

**THE  
SPIRITUAL TEACHING  
OF St. JOHN EUDES**

**BY**

**CHARLES LEBRUN, C.J.M.**

TRANSLATED BY

DOM BASIL WHELAN, O.S.B., M.A.

SANDS & CO.  
15 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN  
LONDON, W.C.2  
AND AT EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW  
[ 1934 ]

Nihil Obstat:  
Dom STEPHEN MARRON, O.S.B.,  
Censor for the Congregation.

Imprimatur:  
W. E. KELLY, O.S.B.,  
Ab. Praes. Cong. Angl.  
Reading,  
23 Jan., 1934

Nihil Obstat:  
GEORGIUS D. SMITH, S.TH.D., PH.D.  
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur:  
JOSEPH BUTT,  
Vic. Gen. Westmonasterii 1 Martii, 1934.

**CONTENTS**

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE	7
I. ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS	9
II. DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD	49
III. THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US	87
IV. PRAYER	131
v. THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.	169
vi. THE PRIESTHOOD	224
CONCLUSION	259

## PREFACE

FOR a long time past the writing of this study of the spiritual teaching of St. John Eudes has been contemplated, but hitherto other preoccupations have made it impossible for me to accomplish it. Now, thanks be to God, it is concluded, and I am happy to offer it to the priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, to the religious of Our Lady of Charity, to the members of the Society of the Heart of the Admirable Mother, and to the numerous admirers and friends of St. John Eudes. In enabling them to become better acquainted with his doctrine, may it also cause them to be permeated with his spirit and assist them to walk faithfully in his footsteps.

In writing this work I have made frequent use of the introductions with which I prefaced the Saint's writings in the *Oeuvres complètes* and the *Oeuvres choisies*; and I have also profited by the labours of M. Letourneau, M. Bremond, and M. Pourrat. But the most systematic and the most complete exposition of the teaching of our Saint is to be found in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, and that book has been my chief guide. I have not, however, neglected the later works of the Saint, in which his doctrine is presented to us in its definitive form.

## PREFACE

In conclusion I would add that this study is but an essay. A definitive synthesis of the teaching of St. John Eudes will not be possible until all its details have been minutely studied. I have only attempted to show the path that must be followed.

CH. LEBRUN Versailles, July 8, 1932.

## CHAPTER I

### ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

ST. JOHN EUDES wrote many books. His *Oeuvres Complètes*, published some twenty years ago, ran twelve octavo volumes, and yet we are without certain number that were never printed, the manuscripts of which were lost in the Revolution of 1789. Not that the Saint was primarily a writer; he was an indefatigably zealous apostle with no other ambition than that of promoting the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and throughout his long life he occupied himself to that end in numerous ways.

Possessing extraordinary aptitude for missions, he did not cease to preach until he was at the end of his strength. Above all, he was convinced that what was chiefly lacking in the Church of France was a supply of virtuous and zealous priests, and it was for that reason that he founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, the principal object of which is to labour at the training of the clergy in the greater seminaries; while to assure a shelter for girls and penitent women he founded the Order of Our Lady of Charity, which is vowed to their relief. In addition, from 1643 onwards, he used all his powers for the establishment and propagation of the public cult of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. And finally he instituted for persons

#### 10- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

in the world several associations intended to honour these Sacred Hearts and to occupy themselves with good works, especially in coming to the help of the ecclesiastical seminaries.

The works written by the Saint were bound up with his apostolic labours, and their only object was to ensure the success of the latter. They were not learned works but popular books intended as propaganda, written to meet the needs of his institutes and to help his priests, pious souls in general, and even ordinary Christians to lead a life conformable to their vocation. Written simply and clearly, without any literary object, they are permeated with his penetrating unction and delicate piety, and therein is the secret of their success. But before studying the teaching that underlies them all, it will not be without value to draw up the list of these works and to show their subject-matter and the work on behalf of which they were respectively composed.

#### A. ST. JOHN EUDES AT THE ORATORY:

##### *Le Royaume de Jésus*

John Eudes was born at Ri, in the diocese of Séez, on November 14, 1601. From his tenderest years he was notable for his piety, and especially for his devotion to the Holy Virgin, so that at the college of Caen, where he studied under the Jesuit Fathers, his fellow-pupils called him "Eudes the Devout." He was admitted into the congregation of the Blessed Virgin in 1618, and therein, as he tells us, received great graces, and when his school days were over he decided to enter the ecclesiastical state, and for two or three years he

#### ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

11 -

attended the course of the theological faculty at Caen.

#### The Influence of the Oratorians

It was in 1623 that he asked for admission to the Oratory, into which he was received the by



Père de Bérulle himself on March 25th. Ordained priest on December 20, 1625, he was sent to Aubervilliers, in the solitude of Notre Dame des Vertus, to recuperate his failing health, and remained there two years, during which he spent his time in prayer, spiritual reading and other pious exercises. During his sojourn at Paris and at Aubervilliers he was able to profit by the instructions of both Père de Bérulle and Père de Condren and was so stirred by their teaching that he mastered it completely and made it the very essence of his piety and of his apostolate.

There is no need for us here to set out the teachings of those holy men; suffice it to say that they delighted to concentrate their devotion on the Incarnate Word and on His Most Holy Mother, that they looked upon the Christian life as a continuation and an extension of the life of Jesus in each one of us, that they stressed the virtue of religion and the supreme worship of adoration that we owe to God in union with His Divine Son, and finally that they held an extremely lofty view of the priesthood, being accustomed to consider it the Order of Jesus Christ and as such the greatest and the holiest of all the orders.<sup>(1)</sup> We will

(1). This school of thought is very dogmatic and is particularly insistent on the dogma of the fall of man by the sin of Adam and his restoration by the Incarnation. The followers of Bérulle delighted in meditating on these great mysteries in the light of St. John's Gospel and of St. Paul's Epistles. We look in vain in their work, for those moral studies that attracted Other writers whose doctrine is ordinarily less theocentric.

## 12 - THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

constantly find these ideas, so dear to Bérulle and his disciples, in the writings of St. John Eudes, for they constituted the basis of his spiritual teaching. It is true that he sets them forth in his own way, and often draws upon the words of St. Francis of Sales, Rodriguez, St. Gertrude, St. Mechtilde, St. Brigid and many other writers of various schools, but in all essentials his teaching is certainly that of Bérulle and Condren.

In 1627, after devoting himself for several months to the service of the plague-stricken people in the neighbourhood of Argentan, he was sent to the Oratory at Caen, where he began to preach missions, employing his free time in the direction of souls either at the Oratory or amongst the religious communities of the town, especially the Carmelites and the Benedictines of Holy Trinity. The letters exchanged during this period between him and the Carmelites and the Benedictines, respectively, show that his wisdom and holiness were already held in high esteem; and it is to this period of his life that one of his best works belongs: *La Vie et le Royaume de Jésus dans les âmes Chrétiennes*. It was published in 1637 and dedicated to Madame de Budos, Abbess of Holy Trinity in Caen, and to her religious. It was also dedicated to all those souls who desire to love Our Lord, and especially to those of whom he had charge.

### Le Royaume de Jésus

At that period books of piety were numerous. Not to mention the works of Grenada, at that time very popular, there were available for the faithful St. Francis of Sales's two works: the *Introduction to the Devout Life* and the *Treatise on the Love of God*, which were praised by everyone. But those books, excellent

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

13 -

though they were, did not completely satisfy our Saint. He did not find in them, at least to the extent he would have desired, St. Paul's noble teaching on our incorporation with Christ by baptism and our obligation to live with His life and to act in His spirit, which is the logical consequence of it. Not that St.

Francis of Sales (to name him alone) ignored this teaching or failed to recall it, but he treated of it only incidentally and in passing, whereas our Saint, like Bérulle and Condren, looked upon it as fundamental and made all his instructions converge upon it. Thus in writing *Le Royaume de Jésus* he believed that he was filling a gap: he wished to bring home to all pious souls the principles of the French School.(1)

This had been attempted in the previous year by one of his colleagues, Père Jean-Hugues Quarré, in his *Spiritual Treasure*, a first-rate book totally inspired by Père de Bérulle, and our Saint thought highly of it and recommended it to his readers in *Le Royaume de Jésus*. But he dreamed of a manual that would be simpler, more practical and more complete, and it was for that reason that he wrote *Le Royaume de Jésus*, in which are to be found, together with very precise ideas on the Christian life and virtues, exercises to be practised every day, every week, every month, and every year for the leading of a truly Christian life and for preparing for a holy death.(2)

(1). It is not merely in this respect that *Le Royaume de Jésus* differs from the works of St. Francis of Sales. Its teaching is more austere in every respect.

(2). In 1662 the author added to his book the *Méditations sur l'humilité* and the *Entretiens intérieurs* which comprise the eighth part of it; and already in 1648 he had inserted in the sixth part a long discussion on *Dévotion due aux saints lieux*, the oratorical style of which contrasts with the remainder of the book.

#### 14 - THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

In writing the book the author strove to be clear. As he was not writing for the lettered, he spoke the language of the people without any other care than to be understood by everyone; and in his desire to be useful he did not content himself with indicating the manner of making the various pious exercises, but frequently put forward ready-made aspirations which, none the less, he recommended should not be made use of hastily, but should be read slowly, savoured, and meditated upon so that the mind and the heart might be thoroughly pervaded by them.

"Most of these exercises," he says in his Preface, "are in the form of aspirations to Jesus, in order that every type of person can make use of them, for there are many who cannot easily use the truths of Christianity in their devotions when they are simply put to them baldly or by way of mere instruction. None the less this will not prevent those who prefer this latter method from extracting from the aspirations the various points and truths to enable them to meditate on the different subjects therein contained, according as the spirit of God shall work in them.-

#### The practical nature of the book.

Furthermore, in the interest of his readers, the Saint did not hesitate to repeat himself: "I have made use of repetitions in some places," he says, "but I have purposely done so, nature of the partly that you should more clearly understand certain things which seem to me of great importance, and that they should be the more impressed upon your minds, and partly so as to avoid giving you the trouble of having to refer back, since certain truths and practices have a bearing upon several subjects and exercises.

#### ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

15-

For this reason I have inserted such passages in several places so that if you should wish to read and to make use of exercises or subjects to which they apply, and either cannot or do not wish to read the other portions, you will not be deprived of a knowledge of these truths or practices, nor will you have the trouble of bunting for them in other parts of the book."

There we see his character and the nature of his apostolate. He was an entirely practical man, not

concerned with speculation, and solely occupied in teaching his readers how they should live. But this he did excellently, for his book is remarkably detailed and souls of good-will find in it everything that they need for raising themselves to the highest perfection. And indeed, *Le Royaume de Jésus* has always been popular with the pious. Concerning it Henri Joly wrote in *La Croix* of October 5, 1919: "*Le Royaume de Jésus* is a book of Christian prayer and practice applicable to all times and all needs. Not merely does it serve to mark a memorable date, it is of definite value by reason of its fundamental, universal, and (one might say) eternal qualities. Like the *Imitation*, or St. Bonaventure's *Life, of Jesus*, like St. Ignatius's *Exercises*, or the *Introduction to the Devout Life* of St. Francis of Sales, it deserves to be in everybody's hands."

And Père de Jaegber, S.J.(1) has written: "In the spiritual life one cannot do better than make use of St. Paul's great doctrine of life in Jesus Christ, the Head of the mystical body. Now that teaching, already so well treated of by St. Augustine and St. Thomas, in their works, has been made by St. John (1) *La vie d'identification au Christ*, ch. 1V.

## 16- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Eudes, more than any other, the centre of his sublime spirituality. . . . And we could not wish anything better than to see the Eudist form of spirituality propagated everywhere and his noble book *Le Royaume de Jésus* in everyone's hands. If this magnificent teaching were better known, if this book were in the hands of those who direct souls towards the loftiest form of divine union, and who instruct priests, monks and nuns, then undoubtedly many souls would be raised higher and would be favoured by various degrees of mystical union who now can only vegetate in mediocrity."

### B. THE CONGREGATION OF JESUS AND MARY

#### **(*Les Règles et Constitutions. Le Manuel de Piété. Les Offices Propres.*)**

In 1643 St. John Eudes left the Oratory to found the Congregation of Jesus and Mary at Caen. In many respects the new Society resembled the Oratory, but it had more specialised aims. Its objects were the professional formation of clerics in the seminaries and the re-awakening of the Christian spirit in the laity by the preaching of missions. Despite incessant difficulties it succeeded in firmly establishing itself in Normandy and Brittany, and at the death of its founder it possessed "greater seminaries" at Caen, Coutances, Lisieux, Evreux, Rouen and Rennes.

But while founding seminaries and preaching missions the Saint also laboured at the organisation of his Society, and for this purpose he wrote *Les Règles et Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, *Le Manuel de Piété à l'usage d'une Communauté Ecclésiastique*,

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

17-

and a collection of *Offices Propres*. These works, which are mutually complementary, are a rich spiritual patrimony wherein the Saint's children find all that they need for their instruction in the true priestly life in accordance with the spirit of their Founder and the nature of the works entrusted to them.

### **The Rules of the Congregation.**

In the mind of the Saint the *Rules*, which are drawn up in Latin, are one with the *Constitutions*, but they can be separated and, in fact, since the nineteenth century, they have been

habitually published separately.(1) They were taken by the Saint from Holy Scripture. In place of the vows of religion the members of his Institute are bound by what are termed the vows of baptism and of the priesthood, and for their more perfect practice the members are subjected to the demands of the common life. Thus St. John carefully gathered together the noblest teachings of the Bible on the duties of the Christian life, the obligations of the priesthood, and the special virtues required in community life; he then grouped them methodically, connecting them together so as to form a continuous text, and it is this choice collection of maxims from Holy Writ that he placed at the beginning of the *Constitutions* of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary under the name of *Rules*.

The *Rules* merely contain the principles of Christian and sacerdotal life; the *Constitutions* point out the method of putting them into practice, and are divided into thirteen sections.

(1) *These Rules* were recently republished under the title of *Regulae Vitae christianae et sacerdotalis*, and they comprise the third volume of his *œuvres choisies*.

18 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

### The Constitutions

Of these the first treats of the state of the Congregation, its objects, its foundations, its spirit. It is the shortest but the most important part, for the determining element in a society, that on which all the rest depends, is its object. Since it is intended chiefly for the formation of clerics in the seminaries, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary had to be a purely sacerdotal society; it is composed of priests and of aspirants to the priesthood, and its spirit is solely that of the supreme Priest which its members must possess "in its plenitude," so as to be able "to communicate it to others."

The second section deals with general discipline and daily routine.

The third treats entirely of the virtue of religion and the exercise of sacerdotal duties, such as the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Divine Office, preaching, and hearing confessions.

The fourth part concerns the charity that all members of the Institute must have for each other and for strangers. St. John dwells on that at all the greater length in that he makes charity "the rule of rules."

The fifth part is about humility, obedience, poverty, chastity and other moral virtues; while the sixth is devoted to the recruiting and training of subjects of the Congregation.

The seventh, eighth, and ninth parts have for their subject the works of the Society, the seminaries, missions, and the college at Lisieux of which the Saint had accepted the direction, but with the express intention of accepting no others.

### ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

19 -

The tenth part speaks of general assemblies, the eleventh of the superior general, the twelfth of particular superiors, and the thirteenth of the principal officials in each house.

Thus we see that the *Constitutions* are very complete, and in them full consideration is given to everything that concerns the intimate life of the Congregation. In drawing them up the Saint made use of the constitutions and rules of other ecclesiastical societies, notably the Oratory and the Society of Jesus. He borrowed from the Oratory all that concerns the condition of the Congregation and its administrative organisation; and he took from St. Ignatius a large number of the rules relative to general discipline and the exercise of authority. Similarly he profited by a certain number of ascetical works, especially

the *Spiritual Conferences* of St. Francis of Sales. But with such discernment did he select the material that he borrowed from his predecessors, and so thoroughly did he augment it with the fruit of his meditations and his experience that one is struck by the unity of thought and of style that runs through his whole book. In short, from one end of it to the other, one finds that deep religious spirit, ardent zeal, compassionate yet steady charity, and entire abnegation that characterised the Saint. Moreover, from end to end are to be found in it the prevailing qualities that characterise all his books, a happy union of lofty principles and practical detail, of eloquence with precision, of energy and gentleness, of simplicity and powerful analogies. We believe, in fact, that the *Constitutions* is one of the best books that issued from his pen, for from the ascetical point of view it is incomparably rich, and

## 20- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

from the literary aspect it is superior to most of the Saint's works by reason of the largeness and regularity of its plan, the true proportion of its parts, the unvarying precision of style, and the purity of its language.

Nor are the Saint's spiritual children ignorant of the value of this book. "It was in the year 1654," wrote Pierre Costil, "that Père Eudes sketched out the complete constitutions that he has given us and for which we cannot doubt that he received particular lights from the Holy Spirit (apart from those parts that he borrowed from the constitutions of other communities noted in his day for their regularity), so much good sense is there in them, so much of the Christian and priestly spirit, and of all that is necessary for good government and the maintenance of fervour in the body of the Congregation. That is the verdict of all his children down to the present day, and they themselves realise that they can read nothing more useful to them than the particular constitutions that deal with the virtues, and that the holy man had forgotten none of the motives or practices which display the necessity or advantages of such reading, or which demonstrate its scope and its operation."

M. Mollevaut, a priest of Saint Sulpice, who had examined these Constitutions, found them "admirable," and Cardinal Pitra stated that he "knew no rule that led to a greater self-denial and a more priestly life."

### **The Manual of Piety.**

The *Manuel de Piété* is a collection of prayers for rounding off the exercises of piety and other actions of the day. It can be useful to everyone, especially to priests, but the Saint wrote it for the members of his

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

21 -

Congregation. "Receive this book, my dear Brethren," he says to them in his preface, "not as from the hand of a despicable man and a miserable sinner, such as I am who, being of myself mere nothingness and an abyss of darkness and sin, can produce nothing else; but receive it as from Him Who is the absolutely unique principle of all good; let it be to you literally a manual, i.e. have it frequently in your hands, read it attentively, and put it into practice faithfully."

In the *Manuel* we find prayers for reciting every day before and after morning prayers, four ways of beginning and ending this morning prayer itself, litanies and other prayers to be recited before midday together with four ways of making the examen which should follow; also prayers to be said before the Blessed Sacrament after dinner and supper, litanies in honour of the Blessed Virgin for recitation after Lauds, night prayers, preparations for the Divine Office, and for meals, conversations, etc. In it also are exercises for each week, each month, each year, as well as others for things that have

no fixed time, such as sickness, travels, deliberations, and so forth.

And so it is plain that the Saint forgot nothing and left to his children a complete and eminently practical manual. It goes without saying that it is animated by the spirit of the French School, but with those special additions which provide the particular features and devotions preferred by our Saint.

A large number of the prayers in the *Manuel* are taken from the Liturgy or from earlier writers, and sometimes the Saint reproduces them in their original form; but frequently he makes additions or modifications in the spirit of his own devotional outlook. And

22-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

side by side with these prayers are others composed by himself, such as the *Ave, Cor Sanctissimum*, the *Ave, Maria Filia Dei Patris*, the *Ave, Joseph Imago Dei Patris*, prayers to be said in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. In general they are notable for their conciseness, precision, and vigour, as also for their sweet and impressive unction.

In addition to the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus and that of the Blessed Virgin, there are in the *Manuel* Litanies in honour of the Holy Trinity, the Heart of Jesus, the Holy Childhood of Our Lord, the Blessed Sacrament, the Passion, the Heart of Mary, her Holy Childhood, the Holy Angels, St. Joseph, St. Joachim, and St. Anne. Those of the Holy Childhood of our Lord, the Passion, and the Blessed Sacrament are not by St. John, but, in accordance with his custom, he has remodelled them. It is believed that the remainder were written by him, though they are taken partly from Holy Scripture and partly from the works of the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers.

The fourth part of the *Manuel* contains also thoughts for certain feasts and ceremonies such as renewal of baptismal vows or of clerical promises, and these were written by the Saint and are full of wealth of teaching and of piety. In short, St. John delighted to express

1 The *Ave Cor Sanctissimum*, which dates from 1643, contains the germ of all St. John's spiritual teaching, for in it are to be found: (a) his devotion to the Sacred Hearts which he did not separate from one another and which he honoured "conjointly"; (b) consideration of the Christian virtues in these Sacred Hearts; (c) the acts which go to make up prayer as understood by the Saint; (d) the complete consecration and immolation of self to Jesus and Mary; (e) fidelity, of which we treat further on; (f) the Saint's views on the life and reign of Jesus in souls: *ut in ipso vivas et regnes!* The *Ave Cor* is in the (*Oeuvres Complètes*, and in the present writer's book on *Devotion to the Heart of Mary*.

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

23 -

the lofty thoughts and sentiments of his mind and heart in either Latin or French prayers, and it was a work in which he excelled.

### New Feasts offices.

But precious though this manual was, it was not enough for the Saint, who was convinced that the best means of developing devotion and making it produce all its fruits was to make it the subject of a liturgical feast, and accordingly he introduced into his Congregation a number of feasts already established in some dioceses or Religious Orders, and in doing so frequently touched up or completed its liturgy. Examples of this are the Feasts of the Holy Name of Mary, of her marriage Espousals with St. Joseph, of the Expectation, of Our Lady of Pity, of the joys of the Holy Virgin, of Our Lady of Victory, of

St. Gabriel, and of St. Lazarus. And the Saint went yet further: with permission of the bishops concerned, which at that time was sufficient, he instituted several new feasts for which he wrote the Masses and the Proper Offices; the best known examples are the Feasts of the Heart of Mary (1643), of the Heart of Jesus (1672), and of the Priesthood (1652); but there were others, for instance, that of the Holy Childhood of Jesus, of the Holy Childhood of Mary, and of the Apparition of Our Lord to His Holy Mother after His resurrection. The collection of Offices re-fashioned or composed by St. John fills a large volume printed for the first time in 1652 and republished in 1668 and in 1672.

There is no need to praise the Masses and the Offices written by the Saint in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary; everyone recognises their perfection

24-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

and beauty<sup>(1)</sup>; and the Office of the Priesthood is not inferior to them. Without being perfect, the other Offices are far from devoid of merit. In all of them there is one of the most striking characteristics of St. John's work: a piety that is gentle and tender, ardent and enthusiastic, that penetrates and soothes the mind with its sweet perfume. What the Venerable Père Boudon said of the Office of the Heart of Mary might also be said of them all: "It is almost impossible to read them attentively without one's heart becoming more tender," which is very similar to the decision of the doctors who approved it in 1651: "These Offices," they said, "are entirely suited to nourish faith, to inflame charity, and to develop Christian piety in souls."

From the doctrinal point of view they are remarkable in that they constantly evoke in the mind the Saint's great and noble teaching on the Word Incarnate and His union with His Holy Mother and with all the members of His mystical body. In short, St. John chants in these Offices what he has explained at length in *Le Royaume de Jesus*, the *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*, *L'Enfance admirable*, *Le Cœur admirable*, and in his other works, so that if one is not familiar with his writings it is difficult to understand fully his Offices. But when once his beautiful teaching has been savoured, one is delighted to see it expressed with such simplicity and piety in the Offices.

Of these the hymns form the most original part, they reveal the Saint as having a wonderful facility. "They show him," says M. Joly, "as having broken

(1) See the present writer's *Bl. John Eudes and the public Cult of the Heart of Jesus, as also Devotion to the Heart of Mary*.

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

25 -

with the exigencies of rhythm and with the resources of a latinity which he scarcely bends to the requirements of his subject in ingenious neologisms." But that does not apply to all. There are some that the Saint chiselled with particular care and has transformed into veritable jewels. Others are less finished and in these there are thoughts, expressions, and sometimes even verses that are taken from earlier Offices, a fact that should hardly surprise us when we realise that the author's work is relatively considerable and that, furthermore, his subject was almost always the same: Jesus and Mary and the links that exist between themselves and with us.

## C. THE ORDER OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY: ITS CONSTITUTIONS

It was in 1641 that St. John laid at Caen the foundations of a Congregation of women intended to labour for the conversion of penitents, and this institute was authorised by Royal Letters Patent, dated 1642, and approved by the Bishop of Bayeux on February 8, 1651, and by Pope Alexander VII on January 2, 1666. The Saint consecrated the new society to the Heart of Mary and placed it under the protection of Our Lady of Charity. The titular Feast of the Order is that of the Heart of Mary which, as in

the case of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, is kept on February 8th; but the sisters observe with equal solemnity the Feast of the Heart of Jesus, which is kept on October 20th in the institutes founded by St. John.

He gave his nuns the rule of St. Augustine and the

26-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Visitation Constitutions, but these last he modified and augmented to bring them into harmony with the spirit and end of his institute. They open with a preamble which sets out the humble glory Of the society and the founder's desires and recommendations for his daughters.

### The spirit of his nuns.

The humble glory of the nuns of Our Lady of Charity. is to be the *Daughters of the Heart of Mary*. It is true that all Christians can claim this title, but it belongs in a very special manner to these nuns by reason of their vocation which has its origin in the heart of her who is the Refuge of Sinners, by reason also of the signal benefits they received from the Heart of Mary during the bitter trials that marked the beginnings of their institute; but above all by reason of the consecration of the Order to the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin. "For," says the Saint, "when it pleased God to put the idea of this community into the hearts of those whom His divine mercy made use of in order to found it, He also gave them the thought of consecrating it to the honour of the most worthy Heart of His well beloved Mother, to which it has been effectively dedicated and consecrated so that those received into the Order should strive to impress on their souls a perfect likeness of the most holy life and excelling virtues of the Most Holy Heart of their good Mother, and so by this means make themselves worthy of being true *Daughters of the Adorable Heart of the Mother of Dilection*."

After that the holy founder besought his daughters to dwell in the Heart of Mary and in that of her Divine Son, and therein to seek "their place of repose, their

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

27

city of refuge, their impregnable fortress, their garden of delights, and their earthly paradise."(1)

"Live," said he, "the life of this blessed Heart, share its sentiments, enter into its dispositions, follow its inclinations, love whatever it loves, hate whatever it hates, desire only what it desires, rejoice only in that in which it rejoices, fear only that which it would fear if it were still subject to fear, be grieved only by that which would grieve it if it were yet capable of grief, labour for the accomplishments of its designs, give yourselves unceasingly to the spirit that animates it, so that this same spirit may possess you and may lead you in all things, that its grace may sanctify you, that its love may inflame you, that its charity may embrace you, and above all that its zeal for the salvation of souls may devour you."

"Finally," continued the Saint, "treasure in your hearts the fact that you are the *Daughters of the Most Holy Heart of the Queen of Heaven*; never forget that glorious name, have it ever before your eyes, engrave it in your minds, imprint it upon the inmost recesses of your souls, and let it be ever on your lips. In this way ~all your thoughts and affections, all your words and actions, will tend to make you worthy *Daughters of the Most Holy Heart of the Mother of Jesus*."

We see, then, how imbued is this preface with ardent piety, and it must ever be very dear to the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, for therein they find their titles of nobility, a pledge of the tender



affection of their founder, and an exposition of that devotion which must be the life of their institute.  
(1). *Preface: To the Religious of Our Lady of Charity.*

28 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

### Object of the nuns.

We have said that the real end of the Order is to the labour for the conversion and instruction of penitent women. This the Saint explains in the first constitution, and having done so, he proceeds to display the excellence of this work and the motives that must move the sisters to devote themselves to it entirely. He would have them regard this first constitution as the soul of their institute, and employ their minds, their hearts, their care, and their industry to ensure the salvation of the unfortunate sinners committed to their charge, embracing with joy all the trials and difficulties they encounter in this thankless task.

And thereby it is made plain that if, in many respects, the Constitutions of Our Lady of Charity are but reproductions of those of the Visitation nuns, yet they have not the same end, and the spirit that animates them is not absolutely identical. The Visitation is a contemplative Order, instituted for the purpose of bringing the advantages of religious life to those who, by reason of advanced age or delicate health, cannot undergo the austerities of the older Orders. It aims only at the perfection of divine love. "It is," says Mgr. Bougaud, "a sweet sanctuary of interior recollection . . . a silent communication with the cherubim in prayer." But the nuns of Our Lady of Charity, although subjected to solitude and silence, are vowed to an active apostolate. They can only sanctify themselves by devoting themselves to the salvation of souls, and everything in their lives (vows, labours, prayers, sacrifices) is a condition and a means of their apostolate, whereas the same observances and 1 *Life of Bl. Margaret Mary.*

### ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

29-

the same exercises are for the religious of the Visitation Order only a means of mortifying nature and of acquiring union with God.

### The Constitutions for the nuns.

In the constitutions relative to the exercises of the religious life, administrative organisation and employments, St. John only very slightly for the nuns. He changed what was laid down by St. Francis of Sales. But in those parts that deal with the Christian virtues he rarely on the contrary, held to the text of St. Francis. Almost always he mixed therewith his personal views and added detailed instructions the importance of which he had been taught by experience. Especially is this the case in the constitutions on obedience, chastity, humility, and silence; those portions are largely the work of St. John Eudes, while those dealing with gratitude and charity are almost entirely from his own pen. The second is admirable; we believe there is not another in the whole book which bears the mark of a more exquisite gentleness. Fraternal charity, indeed, together with zeal for souls, was the virtue that the Saint wished to see supreme amongst his children. He wanted "charity to be the queen, the rule, the soul and the life of the institute; that it should unite all hearts, minds, and spirits in the Order so closely that there should be but one heart, one soul, and one mind; and that it should be manifest from their countenances, their conversation, their labours, in all places and in all things." But this ~benevolent and gentle charity need not prevent that fraternal correction that the sisters owe to one another, especially when they have been given authority; for, as the Saint justly remarks, "one of the most Outstanding effects of true charity is that it helps

others to conquer their faults by pointing them out and correcting them in a spirit of gentleness and benignity.

In writing the life of the Venerable Mother Marie de Ste. Euphrasie Pelletier, founder of the Good Shepherd of Angers, Mgr. Pasquier and M. Portais were led to appreciate the Constitutions of Our Lady of Charity, and they wrote a high eulogy of them that we cannot forbear to quote.

Père Eudes," says Mgr. Pasquier, "adopted the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of the Nuns of the Visitation for his own daughters, with the exception of certain changes made necessary by the particular end that he proposed for them. He added to the three usual vows that of working for the souls of sinful women. In a limpid style, that is as fresh as that of the best writers of the seventeenth century, he pointed out to the Sisters of Refuge the supernatural beauty of their vocation. His views were so profound, and his exposition of them was so luminous, one might have supposed that they were meditations by Bossuet on grace and the ministry of the priest. With him, as with Bossuet, we are on the solid ground of the most trustworthy theology, and we follow him without weariness in his simple yet attractive dissertations. Even the professors of St. Sulpice had no other language and no loftier outlook when training the clerics they received in their first seminaries to meditate on their vocation."(1)

And M. Portais writes that "Père Eudes imposed on his Religious the Rule of St. Augustine as St. Francis of Sales had prescribed it for the Daughters of  
(1). *Life of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier.*

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

3 1 -

the Visitation, adding thereto Constitutions conformable to the especial needs and works of his Institute. It was only after the approbation of the Order by Alexander VII that he could prepare the *Rules and Constitutions* for the printer, but then he gave the matter his whole attention assisted by M<sup>re</sup> Mère Patin and the two superiors who succeeded her. Out of respect for St. Francis of Sales he changed nothing in the *Spiritual Directory*; and, even if he did not follow the same order, yet he did not modify the Visitandine Constitutions more than was absolutely necessary. But he placed at their head, together with certain *Desires and Prayers for the Religious of Our Lady of Charity*, an admirable *Constitution on the end of the Institute and the motives which should lead those who Profess it to carry out its undertakings with all their hearts*. Finally he drew up *Rules for the girls and the Penitent women*, desiring above all that they should be kept entirely separated from the Community. Taken as a whole this work is a veritable masterpiece; everything in it is regulated in detail with a wisdom, moderation, tact, and foresight that are incomparable."(1)

## D. ST. JOHN EUDES AND THE MISSIONS

*L'Exercice de Piété. Le catéchisme de la mission. Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le Saint Baptême. Le Bon Confesseur. Le Prédicateur apostolique.*

11 St. John was a born missionary. He had all the Natural and supernatural qualities necessary for success in that ministry in which he laboured throughout his life and in which he was so extraordinarily successful,

(1).1 *The Life of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier.*

as his contemporaries unanimously proclaimed. "I have listened to many preachers in my life, some of

them the most skilful in France and in Italy," said Pierre Camus, sometime Bishop of Belley, "but I never heard one who worked more potently upon the heart of man than this good Father.»(1)

And St. Vincent de Paul, writing on June 18, 1660, states that "certain Norman priests led by Père Eudes have just given a mission in Paris with wonderful success. The *Cour des Quinze-Vingts* is very large, but it was too small to contain all those who came to hear the preaching.(2) And similarly M. de Renty wrote to M. Olier on June 16, 1648, that "Père Eudes labours here with incredible results. His ability in setting forth the truths of salvation, in displaying the love of God for us in Jesus Christ, and the horror of sin, has so penetrated hearts that all the confessors are overwhelmed. . . . His sermons are thunderbolts that give no rest to consciences till they reveal their secret sins, so that the confessors have to toil rather at consoling than at striving to move to repentance."

Even M. Olier himself applied to Père Eudes when he wanted to procure the benefit of a mission for his parish of St. Sulpice; so that M. Faillon tells us that M. Olier "knew of no one with a greater gift for preaching the word of God and bringing about remarkable conversions than this extraordinary man whom he called 'the marvel of his century,' and whose labours had been blessed with such abundant fruits by God."(4)

(1). Costil, *Annales*, I, p. 37.

(2). Quoted by Maynard in *St. Vincent de Paul*, II, pp. 422-423.

(3). Faillon, *Life of M. Olier*.

(4). Faillon, *op. cit.*

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

33-

### The Saint's missionary books.

To ensure the success of his missions St. John wrote several books, including three for the faithful: *L'Exercice de piété*, *Le catéchisme de la mission*, and *Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le Saint Baptême*; and two for his missionaries: *Le Bon Confesseur*, and *Le Prédicateur apostolique*.

Of these, *L'Exercice de piété*, the first edition of which appeared in 1636, is an entirely practical volume in which the author sets out to teach the faithful how to pray morning and evening, to sanctify the actions of the day, to hear Mass, to confess and to communicate fruitfully. He made use of this little book himself in his missions, in leading the morning and evening prayers, and he recommended parents to use it for family prayers. To it he added an excellent summing-up of the Christian life in eight articles and, under the title of *Paradis sur Terre*, a resumé of Christian perfection which is a masterpiece.

Very often the people evangelised by the Saint were extremely ignorant, and to instruct them he soon to teach the catechism to the children, and it often happened that adults also attended on these occasions. St. John attached great importance to this work, and he was accustomed to take with him such priests as had a special aptitude for teaching the 'Catechism, and these were of great assistance to him.

But there was need of a handbook in which would be found a brief exposition of Christian doctrine, for use by the Children, and it was with this end in view that he wrote the *Catéchisme de la Mission*, which appeared for the first time in 1642 and was subsequently frequently republished. Other more learned catechisms

34 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

have appeared since then, but that of St. John remains one of the most practical and most pious.

*Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le Saint Baptême* appeared in 1654, and has been recently

republished. Though very short and very simple, it is rich in doctrine, and treats of the excellence of baptism, the graces conferred by it, the relations established by it between us and the three Divine Persons, the happiness which it contains in germ, the holy and divine life that it obliges us to follow, the means and the easiness of attaining to that, and the mysteries contained in the ceremonies of baptism. All these great questions are discussed with remarkable lucidity and precision. But what gives the book a particular savour of piety and makes its reading the more profitable, are the numerous texts borrowed by the author from Scripture and the Fathers for the purpose of supporting his arguments. In fact the *Contrat* is in some parts no more than a string of Scriptural texts which mutually complete and explain each other. Yet this little book, written for the simple, has been much appreciated by priests and religious of acknowledged learning and sanctity.

In 1644 St. John published a small book called *Avertissements aux confesseurs missionnaires*, which he wrote for his colleagues and the auxiliary priests who accompanied him on his missions, that it might guide them and help to maintain amongst them uniformity of method in the tribunal of penance. In its contents, as also in its title, this book recalls the *Information for Confessors* of St. Francis of Sales, but St. John had taken care to add to the meekness of the Bishop of Geneva the firmness of St \* Charles Borromeo whose regulations he followed on the delaying or refusing of

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

35 -

absolution. St. John's book had a rapid success and appeared in a second edition which, since 1644, has been followed by several others.

But this volume was only an essay, and the day came when its author wished to complete it by adding to it the fruits of his long experience. He quickly realised that the only way of doing this successfully was to remodel his work completely; and so he produced an entirely new book which he called *Le Bon Confesseur*, and this work, which appeared in 1666, was given a most cordial reception by the clergy and was frequently re-issued in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

"Of all the books," says Martine, -given by Père Eudes to the public, *Le Bon Confesseur* brought him most honour. He received from all sides the thanks and the just praises that he merited by a work of such great utility."

And a little later Pierre Cousin wrote: "We might say that this little book, the first that has appeared in France for the reform of the confessional, has two advantages over most other works on the same subject. The first is that the method that it teaches is so easy that no one could fail to understand and to practise it faithfully. And the second is that the duties of confessors are therein exposed, not drily, but with a devotion that arouses that of the reader even as it instructs him. "

During his missions St. John did not fail to give conferences to his assistants on how most usefully to preach, and in order that these rules might be conserved in the society and that even after his death his missionaries should never neglect them he decided to bring

36-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

them together into a volume with the significant title, *Le prédicateur apostolique*. But though he toiled at it for a long time he could not complete the work till the end of his life, and it was his successor, Père Blouet de Camilly, who published it in 1685.

In this book the author insists on the supernatural character of preaching, and he urges the preacher to raise himself above all thoughts of vanity and of self interest and to aim solely at instructing and touching his hearers. He also goes into numerous details on the preparation and composition of sermons and of how to deliver them: but what he desires above all else is that the

preacher be a man of prayer and that he be the first to practise what he preaches to others.

## **E. ST. JOHN AND THE PRIESTHOOD**

### ***Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique***

The main preoccupation of St. John and his favourite work was the elevation and the sanctification of the clergy, and he employed himself on it to the best of his ability during his missions by giving conferences to priests on the holiness and obligations of their state. He did more: he wrote for priests a certain number of books which between them cover all the functions of the priesthood. Besides *Le Bon Confesseur* and *Le Prédicateur apostolique* of which we have just written, he composed a treatise on the Divine Office and another on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which have not yet been printed; and finally the *Mémorial de la vie, ecclésiastique*, which was published after his death by Père Blouet de Camilly.

The *Mémorial* is not a treatise, and we must not

## **ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS**

37 -

seek therein a complete and methodical exposition of the duties of a priest. The seventeenth century has left us several very valuable books of that nature, of which the best known and the most valuable is the *Treatise on Holy Orders*, by M. Olier, which appeared in 1675. St. John did not profit by it in writing the *Mémorial*, for by that time it was almost completed, but he must have read it, and presumably he greatly appreciated it for, on the priesthood as on the Christian life, his ideas fully corresponded with those of the venerable founder of St. Sulpice.

Previous to the *Treatise on Holy Orders* there had been available for the clergy the *Instruction for Priests*, by the Carthusian Molina: a justly celebrated work which has been republished in our own day. St. John thought highly of it, and recommended it in his *Mémorial*; indeed he was helped by it several times.

### **A handbook for the clergy.**

None the less, books of this type, excellent though they might be, were not, in the eyes of the Saint, sufficient for the clergy. They needed shorter and more practical works which they could have always at hand and which would briefly sum up their duties and tell them how best to carry them out. His *Mémorial* was intended to fill this need. In it he paid homage first to the holy priests of the Church Triumphant who are, after Our Lord, the models of the clergy; and then he dedicated it to all priests of the Church Militant. The address in which he offers it to them contains a very fine panegyric of the priesthood; it concludes with these words: "After consecrating this little work to the saintly priests of the Church Triumphant, I wish equally to dedicate it to all good pastors and to all holy priests

38-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

of the Church Militant, as a slight testimony of the respect that I cherish for the Royal Priesthood of my Lord Jesus, whom I honour in my dear brethren. And I wish to place this book in your hands so that it may serve as a reminder of all the qualities and the merits, the obligations and the duties of your profession, as also the method of exercising in a holy manner all the priestly functions." There we have the object of the book clearly shown: it is a manual intended to help priests to correspond to their vocation and to carry out its duties in a saintly manner.

Of necessity a volume of that kind must be composed of very diverse elements. If it is to be practical it must contain both instructions and methods of work; and that, in fact, is what we find in the Memorial. The author himself tells us in a foreword that in it are five principal things, namely: considerations on the excellence of the priesthood, a summary of the duties of priests, exercises of piety for the various actions of the day, a guide for retreats, and a series of meditations for the use of clerics; in short, five sections of very unequal extent and of quite different natures. And now a short word on each of these.

So long as a priest cherishes only popular ideas of his state and his duties, such as those that are often to be met with amongst the faithful, he does not feel the necessity of aspiring to perfection and experiences none of the holy ardours of true zeal. St. John realised this better than anyone, and so he began the Mémorial by reminding priests of the sublimity of their calling, which we have already stated to be the theme of the long dedication in which he offered his book to his priestly colleagues; and without fearing to repeat

## **ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS**

39-

himself he devotes the first part of his book to the same subject. In both sections the Saint's style is highly coloured and distinctly oratorical, and very possibly both sections (but especially the first) are merely extracts from conferences given by him to the clergy. At all events they are certainly faithful echoes of his conferences and enable us to have some idea of that ardent and devotional eloquence that so strongly impressed his hearers and communicated to them something of the apostolic zeal with which his own heart was filled. We cannot read them without being struck by the deep veneration with which the servant of God addressed priests and the admiration that filled his soul when considering the sublimity of the priesthood. Equally striking is the enthusiasm with which he spoke. It would be impossible to find loftier or more accurate ideas on this subject.

The second part of the book is a summary of the duties that devolve on the priesthood. It was drawn up for secular priests employed in the sacred ministry, and indeed some details in it apply only to them. It was this part that was called a "memorial" by St. John, but that word is now given to the whole book. And it would seem that this section is the oldest part of the volume, the primitive nucleus of the whole; in any case it is superb, and supplies fresh evidence of the Saint's ability to condense a whole programme for the life of perfection into a few pages. The thirty-four articles to be found in it contain everything essential about the priesthood. St. John deals with the necessity of aspiring to perfection, the fundamental laws of the ecclesiastical life, the principal vices that must be guarded against, the care that must be exercised over

40-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

souls committed to one's charge, and the exercises of piety and devotions that are specially suited to the clergy: he forgot none of these things. And in these few pages one will look in vain for exaggeration, or even for hyperbole, so commonly used by orators; for the exactness and moderation of his teaching is matched by the precision of his style, so that together they make this memorial a model of its kind.

The book's third part contains a series of exercises or practices for sanctifying the actions and especially the priestly duties of each day.

The fourth part, which is the Directory for Retreats, is very short and contains the system followed by retreatants in the seminaries conducted by the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, and a few brief notes on the various exercises of the retreat. The chief interest of it is to be found in the "extraordinary examens" inserted by the author, which contain valuable instructions (notably on the Christian virtues) which find their fitting place in a memorial on the ecclesiastical life, but had till

then not been discussed.

The book ends with a series of meditations for the use of the clergy. They could be used during retreats, but they form no part of the Directory, and in the author's eyes they are a work apart, constituting the fifth and last part of the *Mémorial*. These meditations fall into two distinct groups, of which the first deals with the questions of vocation and Holy Orders, the material being extracted for the most part from the Roman Pontifical. It was evidently the Saint's intention that they should be used by those about to be ordained, and possibly they were even written expressly for them.

## **ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS**

41 -

The second group of meditations have as their object the chief obligations of a priest: hatred of sin, renunciation of the world and of himself, love of God, of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the Church. These are much the most attractive, at least to our mind, and they are as remarkable for the conciseness of their style as for the loftiness and solidity of their doctrine. With a little development they would make an excellent clergy retreat.

### **F. ST. JOHN AND DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN**

#### ***Dévotion au Cœur de Marie. L'Enfance admirable. Le Cœur admirable.***

All the distinguished priests who brought about the revival of piety and of the ecclesiastical spirit amongst the French clergy of the seventeenth century were faithful servants of Mary, but perhaps none loved her with so much zeal as did St. John Eudes. He himself would give way to none on this point. ---I willingly," he said, "give place to everyone in talent, knowledge, and all the rest, but I could not endure that anyone should surpass me in respect, confidence, and love towards the Mother of God."

We have already seen that he instituted several Feasts in honour of Mary; but he also wrote several works to propagate devotion to her, to wit: *La Dévotion au très saint cœur et au très sacré nom de Marie*, *L'Enfance admirable*, and *Le Cœur admirable*. In 1648 the Saint, who was then giving a mission at Autun, obtained permission from Mgr. Claude de la Madeleine de Ragny to celebrate solemnly in the Cathedral the Feast of the Heart of Mary instituted by

42-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

himself in 1643, and on this occasion he published at Autun the Mass and Office of this Feast together with a Mass and Office of the Name of Mary. The book was called *La Dévotion au très saint cœur et au très sacré nom de Marie*.

This book he reissued at Caen in 1650, adding to it a *Discours sur la Dévotion au Cœur de Marie* composed of four chapters. In the first of these St. John shows that this devotion has its origin and its basis in the Holy Gospels. In the second, he exposes the main considerations which ought to move us to honour the Heart of Mary. In the third, he points out the object of this devotion by explaining what he means by the words «Heart of Mary»; and in the fourth, he indicates the means to be employed in rendering to this dear Heart the cult it merits. In short, the *Discours* is a small treatise on devotion to the Heart of Mary and, although very brief, it is still, we believe, one of the best that we have.

### **The childhood of our Lady**

*L'Enfance admirable* appeared in Paris in 1676, and is in three parts, of which the first treats of the mysteries, the second the excellences, and the third the virtues of the admirable childhood of the Holy Virgin and of the means of honouring it. In the childhood of the Blessed Virgin the Saint enumerates twelve mysteries, as also twelve excellences and twelve virtues, therein evidently finding a reminder of the twelve stars that formed the crown of that woman in the Apocalypse in whom we are accustomed to see the Blessed Virgin.

The first three mysteries are the predestination of Mary, which is inseparably united to that of her Son,

## **ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS**

43-

the promises that announced His coming, and the figures by which it pleased God to manifest in advance some of His perfections. St. John passes quickly over these three mysteries. But, on the other hand, he dwells at length on the Immaculate Conception, beginning by establishing the dogma which at that time was not defined and which still found occasional adversaries; then he relates the origin of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception; and he ends by setting out the privileges attached to the Immaculate Conception. With regard to the birth of Mary, St. John comments with much knowledge and piety on the twenty-fourth chapter of *Ecclesiasticus* and the eighth chapter of *Proverbs*, which are applied by the Church to the Holy Virgin. Then the Saint considers the name of Mary, explaining its various meanings, showing its excellence and pointing out the ways of honouring it.

The last mysteries of the childhood of Our Lady are her life for three years with SS. Joachim and Anne, her departure from her father's house, her presentation in the Temple, the sojourn that she made there and the life she led there. Holy Scripture tells us nothing of these, but certain ecclesiastical writers give comparatively circumstantial details of them, and these St. John repeats and comments upon with his accustomed piety.

The excellences in the childhood of Mary on which the author dwells are first the nobility of her parents, their eminent sanctity, the fervour of their prayers (of which the fruit was the conception of Mary), and the announcement made to them by St. Gabriel of their miraculous fecundity. At this point he pauses to narrate the praises of the Archangel Gabriel, whom he

44-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

looks upon as "the angel of holy love," since it was his mission to announce the mystery of the Incarnation to mankind, and he was the guardian angel of «the Mother of Dilection.» Then he shows that Our Lady's birth was, as the Church sings, a subject of joy for the entire universe.

The excellences mentioned up to this point by the Saint are extrinsic to the person of Our Lady, and relate to the circumstances accompanying her conception and birth; but in the chapters that follow he fixes our attention on Mary herself, and discourses to us on the incomparable beauty of her virginal body, the perfection of her holy soul, the lofty knowledge communicated to her by the Holy Spirit from the moment of her conception, the plenitude of grace with which her heart was from that moment enriched, and the wonderful sanctity of her life even during her infancy. Many of these questions had already been touched upon in the first part, but here St. John treats of them with greater fullness and, so to speak, *ex professo*.

In the last two chapters of this second part the author establishes the fact that Mary was already from her infancy, at least morally, Queen of the Universe and Mother of Christ and of all the members of His mystical body; for in the mind of God she was already adorned with all her titles, and the wonderful privileges with which she was favoured in her conception and throughout her childhood were



intended to prepare her for the supereminent dignity for which she was destined. Consequently the Saint was not wrong in enumerating the royalty and maternity of Mary amongst the favours of her holy childhood, and in so

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

45 -

doing he considered himself but the interpreter of Catholic liturgy.

The third part of this book considers the virtues which shone with peculiar brilliancy in the Holy Childhood of Mary, and the means of showing fitting honour to them. It also contains eight meditations on the Holy Childhood.

St. John's book on *Devotion au très Saint Cœur de la bienheureuse Vierge* was only a little book of propaganda; there was still need of a comprehensive work which set forth devotion to the Heart of Mary with all the fullness demanded by such a subject; and despite the labours of all sorts that overwhelmed him, the Saint decided at an early date (1652) to undertake a work of which he, more than anyone else, understood the importance. It required laborious researches, and the task of putting together the material collected called for much time, great mental activity, and a robustness of health that would not break down under the strain of the labour. All these things were vouchsafed to the Saint. He was given the time and the necessary strength to bring the work to completion, and on July 25, 1680 he could write in his *Memoriale Beneficiorum Dei*: "To-day, July 25 of the year 1680, God has given me the grace to finish my book on *Le Cœur admirable de la très Sainte Mère de Dieu*." Shortly after this he was taken ill, and he died on the following August 19th at the Caen seminary. "We cannot wonder," says Boudon, "if the death of the Venerable Père Jean Eudes was so precious, so sweet, and so full of heavenly consolations. It seemed as though heaven were wide open to him, and the hour of death, which is generally so formidable, was for him

46-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

a time abundantly filled with delight and spiritual consolations. He spoke of Paradise as though he were already there, and his words were charged with unction and with life for those that were present. It is the privilege of devout servants of the Blessed Virgin not only to die in a Christian manner, but with sweetness and peace. It is no cause for wonder, then, if she caused a stream of peace to flow into the heart of him who was one of her most zealous servants of this century, and the *blessed child of her Heart*." (1)

The author, thus, had not the consolation of seeing the publication of his book, but it was brought out in 1681 by Père Blouet de Camilly.

### The Sacred Heart of Mary.

*Le Cœur admirable de la très Sainte Mère de Dieu* is the largest of St. John's works, for it is divided into twelve books, of which the first explains what is meant by the Heart of Mary, and the second and third lead us to contemplate in the physical world and in the Mosaic Law twelve tableaux in which God the Father deigned to prefigure its perfections in advance. The fourth and fifth books show us the Word imprinting upon the heart of the Blessed Virgin a perfect reproduction of the divine attributes and a wonderful participation in the properties of each of the three Divine Persons. In the three books that follow we are taught devotion to the Heart of Mary by the sayings of Holy Scripture, by the writings of the Fathers and Doctors, and finally by the teaching of popes and bishops and the example of the saints. The ninth book is very long and deals with the merits of the Heart of Mary, while the tenth contains an explanation of the

(1). *Devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God, I, 111, ch. iv.*

## ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

47-

*Magnificat*, which St. John calls «the canticle of the Heart of Mary.» The eleventh book is entirely practical, the author recalling therein at some length the reasons that should lead us to honour the Heart of Mary, and pointing out the method of so doing. It concludes with two series of meditations for the Feast and the Octave of the Heart of Mary. The subject of the twelfth book is the Heart of Jesus and for the most part is devoted to explaining the saying of St. Bernadine of Siena that the Heart of the Divine Master is a furnace of love for the whole universe. It also concludes with two series of meditations for the Feast and the Octave of the Heart of Jesus.

And so the author has planned the book on a grand scale, and though based on mystical reflections it is not lacking in logic. By it the Saint is enabled to consider in all its aspects that devotion of which he had made himself the apostle. All such matters as the perfections of the Heart of Mary, its relations with the three Divine Persons, its union with the Heart of Jesus, its joys and its sorrows, its part in the work of redemption and of the sanctification of the human race, are discussed very fully by the author, and he has neglected nothing that could contribute to making that adorable Heart better understood and more fervently loved. After setting clearly in relief the precise subject of the devotion, he shows the grounds for it, and traces its history from the beginnings of Christianity; he then produces the literature that has enabled it to take its place in Catholic liturgy, and he explains how to reduce it to practice in the ordinary course of life. And so *Le Cœur admirable de la très Sainte Mère de Dieu* embraces the theory, the history and the practice of

48-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

devotion to the Heart of Mary, and each one of these questions is treated therein with such knowledge and sureness of touch that to this day nothing notable has been added to the Saint's teaching on the subject. And it is no less remarkable that he treats of these matters in language so simple and so full of unction that, despite the treasury of doctrine and erudition to be found in it, this book is yet a work of piety easily understood by everyone. We have to confess, however, that the plan followed by the author has several times led him to discuss again questions already dealt with, and that at times he allows himself to be led into digressions that prove fatiguing to modern readers.

But in spite of these failings we believe that any who give themselves the trouble of reading the book with the attention it deserves will agree with M. Joly that "it has raised up to the Heart of the Blessed Virgin a monument stamped with her image and worthy of perpetuating her memory by itself alone."

In this study of the Saint's works we have already mentioned certain aspects of his spiritual teaching, but now we must pass to a direct study of it in which we shall strive to set out its principal points clearly and precisely, and in the course of this exposition we will deal successively with devotion to the Incarnate Word, the life of Christ within us, prayer, the Christian virtues, and finally the priesthood.

## CHAPTER 11

### DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

THE object of the Christian religion is God in the unity of His nature and the Trinity of His Persons. But since the Incarnation it is principally to Jesus Christ that the religious life of humanity has been directed. That is easily understandable. The God of Heaven rules us from his lofty throne, the spirituality of His nature conceals it from our sensible faculties, the infinity of His perfections disconcerts our intelligence, and when we reflect on Him what impresses us most is His majesty, which dazzles us, His omnipotence which overpowers us, and His justice which terrifies us. The God of the crib, of Calvary and of the altar is, on the other hand, more within our grasp. In making Himself our brother He permits us to approach Him with all the powers of our nature, and above all He is as it were stripped of everything that could overawe us, so that nothing is allowed to appear in Him but an infinite goodness that draws us to Him. Moreover, since the Incarnation the centre of attraction for religious souls has been changed, as the Abbé Lejeune puts it, not in order to separate us from God but to enable us to go to Him by an easier way and to know Him in the Person of the Incarnate Word.

Germain Habert, the first biographer of Cardinal de Bérulle, remarked on this subject:

### THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

#### The Incarnate Word.

"Although the Holy Trinity is the greatest of all the mysteries that we adore, although it Word. is the principle and end of all, and although all things exist but to honour It . . . yet I venture to say that in the course of this present life in which we proceed by faith the chief attention and the greatest devotion of the Christian is given not to the Trinity but to the Incarnation. And that is the spirit and the practice of the Church which, in this as in all other devotions, faithfully follows the very spirit and practice of God. For in fact God, in His divine Providence, only reveals the Trinity to us in relation to the Incarnation; He unveils the Three Persons to us only so far as is necessary for our better understanding of the Second Person; and whereas He reserves the manifestation of this first and greatest mystery till we attain to glory in Heaven, it might be said on the contrary that He takes pains to depict amply for us the Incarnate Word. That is the aim of all Holy Scripture . . . to give us a perfect knowledge of His various states, offices and qualities. Holy Writ instructs us on these points on every page, and all the time that the Eternal Father speaks to us He sets His Son before us, we might say, and in doing so proclaims as on Thabor: 'This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him.'"

So impressed with this idea was Cardinal de Bérulle, and so enthusiastically did he propagate it that he deserved to be styled by Urban VIII "Apostle of the (1). *Avant et après la Communion*, p. 2, ch. i, n. iv.

Quoted by Bremond in *L'École française*, p. 44. It is for this reason that St. John Eudes, instead of speaking simply of the Father and the Holy Ghost, often calls them the *Father of Jesus* and the *Holy Spirit of Jesus*.

### DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

Incarnate Word." He had a "singular devotion" to Jesus Christ, Whom he strove to see and to honour in all things; and St. John Eudes, as a faithful disciple of that illustrious master, invites us to concentrate all our devotional efforts on the adorable Person of the Saviour. He would have us find "all our delight" in Jesus after the example of our Heavenly Father, and make Him "the sole object of our thoughts and our affections, the end of all our actions, our centre, our paradise, our all in all." (1)

## **Relations of the Incarnate Word with the Blessed Trinity.**

But we should not get the idea that the worship of the Incarnate Word, understood in this sense, is in any way prejudicial to that which we owe to the other two Persons of the august Trinity. Jesus cannot be separated either from the Father, from Whom He proceeds, or from the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from Him. He is but one and the same God with the one and with the other, and therefore the homage that we give Him is addressed equally to the Father and the Holy Ghost even though we perhaps have not the explicit intention of honouring them with Him and in Him.

"When I exhort you," says St. John, "to kneel every morning in adoration of Our Lord Jesus Christ to thank Him and to offer yourselves to Him, I do not mean that these acts should be made only in regard to the Person of the Son of God, but in regard to the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And this, in fact, is always infallibly done, even though one has not always got this expressly in mind. For since Jesus is but one with the Father and the Holy Ghost,

(1). Royaume de Jésus, Part I, n. vii.

52-

### **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

and since all the Most Holy Trinity, or, as St. Paul puts it, all the fullness of the divinity dwells in Jesus Christ, we must necessarily conclude that to adore and to glorify Jesus is to adore and to glorify the Father and the Holy Ghost; to offer to Jesus all the glory rendered to Him in heaven and on earth is to offer this same glory to the Father and to the Holy Ghost; and to beg the Father and the Holy Ghost to glorify Jesus is to beg them to glorify themselves."(1)

For the rest, our Saint's habit of making the Incarnate Word the preferred object of his devotion had nothing exclusive in it, and frequently he addressed himself directly to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (2) He loved to contemplate the divine perfections, and he had a particular devotion to the divine will. He consecrated Sunday to honouring the Blessed Trinity; and he delighted in meditating on the relationship that baptism and the priesthood establish between us and each one of the Divine Persons, often addressing himself to the Father and to the Holy Spirit and beseeching Them to love Jesus on his behalf.

#### **A. THE GENERAL DEVOTION AND SPECIAL DEVOTIONS**

The cult of the Incarnate Word extends to all that He is in Himself, in His two-fold nature, divine and human, and to all His operations in heaven, on earth, and in hell.

(1). Ditto, Part 1, n. iv.

(2). Worship of the Most Holy Trinity holds, of course, a prominent place in the life of the faithful and in Catholic liturgy; as, for instance, is testified by the Gloria Patri, the doxology that concludes the hymns in the Divine Office, and also by the sign of the Cross, the use of which is so frequent.

#### **DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD**

53 -

#### **The praises of Jesus.**

"Consider," writes St. John, how Jesus is infinitely worthy of praise, glory and benediction, and for an infinity of reasons.

For He deserves infinite praises for all that He is and for all that He does in regard to His Eternal Father, glorifying and loving Him infinitely and continually from all eternity to all eternity. Also for all that He is in Himself, in His divinity, in all His divine perfections, in His divine Person, in His sacred Humanity, in His body and His soul, in all the parts of His body and soul the least of which merits infinite praise, in all His mysteries, qualities and offices, in all His words, thoughts, deeds, and sufferings, in all His - virtues and in everything that is in Him, the smallest of which is so worthy of praise that though all the angels and saints are occupied throughout eternity in praising and glorifying it with their whole power yet they cannot give it the glory it deserves.

"Moreover," he continues, "He merits immortal praise for all that He is and for all that He does in regard to His Holy Spirit, His Holy Mother, all the angels, all the saints, all mankind and all the creatures on earth and even in hell. For he merits no less praise for the consequences of His justice than for those of His mercy, everything that is in Him and from Him being equally holy and adorable. How many subjects and reasons there are for blessing and glorifying our Most Adorable and Most Lovable Jesus! But . . . you ought to be much more impelled to praise and love Him for what He is and does in regard to His Father, Himself and His Holy Spirit, than for what He is and does in regard to yourself and other creatures; for

54-

#### THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

the interests of God must be infinitely dearer to us than our own."(1)

Now Cardinal de Bérulle instituted a Feast of Jesus, the precise aim of which was to honour the Incarnate Word in all His perfections, divine and human.

"The particular purpose of this Feast," said the Cardinal, "is primarily to consider, love, and adore the Son of God as regards what He is in Himself, in His two natures, His divine Person, all His glories, His powers and offices, His benefactions and operations, but chiefly in what He is in Himself and in all His glories known and unknown. . . . And this solemnity is the more reasonable and Christian because if particular mysteries, such as the Incarnation, the Nativity, and others, have each their Feast, it is right also to allot a day of solemnity to Him Who is their principal, subject, and end; to the Word made flesh considered, not in the operation and accomplishment of His mystery, but in His permanent and eternal state as the Man-God."(2)

And Quesnel has written that "those who call this Solemnity the *Feast of the Glories of Jesus* do not give a sufficiently comprehensive and extensive idea of it,

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, Part IV, n. 111. The principle expressed at the end of the paragraph was dear to Bérulle and his school. Cf. Bremond: cf. *École française*, p. 29. It is to be found also several times in the *Royaume de Jésus* and other works by St. John.

(2). *Oeuvres*, Migne, col. 99 sq., 1070 sq. Bérulle assigns two other ends to this feast: "Secondly," he says, "we ought to be in contact with the Son of God Who is connected with us in His Person and in the Person of the Father to Whom He refers all that He is in His two essences, eternal and new, and generally all that appertains to him. . . . In the third place, we should unite ourselves to the sacred Humanity of Jesus, just as it is united to the Divine Nature in the unity of the Person of the Word, and thus bind and unite ourselves to the Divine Person subsisting in that Humanity."

#### DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

55-

for it includes His humiliations just as much as His glories, and is properly the particular feast of neither the one nor the other, but of Him Who is the adorable subject of it. In fact, Jesus Christ is the object of this feast to the same degree as He is the object of the adoration of the angels and saints in heaven, wherein we hope some day to celebrate the Feast of Jesus in its perfection, adoring therein not .

.. certain particular actions of Christ, but the whole Christ Who is consummated in God His Father and Who there consummates with Himself His complete human nature, His mysteries, perfections, and qualities."(1)

During his sojourn at the Oratory St. John specially loved this Solemnity. Thus he wrote in 1634 to a Benedictine nun of the Holy Trinity at Caen: "I give you for this month (January) and for your eternity the great Solemnity of Jesus that we are keeping on the 20th of this month. It is one of the three great Solemnities . that are continually kept in heaven. . . . And until you go to keep it in heaven, I want to celebrate it for you on earth, or rather I beg Jesus that He will honour Himself and glorify Himself in you in the way that He desires. I beseech Him to grant that all that has ever been, or is now, or ever shall be, in you . . . may give homage and glory to all that is in Him, in His body, in His holy soul, in His divinity, in His humanity, and in His temporal and His eternal life."(2)

And when he left the Oratory he did not renounce the Feast of Jesus; he had it celebrated in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary with the Mass and Office written by Cardinal de Bérulle. He only abandoned it

(1). Quoted by Bremond, *École française*, p. 78.

(2) . *Oeuvres complètes*. XI. p. 22..

56 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

in 1672, when he instituted the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus.(1)

### **The mysteries of Jesus.**

But he did not stop short at honouring Jesus in His perfections considered as a whole; Jesus. he strove to give a particular cult to each of the mysteries of His life, and he believed he was obliged to this for various reasons that he sets out in *Le Royaume de Jésus*. In particular he calls to mind the example of the Heavenly Father continually occupied in contemplating and loving Jesus in Himself and in all his states and mysteries, and the authority of the Church which constantly brings these mysteries to our notice, and also the honour given to God by each of them, as well as their own intrinsic excellence. "We have," he says, «a very special obligation of honouring all that is in Jesus, for all greatness deserves honour, and infinite greatness deserves infinite honour. But Jesus is the greatest of the great, He is greatness itself: an infinite and incomprehensible greatness. And everything in His divinity and His humanity, all His states and mysteries, and the smallest things that happen in connection with Him have a greatness and an infinite dignity of their own and comprehend an infinity of marvels: for that reason they merit infinite honour and glory.» (2)

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* the Saint indicates the order to be followed in honouring every year all the mysteries of the life of Jesus in the closest possible conformity with the order followed in the liturgical year of the Church. He omits none of them and, after enumerating them all, he adds by way of conclusion: "Thus we should leave nothing in Jesus to which we do not render

(1). *Oeuvres complètes*, XI, p. 591.

(2). *Oeuvres complètes*, I, p. 313 sq.

## **DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD**

57 -

some particular honour. In this way we should consider and honour Him everywhere, at all times, and in all things."(1)

But there were certain mysteries for which he had a marked preference because of the love

shown to us therein by Jesus and the spirit of grace contained in them, and by which we must profit if we would perfect the Christian life within us. These mysteries were the Holy Childhood, the Passion, the Eucharist, and the Priesthood.

### **The Holy Childhood and the Passion.**

What impressed him most in the Holy Childhood was the abasement of the Incarnate Word and the beautiful virtues of simplicity, humility, gentleness, innocence, and obedience of which He gives us so many admirable examples in this mystery. St. John considered this state the apex of wisdom and of Christian perfection, and he spared no pains to capture its spirit and to communicate it to his disciples. And not content with honouring the Holy Childhood from Christmas to the Purification, he also consecrated the Monday of every week to it.(2)

The Passion is a mystery of humiliation, suffering, and death, and has ever held a prominent position in

(1). *OEuvres complètes*, I, p. 316 sq.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, I, pp. 335, 405, 423; III, pp. 325, 455. This is the collect of the Office of the Holy Childhood: "Domine Jesu, qui non solum homo, sed etiam infans pro nobis fieri dignatus es: da nobis, quaesumus, hunc humillimum exinanitionis tuae statum summe venerari, sapientissimo Infantiae tuae spiritu repleri, ac divinam ejus innocentiam, simplicitatem, atque puritatem, mansuetudinem, humilitatem, obedientiam, charitatemque perfecte imitari; ut quasi modo geniti infantes, sine dolo ac malitia lac concupiscamus, mites et humiles corde fieri a te discamus et, sicut parvuli coram te effecti, te parvulum sequamur in terris, te magnum glorificemus in caelis. Qui vivis et regnas.

58 -

### **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

Christian piety. Fully entering into the spirit of the Church, St. John set apart Friday in honour of this great mystery, and he strove to draw thence, along with a love of the cross, a spirit of death to sin and to the old man, so as to participate more and more abundantly in the life of the Risen Christ.(1)

### **The Eucharist and the Priesthood**

The Eucharist is the very centre of the Christian life, and procures for us the sweet consolation of rejoicing in the presence of the Incarnate Word and of nourishing ourselves with His Body and Blood. To It St. John devoted the Thursday of each week, and he found in It both a lesson on sacrifice which led him to immolate himself generously for the glory of God and a lesson on charity for his neighbour. In fact, he applied to this mystery of love the words in which our Divine Master so strongly recommends this virtue: *Hoc est praeceptum meum ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos.* (2)

As for the Priesthood, every one knows in what esteem it was held by Cardinal de Bérulle. "Of all the qualities and distinctions that the Son of God acquired in our nature," says Bourgoing, "the highest and the most marked is the dignity of sovereign priest. . . . Now that union and fidelity to the Person of Jesus that was always so marked in his faithful servant (Pierre de Bérulle) also united him to the unction of His sovereign Priesthood, as was shown by the expressions and lofty thoughts that he showed forth in various treatises, in his whole life, and by establishing in His Church a Congregation of priests whose principal aim was to make themselves worthy priests of Jesus Christ, to

(1). *OEuvres complètes*, I, 318, 406, 430; III, 335, 391 sq.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, I, 318, 319, 427; III, 332, 410.

adore His Priesthood, to honour and to augment the dignity of the priesthood and to carry out its duties in a holy fashion." (1) And on this point, as on so many others, St. John entered fully into the views of his master, and it was to labour more efficaciously for the improvement or the advancement of the priesthood that he founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and instituted a feast in honour of the Priesthood of Christ and of all holy priests and levites.

We will see later, when treating of prayer, what precisely the Saint invites us to consider and to honour in the mysteries of the Incarnate Word. For the moment we may merely note that, following Bérulle and his school, he exhorts us chiefly to consider the *interior* of the various mysteries, and by that he means «the virtue, the power, and the particular grace that resides in the mystery and that is proper and peculiar to it, each mystery having its virtue and its proper and peculiar grace; and also the thoughts and intentions, the interior affections, sentiments, dispositions and occupations with which it was carried out. » (2)

## B. DEVOTION TO THE HEART OF JESUS

While he was still at the Oratory it does not seem that St. John rendered any particular cult to the Heart of Jesus. But possibly he felt drawn to it, for *Le Royaume de Jésus* was pervaded with that spirit of confidence and love that characterises devotion to the Sacred Heart. But the devotion itself, as the Saint later conceived

(1). *OEuvres de Bérulle*, Migne, col. 103-104.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, I, p. 324.

60-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

ceived it, does not appear in it, though we can certainly say that it is to be found there in germ. (1)

### Devotion to the Heart of Jesus.

The older biographies of St. John are unanimous in telling us that what attracted his attention to this devotion about the year 1643 was the reading of the works of St. Gertrude, St. Mechtilde, St. Teresa and certain other holy people, and this assertion agrees with what we learn from the Saint's own writings. (2) But it is obvious that these external influences did but second a special attraction of grace for, as Pius X states in the decree of the Saint's beatification, it was not without divine inspiration (*non sine aliquo divino afflatu*) that he first thought of rendering public worship to the Sacred Hearts?

However that may be, when he founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1643 he dedicated it to the Sacred Hearts and he stated in *Le Coeur Admirable* that "the chief aim for which it has been established is to honour specially that most august Heart which it looks

(1). In *Le Royaume de Jésus* St. John certainly tells us that Jesus is all love, but he never thinks of that love in its relations with the heart of flesh. He but rarely speaks of the latter. It is true that in one passage (*OEuvres complètes*, I, p. 320) he tells us that this heart merits a particular cult, but he is considering it in itself and not in relation to love. And so we see that the synthesis of the elements constituting the object of devotion to the Sacred Heart was not formed in the Saint's mind when he published *Le Royaume de Jésus*; that did not come till later.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VIII, p. 411 sq.; VII, p. 374 sq.

(3). Père Ange Le Doré has tried to prove that St. John received in 1641 the formal mission of establishing the public cult of the Sacred Hearts, through the instrumentality of Marie des Vallées. But this view, which is a novel one, does not seem to us to be well founded, and we have said why in our book



*Marie des Vallées et le culte public du Coeur de Jésus.* It is not impossible that the Saint himself received this mission by way of revelation, but his earliest biographers say nothing of this.

## DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

61 -

upon and respects as its first and principal patron, and as the rule and example that it offers to its children that they may study to conform the sentiments and affections of their hearts to it." (1) To the Sacred Hearts the Saint also dedicated the Order of Our Lady to Charity and all the associations that he subsequently founded; and so that these divine Hearts should be given the adoration that is due to them he instituted in honour of the Heart of Mary (1643) and in honour of the Heart of Jesus (1672) a special feast, with proper Mass and Office, which he caused to be kept in his institutes as a double of the first class with octave. Moreover, he strove, not without success, to propagate them outside. Hence came the title of *Originator of public worship of the Sacred Hearts* conferred on him by Leo XIII, (2) and those of *Doctor* and *Apostle* of this same cult given to him by Pius X. (3)

There have been many discussions on devotion to the Heart of Jesus as conceived by our Saint, and we have

(1). *Oeuvres complètes*, VII, p. 411. It is known that the Saint instead of saying, as we do now, "the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary," liked to say, "The Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary," which expression is now never used. On the subject of this expression, cf. *Oeuvres complètes*, VI, p. 88 sq.

(2). "Auctor cultus liturgici Sacrorum Cordium. Jesu et Mariae." Decree on the heroicity of his virtues.

(3). "Verum enim vero ad Joannis in Ecclesiam merita cumulus accessit, quum ipse singulari erga sacratissima Jesu et Mariae corda flagrans amore, de liturgico eis cultu praestando non sine aliquo divino afflatu primus cogitavit. Cujus ideo suavissimae religionis tum *Pater* existimandus est, quippe qui usque ab instituta sacerdotum Congregatione solemnia sacrorum eorumdem cordium inter suos filios celebranda curavit; tum *Doctor*, nam propria officia et missam in eorum honorem composuit; tum denique *Apostolus*, toto enim est pectore nisus, ut saluberrimus ipsorum cultus in quemcumque locum evulgaretur." Decree of Beatification. On the significance of this Decree, see my book: *Le B. Jean Eudes et le culte public du Coeur de Jésus*, pp. 259 sq.

62-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

dealt with the question several times. ((1)) It would be useless to return to these discussions here; it will be sufficient to set out the Saint's teaching as it is to be found in his books and his Offices, for these Offices agree entirely with his theory of the devotion.

### The theology of this devotion.

St. John was the first theologian to treat of the proper object of the devotion, and in doing so he could not fall back on any decision by the Church. In order to resolve the question he studied the various meanings that Holy Scripture gives to the word *Heart*. "This word *Heart*," he writes, "has several meanings in Scripture: (1) It means that material and corporal heart that we bear in our breast; (2) It is used to signify the memory; (3) It denotes the understanding by which we make holy meditation; (4) It expresses the free will of the superior and reasonable part of the soul, which is the noblest of its powers, the root of good or evil; (5) It refers to that supreme part of the soul that theologians call the highest point of the soul; (6) It sometimes means the whole interior of man; (7) It signifies the Holy Ghost Who is the heart of the Father and the Son, which they wish to give us as our spirit and our heart; (8) The Son of God is called the Heart of the Eternal Father." ((2))

The Saint did not ignore any of these meanings, but on the contrary tried to elaborate a theory embracing them all. For this purpose He distinguished three Hearts in Jesus, His divine Heart, His spiritual Heart and His corporal Heart, but he hastened to add that

(1). See my introduction to *Le Coeur Admirable, OEuvres complètes*, VI, my book just named above, and my brochure: *St. Jean Eudes et la dévotion au Sacré-Coeur, réponse au R. P. Auguste Hamon, S.J.*

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VI, pp. 33 sq.

## DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

63-

these three hearts make but one in the Man-God, "because, since His divine heart is the soul, the heart and the life of both His spiritual and His corporal heart, it establishes them in so perfect a unity with Him that these three hearts are but one absolutely single heart that is filled with *infinite love for the Holy Trinity and inconceivable charity for mankind.*" ( 1 )

The divine Heart of the Saviour is His increased love, i.e. the essential love that He has in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost; but sometimes the Saint means by this phrase the *notional* love with which the Father and the Son produce the Holy Ghost, or the *personal* love which is the Holy Ghost Himself.(2)

The corporal Heart is the Heart of flesh which St. John considers as not merely the symbol,<sup>3</sup> but also the organ of sensible love and the other passions.

But the spiritual Heart of the Man-God is, according to St. John, the superior part of His soul, which includes the memory, intellect, and will; but he at once adds, in speaking of devotion to the Heart of Mary:

"Above all (under the title 'Heart of Mary) we intend and desire to revere and honour primarily and principally that faculty and capacity of loving, both natural and supernatural, possessed by this Mother of Love,

(1). These words in italics clearly show that the object of our Saint's devotion is love.

(2). In this connection, M. Baruteil says in his *Genèse du culte du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* (p. 99) that, "Père Eudes, when precisely defining the object of his devotion, attained to a view-point worthy of a great mystic, and especially of a great theologian, scrutinising in the light of the Holy Spirit the unfathomable mysteries of charity in God, in the Trinity, and especially in the Heart of the Son of God, both as God and as man."

(3). According to St. John the Heart of flesh is the symbol of the spiritual Heart and of the divine Heart of the Man-God in a twofold respect; viz. both as the principle of life and as the principle of love. Cf. *Le Coeur Admirable, Bk. I, ch. 111 and 1V.*

64 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

and entirely used by her for loving God and her fellows, or rather all the love and charity of the Mother of the Saviour in regard to God and ourselves. . . . For, *while the heart represents the whole interior, yet it chiefly signifies love. . . . And so it is this incomparable love and ineffable charity that we specially regard and revere* in our Most Honoured Lady and our very dear Mother. It is this that we *principally* mean by her most holy Heart, and it is under this beautiful aspect and under this glorious title of MATER PULCHRAE DILECTIONIS, MOTHER OF LOVE AND OF CHARITY, that we wish singularly to honour and to praise this most lovable Virgin and admirable Mother.-

And then, as though he feared lest he might not have been understood, he adds a little later: "It is this *love, the miracle of divine loves, this charity, the most wonderful manifestation of holy charity, this virginal heart filled and running over with such love, such charity,* that we intend to honour, to

praise and to exalt in every way that we possibly can."

He continues in these terms: "In the most honourable and holy Virgin Mother of Jesus we desire to honour not merely some of her mysteries or some of her actions . . . not merely some of her qualities . . . not even simply her most worthy person(1); but *Primarily and principally* to honour in her the source and origin of the holiness and dignity of all her mysteries, actions and qualities, and even of her person, to wit, *her love and charity*, since, according to all the holy (1). We believe that here the Saint opposes his devotion to that of Cardinal de Bérulle which had as its object the Holy Virgin considered in all her perfections. Bérulle had, in fact, established a Feast of Mary corresponding to the Feast of Jesus.

## DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

65-

doctors, love and charity are the measure of merit and of all holiness."(1)

It is obvious that these principles are valid for devotion to the Heart of Jesus just as much as for devotion to the Heart of Mary; and so there is no possible doubt about our Saint's views. Although, in a wide sense, he extended devotion to the Sacred Heart to the whole interior life of the Saviour, what he *primarily and Principally* intended by the phrase "Heart of Jesus" was its love, all that love: divine, spiritual and sensible, of which His fleshly heart was the seat; His love for His Father, for His most holy Mother, and for us. And so for him the Feast of the Heart of Jesus was the feast of charity, as is plainly shown by the more important passages in the Mass and Office such as the invitatory, the collect, the introit, the Gospel, the hymns, versicles and antiphons. Notable in this respect is this antiphon from the First Vespers: *Cor meum caritas est: qui manet in caritate in Corde meo manet et Cor meum manet in eo*. And in the Office, in *Le Coeur admirable*, in his *Magnificat*, and in the picture of Our Lady of Hearts, St. John always presents the Heart of Jesus as *a furnace of love*, and on this point there is no difference between his devotion and that of Paray.(2)

### Comparison with the oratorian Feast.

And thus the Feast instituted by him is quite distinct from the Feast of Jesus instituted by Cardinal de Bérulle, the object of which was not the love of Jesus, but the actual Person of the Incarnate (1) *OEuvres complètes*, VIII, pp. 431-435. The same doctrine is expressed in the same terms on p. 132.

(2). See my book, *Le B. Jean Eudes et le culte public du Coeur de Jésus*, pp. 53 sq., 267 sq., 273 sq.; and on *La dévotion au Coeur de Marie*, pp. 88 sq., 523-524.

66-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Word considered in His two-fold nature and in all His perfections, divine and human. No doubt there are characteristics common to both Feasts, and in fact St. John introduced into his devotion to the Sacred Heart the lofty views of Bérulle on the life of Jesus within us.(1) Furthermore, we might say of both that their object is all that is great and holy in the other feasts, for the Person and the Heart are, each of them, the prime agent of all the mysteries of the Incarnate Word, but by different titles and in different ways, just as the person and the foot are, each of them, the prime agent of walking, but by different titles and in a different way. But despite these common characteristics the two feasts are none the less distinct in their subject and in their spirit, and therefore M. Bremond is wrong when, in his *Histoire du Sentiment religieux*, he tries to link St. John's feast with that of Cardinal de Bérulle by maintaining that the subject of the former is not the Heart as a furnace of love (as is the case with the devotion at Paray), but what he calls the Heart-Person.(2) For the rest, the eminent academician

seems himself to have realised that his thesis is somewhat

(1). Moreover those views are always found in the Saint's devotion to the incarnate Word, whatever be its special subject; and that is natural since, whatever be the mystery in which He is considered, Jesus is always our Head, and our life is always a participation and a prolongation of His.

(2). Vol. III, pp. 645 sq. In order to support his thesis M. Bremond brings forward among other arguments the preoccupation of Bérulle and his disciples with the "interior" significance of the various mysteries, from which, according to him, it is but a step to the cult of the Sacred Heart. But we, on the contrary, believe that there is a very considerable distance between the two, and that several stages have to be traversed if that gap is to be crossed. It would, in fact, be necessary (a) to pass from the "interior" to love; (b) to consider love in itself, abstracting from every particular mystery; (c) to envisage it in relation to the Heart of flesh, which M. Bremond is wrong in neglecting.

## **DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD**

67 -

exaggerated, for, referring to St. John, he wrote to us on March 31, 1919: "Perhaps I Bérullise' him too much.',"

### **C. PURE LOVE**

The feelings that we must have for Jesus Christ are those that, taken together, go to make up the complete religion of the creature in regard to his Creator. In the front rank must be adoration which is due from man by reason of his own nothingness and the absolute sovereignty of God. And to adoration must be added praise, thanksgiving, reparation, and especially confidence and love. Indeed, what struck St. John most forcibly in the life and mysteries of the Incarnate Word (even while the Saint was still at the Oratory) was not His greatness, but the love and the tender pity that He displays towards us. And therefore, in *Le Royaume de Jesus*, after summing up the considerations that oblige us to employ our whole life in the service of Jesus, he stresses the reflection that the Divine Master has given us all that He has and all that He is.

#### **Reasons for loving Jesus.**

"He has given us," he writes, "His Father to be our Father, making us children of the very Father of Whom He is the Son. He has given us His Holy Spirit to be our own spirit, and to teach, rule, and conduct us in all things. He has given us His holy Mother to be our Mother; He has given us His angels and saints to protect us and to intercede for us; and He has given us everything else in heaven and on earth for our use and our needs. In His Incarnation He has given us His own Person; He has given us His whole

68-

### **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

life, for every moment of it He employed for us, so that He never had a thought, said a word, or performed an action, even the least, that He did not consecrate to our salvation. And finally, He has given us in the Holy Eucharist His Body and Blood, and with these His soul and His divinity together with all the infinite marvels and treasures to be found in His divinity and His humanity; and all this He gives us every day, or at least as often as we choose to prepare ourselves to receive Him."(1)

And in *Le Coeur admirable* he adds: "But, besides that, Jesus gives us His most lovable Heart, which is the principle and origin of all His other gifts. For it was His divine Heart that made Him go forth from His Father's bosom and come upon earth to give us all these graces; and it was His Heart, humanly divine and divinely human, that merited and acquired them for us by all the sorrows and anguish that He bore while He was in this world." (2)

And thence the Saint concluded that we in our turn are bound to give and to consecrate entirely to Jesus all the undertakings and actions of our lives. His *Royaume de Jésus* is full of the thought that Jesus is all love for us and that in return we must be filled with love for Him. In the fourth part of it there is a long chapter in which the author sets out with joy all the perfections of the love of Jesus for us and draws from his heart a magnificent chant of love for the divine Master.(3)

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, I, n. 111.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VIII, p. 311.

(3) In the eighteenth century this chapter was applied to devotion to the Sacred Heart. In actual fact we believe it impossible to find a more beautiful commentary on Our Lord's words to St. Margaret Mary. "Behold the Heart which has so loved men."

## DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

69-

It has been remarked that, in concentrating itself on Jesus, love of God has acquired a tenderness unknown before(1); and *Le Royaume de Jésus* is a manifest proof of this. In it love of God overflows with a vivacity, a delicacy, an abandon, and an intimacy that carries one away, and this exquisite tenderness is revealed in the very terms that the Saint uses in connection with the Saviour. Not only does he never tire of repeating the name of his Well-Beloved (after the example of St. Paul), but when he directly addresses Him the most affectionate phrases flow spontaneously from his heart, and he calls Him his "dearest, best, most amiable, most desirable, most benign Jesus," while in another passage he hails Him as 'the desired of my soul, my life, my all, king of my heart, my sweet love,' etc. We would never finish if we were to enumerate all the phrases in which St. John expresses his tender love for the Divine Master.

### How to show this love.

But true love does not stop short at affection, it translates itself into acts; if we would show Jesus that we love Him we must take pains to do what He expects of us; and it is not difficult to find out what that is. Jesus asks us to observe the evangelic precepts, and counsels, to fulfil the duties of our state, to obey those who are charged with our guidance, and to submit ourselves to the dispositions of Divine Providence which are manifested by the events, both great and small, with which our lives are mingled. In that programme we will find plenty to which to attend, but St. John would have us go further and place our whole being at the service of the Divine Master, spending

(1). Dalgairus: *Holy Communion*, ch. 111.

70-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

ourselves, body and soul, in the interests of His glory and the salvation of our brethren. With Bérulle and his followers, he considers that we have pledged ourselves to this by our baptism; for, in receiving that sacrament, 'We profess,' he says, 'servitude in regard to Jesus and to all His members. . . . And, in consequence of that profession, all Christians have nothing of themselves, any more than have slaves, and have no right to make any use of themselves, either of the members of their bodies, or of the powers of their souls, their lives, their time, or of the temporal goods they may possess, save only for Jesus Christ and for His members, who are all those who believe in Him.'(1)

But the value of our works does not depend solely on their nature, it derives also from the motives for which we act. When it is charity and charity only that moves us the value of what we do for God is markedly enhanced, and that is why St. John exhorts us not only to serve Christ but also to do it with the sole object of pleasing Him, through pure love of Him, and without any motive of self-interest. "Of all the works of a truly Christian soul," he wrote, "the noblest, the most holy, the loftiest, and that which God chiefly demands of us, is the exercise of pure divine love. That is why we should take great

care in all our pious works and all our acts to protest to Our Lord that we wish to do them, not through fear of Hell, nor for the reward of Paradise, not for merit, nor for our own satisfaction and consolation, but for love of Him, for His pleasure, for His glory alone and for His most pure love."

And the Saint never ceases to urge his readers on to this pure love, which is why *Le Royaume de Jésus* is

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxxviii.

## DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

71-

truly, as has been said, "the manual of perfect charity." (1) Indeed, the same might be said of the *Manuel de piété* and of the *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*. In this respect the Saint's teaching is summed up in the phrase spoken by Our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena: "My child, think of me, and I will think of you.--- The Saint presses us to make our own this invitation by the Divine Master, and to do everything with the sole object of pleasing Him, abandoning the care of all our interests to Him. (2) Moreover, that is the best means of endowing our actions with all the perfection of which they are capable, and consequently of laying by treasure for Paradise. (3)

It was in this way that St. John thought of devotion to the Word Incarnate from 1637 onwards, and when later his piety turned specially to the Heart of Jesus he found nothing to change in it. His devotion was already so impregnated with confidence and love that, if it could grow in intensity, it certainly had no need to take a new direction; and when explaining the practice of devotion to the Heart of Jesus as conceived by the Saint, P&Pères Dauphin and Le Doré depended on *Le Royaume de Jésus* as much as, if not more than, on *Le Cœur admirable* and the Office of the Sacred Heart.

(1). The Rennes Edition, 1869, avant-Propos.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxx.

(3). We see thereby that the Saint's spirituality is strictly theocentric, in the sense that it is disinterested and directed entirely to the glory of God. On this subject see what he says in *Le Royaume de Jésus* on the end of man, prayer, the Christian virtues, confession, indulgences, aridities, etc.

## 72- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

### D. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN (The Cult of Jesus in Mary)

As is well known, St. John threw himself with ardour into propagating the cult of the Most Holy Virgin, and it would require a volume to study in detail his apostolate and doctrine concerning devotion to her. Here we can but sketchily indicate the way in which he thought of this devotion.

We have said that he was already completely devoted to the Blessed Virgin when he first entered the Oratory; but in the school of Bérulle his devotion became, if not more ardent, at least more doctrinal and more profound through being governed by his teacher's principles. And in fact his devotion to Mary is profoundly "Berullian." (1)

(1). In his study, *La dévotion à la Vierge au commencement du XVIIe siècle*, Charles Flachaire ranged St. John and M. Olier in a group apart, distinct from that of Bérulle; and in that he was certainly mistaken. Indeed, he spoke of them in strange terms. Read his own words: "The third current, derived from the preceding, took a very different direction. Those we encounter in it were *daily subject to visions, ecstasies and transports in God*. Marial piety with them was less a product of speculative mysticism than an experience lived through: it was *passionate, impetuous, tormented*. To understand it we have to know something of their ardent lives, and as regards M. Olier this is made possible for us by his *Mémoires*, which are still unpublished, and by the unpublished fragments of his writings on the Virgin. And Père Eudes, in some respects a disciple of M. Olier, made himself by unwearying propaganda the

apostle of a special cult: *that of 'the Holy Heart of Mary,' which is subject to the twofold Peril of materialisation and of being parcelled out into details in practice.*" Loc. cit., p. 7.

And elsewhere he writes: "The analysis we have just made of Sulpician piety and of devotion to the Heart of Mary leads us to guess at, if it does not demonstrate, the *dangers* and *extravagances* (!) which may result from the purest intentions. . . . M. Olier did not fear to indulge in theological adventures, and *Père Eudes, without expressly wishing it, ran the risk of entangling himself in pious materialisations.*

*Speculative hardihood and mystical transports need temperaments of solid good sense.* It is of importance that the privileges of the Virgin, the power of her intercession, and the nature of the bond uniting her to her servants should be examined *by calmer minds.*" Pp. 141-142.

And further on we find this: «It should be behind closed doors that contemplatives abandon themselves to *the spirit of a very infectious sentimentality and unusually sweet affection, to excesses of imprudently hyperbolic glorifications, and to the fever of waves of 'tenderness.'* . . . Several masters of the spiritual life amongst the Jesuits, then M. Olier, *Père Eudes*, and very many others gave themselves up *with far too little reserve to a devout dream; they flattered rather than honoured Mary; they loved and celebrated her less as a patron and queen than as a mother and a mystical spouse.* They entered upon this cult with the ardour of their feelings turned towards the invisible, but not destroy with the personal preferences peculiar to their theology, and the particular sentiments of the cherished devotions; they created, they overloaded, and they unwearyingly adorned with prodig complaisance a symbol which summed up all their piety.» Pp. 155-157.

It is truly surprising to see a Catholic write in these terms of two celebrated men universally esteemed, one of whom was beatified while de Flachaire was alive (though he seems ignorant of the fact), and was canonised by Pius XI. As for the cult of the Heart of Mary, which seems so dangerous to Flachaire, everyone knows that it has long been approved by the Church. Flachaire reproaches St. John with loving and honouring Mary less as a *queen* than as a *mother* or as a *spouse*. But what is wrong with that? Is Mary not the mother of all the faithful? Has she not a right to receive from us all the tenderest and most delicate marks of love? Following the example of many saints, St. John chose Mary as his spouse and drew up a contract of alliance with her which is definitely dated 1668. It is to be found in Vol. XII of the *OEuvres complètes*. Has Flachaire taken the trouble to read it? If so, he completely failed to understand it. M. Bremond tells us (IX, p. 248) that when Flachaire wrote his thesis «he was little familiar with really mystical matters.» In that case perhaps he would have done better not to write of things that he did not understand, or to write of them only with that reserve and modesty that is called for in such a case.

## DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

73 -

It was in *Le Royaume de Jésus* that the Saint most precisely and succinctly set out the principles that should govern devotion to Mary as he conceived it. With Cardinal de Bérulle he taught first of all that we must not separate Jesus and Mary, but unite them in our devotions: "Jesus and Mary," he said, --are so closely connected that he who sees Jesus sees Mary,

74 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

he who loves Jesus loves Mary, he who has devotion to Jesus has devotion to Mary. Jesus and Mary are the two chief foundations of the Christian religion, the two sources of all our blessings, the two subjects of our devotion, and the two to whom we must look in all our actions and devotions." (1)

Several times in his works the Saint set himself to display clearly the union of Jesus and Mary in the work of salvation. In *L'Enfance admirable* he rightly affirms that the Son and the Mother were the subject of one and the same predestination, since it is only as Son of Mary that Jesus has His place in the eternal designs of God .(2)

### **Inseparable union of Jesus and Mary.**

In other writings, and especially in *Le Coeur admirable*, he bases his argument on the close union and perfect conformity of thought and feeling which always existed between Jesus and His divine Mother, and in giving expression to the perfection of this union he loved to repeat that Jesus and Mary always had but one mind, one will, one heart: "Although the Heart of Jesus," he wrote, "is distinct from that of Mary and surpasses it infinitely in excellence and holiness, yet God has so closely united these two Hearts that it may be truly said that they are but one Heart since they are always animated by the same spirit and filled with the same sentiments and affections. If St. Bernard says that he has but one heart with

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xi. The Saint expressed the same ideas in this anthem which he used for commemorating the Sacred Hearts: *Benedictum sit Cor amantissimum Jesu et Mariae, fons vivus benedictionis, fornax amoris, thronus divinae voluntatis, sanctuarium divinitatis.*

(2). *OEuvres Complètes*, V, p. 77.

### **DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD**

75-

Jesus (*Bene mihi est, cor unum cum Jesu habeo*), and if he says of the earliest Christians that they had but one heart and one soul by reason of the intimate union existing between them, how much more can we say that Jesus and Mary have but one soul and one Heart through the most perfect union and conformity of spirit, of will and of feeling which exists between such a Son and such a Mother!"(1)

The object of the union of Jesus and Mary is the glory of God and the salvation of the world. Scripture and Tradition rival each other in proclaiming this. St. John had studied both, and he delighted in showing the part, secondary, it is true, but none the less real, taken by the Holy Virgin in the work of redemption and the role played by her in the distribution of grace. He summed up his teaching on this point by saying, as we have just seen, that Jesus and Mary are "the two chief foundations of the Christian religion, the two sources of all our blessings,- and from this he concluded that they must be "the two subjects of our devotion and the two to whom we must look in all our actions and devotions."

It goes without saying that he added the force of example to that of precept. Sometimes he united the Son and the Mother in the same prayer, and we have an example of that in the salutation to the Sacred Hearts, *Ave Cor Sanctissimum*, which is addressed to the Heart of Jesus and to the Heart of Mary, though the praises rendered "conjointly" to one and the other have not the same significance.(2) And we know that when he established the Feast of the Heart of Mary in

(1). *OEuvres Complètes*, VIII, p. 129.

(2). *Oeuvres Complètes*, VIII, pp. 490-491.

76-

### **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

1672 he gave an important place therein to the Heart of Jesus.

At other times he added to the prayers he addressed to Jesus an analogous prayer addressed to Mary, and examples of this abound in *Le Royaume de Jésus*.



Finally he recommended that all the mysteries of the Blessed Virgin should be honoured in the same way as those of Jesus, due proportion being, of course, preserved. And so he wrote litanies, and established a Feast, in honour of the sacred childhood of Mary, which corresponded to the litanies and Feast of the Sacred Childhood of Jesus; and similarly he wrote litanies, an Office and a Mass in honour of each of the Sacred Hearts (of Jesus and Mary), and encouraged a cult to the Name of each.

### **To honour Mary Is to honour her Divine Son**

Another principle stressed by our Saint was that we ought to honour Jesus in Mary and Mary in Jesus. God asks of us and as she desires," he wrote, «we must look on and adore her Son in her and see and adore therein none but Him. For that is how she wishes to be honoured since, of herself and by herself, she is nothing, but her Son Jesus is everything in her: He is her being, her life, her holiness, her glory, her power and her greatness." (1)

And in truth this is what has always been done, at least implicitly, for the honours given by Christians to Mary are based upon her dignity as Mother of God and thence they ascend even to her Son. This is explained by St. John with his customary lucidity in his *Coeur admirable*: "Come," he says, speaking of the

(1) *Royaume de Jésus*, loc. cit.

## **DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD**

77 -

Heart of Mary, "Come and lose yourselves in the gentle waters of this stream of peace, this torrent of delights. . . . Hasten, why do you delay? Why do you put it off for a single moment? Is it not that you fear to wrong thereby the unparalleled goodness of the most adorable Heart of Jesus, your God and your Redeemer, if you address yourselves to the charity of the Heart of Mary? But do you not know that Mary is nothing and has nothing and can do nothing save from Jesus and by Jesus and in Jesus, and that it is Jesus who is all, who can do all, and who does everything in her? Do you not know that it is Jesus who has made the Heart of Mary what it is, and who desired to make it a 'fountain of light, of consolation and of all sorts of graces for all those who have recourse to it in their necessities? And do you not know that not only is Jesus resting and dwelling continually in the Heart of Mary, but that He is Himself the Heart of Mary, and that therefore to come to the Heart of Mary is to come to Jesus, to honour the Heart of Mary is to honour Jesus, and to invoke the Heart of Mary is to invoke Jesus? " (1)

None the less he advised that we should *explicitly* refer to the Son the homage offered to the Mother, and so we get those beautiful words that form the invitatory of his Office of the Heart of Mary: *Jesum in Corde Mariae regnantem, venite adoremus*.

A last principle inculcated by St. John was that we ought to model ourselves on Jesus in the practice of devotion to Mary. "As we have to imitate the virtues and foster within us the sentiments of Jesus, we must also imitate and foster the feelings of love, piety and

(1). *Œuvres complètes*, VI, P. 189.

78 -

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

devotion that He cultivated in regard to His blessed Mother. And He loved and honoured her most perfectly, choosing her for His Mother, giving Himself to her as her Son, taking from her a new being and a new life, desiring to be thus connected with her, subjecting Himself to her, and externally being guided by her during His Childhood and His hidden life, establishing her as Queen of heaven and earth, glorifying her and making her be glorified by all the world."

And so, the Saint continues, we must "acknowledge and honour Mary as the Mother of our God, and consequently as our own Mother and Sovereign. We must thank her for all the love, the glory and the services which she has rendered to her Son Our Lord Jesus Christ, and, referring all our being and our life to her (after God), put ourselves in dependence upon her and beseech her to take charge of all that concerns us. And we must subject ourselves to her as slaves, begging her to take full command of us as of something that is entirely her own, to dispose of us as she pleases for the glory of her Son, to deign to make use of all our actions for honouring those of her Son, and to associate us with all the love and all the praises she has ever given Him in the past and will render to Him through all eternity."(1)

And so we see that devotion to Mary, as thought of by St. John, goes very far. It implies a complete donation, an entire consecration, a constant subjecting, of our whole person to Mary and through her to Jesus, and consequently an assiduous application in honouring her, in serving her in all the details of our lives, in performing all our acts for her glory, in a word in living with her in the most intimate and constant union possible. It is

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, loc. cit.

## DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

79-

this point of view that produced the acts of consecration to Mary that are to be found so often in the Saint's writings, and in particular the noble words that end the salutation written by him in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary: *Tibi cor nostrum offerimus, donamus, consecramus; accipe et posside illud totum et purifica, et illumina et sanctifica ut in ipso vivas et regnes et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum.*

These principles are those of the French school, and -are to be found in one form or another in all the writings of that great school. They are the same as those that inspired Blessed Grignon de Montfort and which he made known to the faithful in his excellent *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge*.

We have already said that St. John, like the Church in its liturgy, calls upon us to honour every year the various mysteries of the life of the Most Holy Virgin, and it goes without saying that above all he would have us honour the inner spirit of these mysteries. Is not that the best way of grasping their real meaning and of so eventually being of but one mind, one heart, one soul with the Holy Virgin and her Divine Son, which is the object of every truly Christian life?

## Feast and Offices

### of Our Lady.

But for some mysteries our Saint had a special devotion, for instance the Immaculate Conception, the Holy Name of Mary, her holy Childhood, her glorious Annunciation, her joys, her sorrows, and especially her Heart. We have already seen that he consecrated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary the two Congregations as well as the confraternities founded by him, and that in them he had caused to be celebrated in honour of each of these Hearts a solemn

80-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Feast under the rite of a double of the first class with octave, and had himself composed the Mass and Office for them. To them he dedicated the chapels that he built at Coutances and Caen; and in his *Testament* he bequeathed these two Hearts to his spiritual children begging them to be faithful in celebrating their Feasts every year with all the devotion of which they were capable. In some respects he did more for the Heart of Mary than for the Heart of Jesus, since for a long time he gave it the first place in his apostolate, instituted its Feast as early as 1643 while that of the Heart of Jesus only dates from 1672, and it is with it that he is chiefly concerned in his writings.

We have elsewhere studied the subject of devotion to the Heart of Mary', and need not now go over that again. It will suffice here to say that in Mary, as in Jesus, the Saint distinguishes three Hearts that make but one: the divine, the spiritual, and the corporal.

Under the name of the Divine Heart of Mary St. John ordinarily means the Incarnate Word: *Jesum in Corde Mariae regnantem venite adoremus*. But sometimes he gives this name to the Holy Ghost or to the complete Trinity. And so it is that he ends the hymns of, her Office with the following doxology:

*O sacrosancta Trinitas,  
Aeterna vita cordium,  
Cordis Mariae sanctitas,  
In corde regnes omnium.*

(1). See the introduction to *Le Coeur admirable* and my book on *La dévotion au Coeur de Marie*, which is an historical and doctrinal study of the question.

81-

## DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

The corporal Heart of Mary, on the other hand, is her heart of flesh', and we have elsewhere remarked that in the devotion to the Heart of Mary the heart of flesh does not occupy so prominent a position as it does in devotion to the Heart of Jesus.(2)

As for the spiritual heart, we have already seen that in St. John's view it is the superior part of Mary's soul, which includes her intellect, memory, and will, but *primarily and Principally* her love and charity, her love for God and her charity for mankind. In his eyes

(1). Flachaire (loc. cit., p. 134) says that this symbol (the Heart of Mary) was too liable to call up concrete representations, and that this devotion "was soon to confirm the *law of materialisation* from which few cults are immune. Père Eudes," he adds, "foresaw the danger, but he was perhaps not always able to avoid it; for he dealt only rapidly with the sensible element and in his treatise of 1650 hardly mentioned the corporal heart. Nothing is more curious than the tenacity of certain contemporary Eudists in claiming for their founder the honour (or the responsibility) of having insisted on the cardiac organa itself. Undoubtedly Père Eudes distinguishes three hearts in Mary: « He corporeal heart which beats within her virginal breast, the spiritual heart which is the superior part of her soul, and her divine heart which is Jesus,' but he soon adds: 'Above all we mean and desire to honour and revere primarily and principally that faculty and capacity for loving, both natural and supernatural, which is in this Mother of love and which she entirely employs for loving God and mankind, or rather (we honour) all the love and all the charity that the Mother of our Saviour has for us.' And so it is the spiritual side that he stresses." But this is precisely what contemporary Eudists have always thought and loudly proclaimed; and if they have tried to show that in his devotion St. John did not ignore the heart of flesh it is because that has been denied and because a devotion to the Sacred Hearts in which the heart of flesh held no place would be conformable neither to the exigencies of human nature nor to the spirit of the Church. «In all the devotions or feasts that concern the Sacred Humanity of Christ," says Père de Galliffet very justly, "there is always a double subject, the one sensible and corporal, the other invisible and spiritual, and these are united together and honoured indivisibly, the spiritual object communicating its dignity to the corporal object. . . . But the corporal and sensible object has of itself that which always gives its name to the devotion." (*Excellence de la dévotion au Sacré-Coeur*, 1, ch. 1 V.)

(2). *La dévotion au Coeur de Marie*, p. 287.

82-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

the Heart of Mary is before all a furnace of love, and the chief fruit of devotion to this most holy Heart should be an increase of love for God and mankind. This the Saint repeated over and over again in his

books and in his Offices, and he even had a statue made, called *Notre-Dame des Coeurs*, ( 1 ) which showed the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary beneath the emblem of a furnace of love at which he and his priests sought to kindle torches with which to encircle the world in the fire of divine love.

## E. JESUS IN EVERYTHING

Devotion to the angels and saints is familiar to everyone, and in *Le Royaume de Jésus* the Saint recommended it in these terms:

"We ought to have devotion to all the saints and angels, especially to our own good angel and to the (1). A picture of this statue is to be seen at the beginning of Vol. VI of the *OEuvres complètes*, and in Le Doré's *Les Sacrés Coeurs et le V. Jean Eudes*, Vol. II. After describing this statue in his *Paray-le-Monial*, p. 226, n. i, Père Hamon, S.j., adds: «This statue was certainly constructed under the influence of the ideas of Père Eudes, and it is therefore his apostolate that it propagates. Did Père Eudes actually have it made? Père Lebrun answers affirmatively, without giving any proof. . . . He thinks that Père Eudes expressed in the third book of his *Coeur admirable* (*OEuvres complètes*, Vol. VI, p. 335) the ideas of which this statue is the symbol. But if we consider the context of the lines that he quotes, we have difficulty in agreeing with him." It is true that I never dreamed of proving that this statue was the work of Père Eudes, but the name it bears, the inscriptions that adorn and explain it, and the very subject itself, sufficiently proclaim the fact. And one of the Saint's opponents expressly states that -wherever he (Père Eudes) had any influence he caused to be set up and to be publicly sold statues and pictures of Our Lady of Hearts, as he called them- (quoted by Le Doré, loc. cit., II, p. 375). As for the passage in *Le Coeur admirable* referred to by Père Hamon, if the reader will turn to it we believe that, like me, he will find therein the ideas symbolised in the statue of Our Lady of Hearts.

## DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

83-

saint whose name we bear, also to the saints who conversed with Our Lord when He was upon earth, to the order of angels and saints to which we should be associated in heaven, and to the saints and angels who are protectors of the places wherein we dwell or through which we pass, and of the persons with whom our lot is cast. "

While preserving all due proportion, Père Eudes looked upon devotion to the saints in the same way as that in which he regarded devotion to the Blessed Virgin:

### How to honour the Saints.

"To honour the saints as they should be honoured," he says, we should adore Jesus in them; for He is everything in them: *omnia in omnibus*. He is their being, their life, their sanctity, their joy and their glory. We must thank Him for the glory and the praise that He renders Himself in them and by them, and thank Him the more for the graces He communicates to them, and by them communicates to us, for the interests of God should be dearer to us than our own. We must offer Him all the honour and love that His saints give Him, and pray Him to make us sharers in this same love and in all their other virtues.»

And he adds: "When we address the saints we must humble ourselves before them, esteeming ourselves most unworthy even to think of them, and unworthy to be thought of by them; we should thank them for the services and the glory they have given Our Lord, and should offer ourselves to them, begging them to offer us to Jesus and to ask Him to destroy within us everything that displeases Him, and to make us sharers in the graces He has given them. We should also ask

them to honour and love Him for us, and to give Him a hundredfold on our behalf all the love and glory that we ought to have given Him throughout our lives; and pray them to associate us in the homage and praises they render Him in heaven, and to make use of us in honouring and glorifying Him in every way they please."(1)

It need hardly be said that these principles also apply to relics of the saints, for Père Eudes had the greatest veneration for these. "We ought," he wrote, "to consider and honour relics of the saints as a portion of Jesus and part of His members, and should carry them with us in union with the love with which He bears all the saints of all eternity in His bosom and His Heart, thereby uniting us with the love and the praises rendered to Him by those saints whose relics we carry, and which will be rendered by them eternally.» (2)

### **Seeing Jesus in others**

When he treats of charity the Saint makes use of the same ideas, urging us to see and love Jesus in our neighbour. "Look upon your neighbour as . . . the temple of the living God, bearing in himself the image of the Most Holy Trinity and the character of Jesus Christ, for he is a portion of Christ, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh. Look upon him as he for whom Christ so laboured, so suffered, and gave His Blood and His life; and also look upon him as one whom Christ commends to you as though he were Christ Himself, assuring you that *what you do to the least of these*, i.e. of those that believe in Him, *He will consider it as done to Himself*.(3 ) If we weigh well the importance

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, III, n. xv.

(2). Ibid.

(3). Matt. xv, 40.

### **DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD**

85-

of these truths, what charity, what respect, what honour we will have for each other.» (1)

### **and In ourselves.**

And again it is Jesus that we should have in mind when we are concerned with our selves, whether in labouring for the acquisition of Christian virtues, or in giving our body the rest or the nourishment that it requires: "When you have to rest or to give your body food or refreshment, do it with this intention of considering your health, your life and your body not as merely your own but as being one of the members of Jesus, as Scripture tells us, and as something that belongs to Jesus: *Corpus autem Domino* (2) and of which you must in consequence take care, not for your own sake but for Jesus, in so far as it is necessary for His service; reminding yourself, like St. Gertrude, of Our Lord's saying that *what we do to the least thing that belongs to Him, we do to Himself*." ( 3 )

In actual fact, indeed, even creatures devoid of reason should lead us to love Jesus; for, as God, He created them, and, as man, He acquired for us, at the price of His Blood, that right of making use of them that we had lost through sin. They sing His glory "with all their being and all their natural power," and invite us to glorify Him with them. Let us make use of them with thankfulness and for the greater glory of Him who placed them at our service.

To sum up: St. John would have us see Jesus in everything and everywhere; in the natural world

and in the spiritual world, because He reigns in both the one and the other although in different ways; in death

(1) *Royaume de Jésus, II, n. xxxv.*

(2) 11 *Cor. xv, 13.*

(3). *Royaume de Jésus, II, n. xxxvi.*

86-

#### **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

wherein He exercises His sovereignty, in the particular judgment which shows forth His justice, in heaven which is the kingdom of His glory, in purgatory where He reveals both His justice and His mercy, and even in hell where He triumphs over His enemies in the most terrible manner.

In this way Jesus will truly be our "only aim," since we will only see persons and things as they stand in regard to Him. He will be our "all," since we will seek only Him and love only Him in everything, in accordance with that phrase of St. Paul's which St. John would have us make the rule of our lives: *Omnia in omnibus Christus.*

## CHAPTER III

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US (1)

Not only is Jesus the object of our religion, He is also that of our life, for everything of the Christian life that we possess comes from Him and is but the continuation and completion of His life in each one of us.(2) Now this

(1). On this question, see the *Regulae vitae christianae et sacerdotalis* (I, ch. 111), in addition to *Le Royaume de Jésus* which treats of it at length.

(2). "The French School," says M. Letourneau, "has the courage to study and to expound *the loftiest and the most beautiful of the doctrines of St. John and of St. Paul on the life of grace*. It in no way consents to whittle them down or to dissimulate regarding them under the pretext of accommodating them to the intellectual weakness of the mass of the faithful. On the contrary, it insists on putting them forward with the utmost plainness. It loves to contemplate first the marvels of *divine life* in the soul of Jesus, in His intellect, and His will, i.e. in His Heart; it exalts and glorifies in every possible way this *interior life* in the soul of Jesus. Then it delights in considering how this divine life of grace flows from the head into the members of the mystical body of Christ, and how the faithful, from St. John the Baptist onwards, reproduce in themselves the death and the life of Jesus. Its members are never more at home than when poring over the texts of St. John (the Evangelist) and St. Paul which set out this magnificent teaching: *In ipso vita erat; Ego veni ut vitam habeant et abundantius habeant; Ego sum vitis, vos palmites*. . . . Would it not be a calamity for us to be deprived of these superb commentaries, and is it not greatly to our advantage to be nourished on such substantial doctrines? Would it not be deplorable to see even priests neglecting to make the effort necessary to permeate themselves with them? Nor can we say that similar lessons could easily be learnt elsewhere: that is not so. And so St. Teresa, who so admirably described the marvels of divine love, studied this teaching of St. Paul's in the same way as did our Fathers of the seventeenth century." (*L'École française du XVIIe siècle*, pp. 9-10. From *Le Recrutement sacerdotal*, Sept. 1911)

88-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

way of looking at the Christian life was of capital importance in the eyes of our Saint, indeed he wrote an entire book, *Le Royaume de Jésus*, to bring it into prominence and to teach pious souls to reduce it to practice in their daily lives. He himself tells us as much in the Preface of this book:

**The reign  
of Christ with us.**

"The name I have given to this book indicates its two subjects, namely *The Life and the Kingdom of Jesus in Christian*

Souls. I call it primarily *The Life of Jesus in Christian Souls*, because its first and principal end is to point out that Christ must be living within all Christians, since Christians are only on earth for the purpose of thereon continuing the most holy life that Jesus once led there, and since the chief business of a Christian must be to labour to form and establish Jesus within himself, in accordance with the Apostolic desire: *Formetur Christus in vobis*, (1) i.e., to cause Him to dwell in his spirit and in his heart and to establish the holiness of His life and habits in his soul and in his body. That is what St. Paul calls 'bearing and glorifying God in our bodies,' (2) and St. Peter 'sanctifying Jesus Christ in our hearts.' » (3) For Christ being our leader and we His members (and therefore all that is in Him being in us, and all that is in us being in Him), it follows that as He is sanctified for us (4) and is *Himself our sanctification*, as His Apostle assures us, (5) so when we sanctify ourselves we do so for Him, in order that

(1) Gal. iv, 19.

(2). 1 Cor. vi, 20.

(3) 1 Pet. 111, 15.

(4). As He Himself, speaking to His Father, says: «I sanctify myself for them, that they may be sanctified in truth,» i.e. "in Myself Who am the Eternal Truth,- according to St. Augustine's interpretation (*In Joan.* Tract. CVIII, n. 5). Cf. *Oeuvres complètes*, 1, 91.

(5). 1 Cor. i, 30.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

89-

He may be sanctified in us (and our sanctification is the sanctification of Jesus in us), and that we may fulfil the admonition of St. Peter: 'Sanctify the Lord Jesus in your hearts.' (1) Now, all that is done by accustoming ourselves to see, to love, and to glorify this same Jesus in everything, and to do all our actions in His holiness. And that is what this book teaches by very easy, gentle, and potent means.

In the second place I call it *The Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls* because its design is not merely to propose to you very easy and efficacious means of causing Jesus to dwell within you in His Holiness, but also the means of causing Him fully to reign within you.» (2)

The author justifies this view of the Christian life by quoting numerous passages by St. John and by St. Paul, but he relies chiefly on the Apostle's teaching concerning the mystical body of Christ. This, of course, was that the faithful form one moral body with Our Lord, of which body He is the head, so that the Saviour has two bodies and two lives: His natural body that was derived from Mary, and His mystical body which is the Church redeemed at the price of His blood; similarly, His personal life of suffering which was spent on earth and now continues in heaven in glory, and His mystical life which He lives in His members and which

(1). 1 Pet. 111, 15.

(2). Here is how St. John Eudes understands the kingdom of Jesus in Souls: "Yes. Jesus is King . . . . He is your King and the King of all the hearts He has created . . . . But He only reigns in those in which sin, the world, and vanity are dead and in which pride, self, and the will are thoroughly subjugated, or at least so enfeebled that they do not prevent Him from being master, so that He has the keys of your dwelling, and His divine will is therein obeyed in all things and disposes of everything as it pleases. But the number of such hearts is very small." (*Le Coeur admirable*, Bk. III, ch. in, sect. 2.) Cf. *La Vie admirable de Marie des Vallées*, 13k. VIII, ch. iv (Quebec MS.).

90 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

also begins with trials and ends in the beatitude of heaven.

### The mystical Body of Christ.

This teaching delighted our Saint and, following the example of Bérulle and Condren, he made it the basis of his instructions on the Christian life. «He seems to delight," says one of his biographers, "in studying St. Paul's doctrine on the mystical Body of Christ, and he sees in the Church the unceasingly progressive development of this great body. For him, every Christian is above all else a member who, when he comes to take his place in the general body, must reproduce in himself the various mysteries that are accomplished in the entire body, just as they are accomplished in the actual Person of Jesus Christ. It was in order to bring out this aspect of the Christian life that he wrote *La Vie et le Royaume de Jésus*. » ( 1 )



Generally spiritual writers consider it from another point of view. They see the Christian life in its internal principle, which is sanctifying grace and charity, and it is only accidentally and in passing that they mention St. Paul's teaching on the life of Jesus within us. This is true of St. Francis de Sales whose *Introduction to the Devout Life* and *Treatise on the Love of God* are full of the idea that the Christian life in all its degrees is nothing else but the love of God, and the object of these two well-known and valued books is simply to teach us to preserve, to increase, and to put into practice the divine charity. But St. John, on the contrary, always considers the Christian life in its relations to Jesus Christ. Whether he writes of prayer, of the Christian virtues, or of ordinary actions, he constantly

(1) *Le P. Eudes, ses vertus*, by P. Hérabourg. Ed. Le Doré, p. 26.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

91 -

returns to the principle that the divine life that we enjoy is the continuation and prolongation in each of us of the very life of Jesus, and, as we shall see, he would always have us act in Christ's name, with His dispositions and intentions, and in union with Him and with all the members of His mystical Body.(1)

Let us then carefully study the Saint's teaching on this important question.

### A. INCORPORATION WITH JESUS BY BAPTISM

Baptism, by incorporating us with Jesus, initiates us into His life, and so St. John Eudes applies to baptism all his teachings on the Christian life. In almost all his writings he treats of this matter, (2) he even made it the subject of a separate book (*Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le Saint Baptême*), and always he insists on the close union established between Jesus and ourselves by this sacrament.

"In baptism," he writes in his *Entretiens intérieurs*, "God delivers us from the accursed alliance we had contracted with Satan and makes us enter into marvellous relations with Himself. . . . These relations are the noblest and the most perfect that could possibly be; for it is not merely a question of an alliance of

(1). These two points of view (which are not the only ones from which the matter may be considered) do not exclude each other. On the contrary, they are complementary to each other and we cannot without inconvenience neglect either. But the predominance given to one or other of them results in an appreciable modification of the interior life and stamps it with a particular character. Later on we shall see that St. John, like St. Francis de Sales, sees in the Christian life a life of love for God and one's neighbour; but he looks upon it above all as a participation in the life of Jesus.

(2). Particularly in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, the *Entretiens intérieurs*, and the *Regulae Vitae christianae et sacerdotalis*.

92-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

friend with friend, of brother with brother, of child with parent, or of wife with husband, but of members with their head. and that is the most intimate, the closest union possible."

### Unity by Baptism.

But he also takes care to point out that the union of head and members in the human body, close though it be, is but a figure and a shadow of the union of Jesus with the members of His mystical body, because the material world is only a figure of the spiritual world, and nature but a shadow of grace: "And besides that," he adds, "the union of the vine-branch with the plant of the vine and of members of the body with their corporal head is in conformity with the quality, and the base and material nature, of the things which that union joins together. But the union of the members of Christ with their Head is

conformable to the excellence and the holy and divine nature of the things that it joins together; and consequently the alliance that Christians have with Jesus Christ excels the union between the head and the members of a human body by as much as this divine Head and these holy members are exalted above the natural head and its members."

But St. John goes even further, and reminds us that "the relations we contract by baptism with Jesus Christ and, through Him, with the Eternal Father, are so lofty and so divine that they are compared by Christ Himself to the unity existing between the Father and the Son: *Sint unum sicut et nos unum sumus, Ego in eis et tu in me, ut sint consummati in unum.* ( 1 ) And thus the unity of the Father and the Son exemplifies our

(1). John xvii, 21-22.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

93-

union with God by baptism, and this same union is a vivid representation of that adorable unity."

Describing the union established by baptism between Jesus and ourselves, St. John also observes that it is based on the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ and operated by the Holy Ghost: "That same Holy Spirit who is the unity of the Father and the Son . . . is the sacred bond of our association and union with Christ and through Christ with the Eternal Father." (1) Thence the Saint concludes that baptism unites us to Jesus and, through Him, to the Father, in the closest union that can possibly be conceived after the hypostatic union of Christ's human nature with the Eternal Word. Rightly understood, is it not an image and even, so far as is possible, an extension in each of us of the union of the Word with human nature?

### Consequences of

### this union.

Now the consequences of our incorporation with Jesus are numerous. St. John specially stresses the principal ones: 'I beg you to consider,' he wrote in *Le Coeur admirable* "that Our Lord Jesus Christ is your true Head, and that you are one of His members, and that from that fact there flow five important results: (a) That He stands to you as the head to its members, so that everything in Him is yours, His spirit, His heart, His body, His mind, and that you must make use of them as your own for the purpose of serving, praising, loving and glorifying God. (b) That you stand to Him as do the members to the head, for which reason He ardently desires to make use of all that is in you for the service and the glory of His Father, as of things that are His own. (c) That not only does he so stand in

(1). Oeuvres Complètes, II, pp. 184 sq.

94-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

regard to you, but also He wishes to be in you, to be living and reigning within you, as the head lives and reigns in its members; and that He desires all that is in Him to live and reign in you: that His mind should live and reign in your mind, that His heart should live and reign in your heart, that all the powers of His soul, all His interior and exterior senses and all His passions should live and reign in the faculties of your soul, in your interior and exterior senses, and in your passions, so that . . . the life of Jesus may visibly appear even in your flesh and in your external deportment. (d) That not only do you stand in a particular relationship to the Son of God, but that you must be in Him, as the members are in their head, that all that is in you must be incorporated in Him and receive life and direction from Him, that there is no true life for you save only in Him alone . . . that outside Him there is only death and perdition for you, that He must be the sole principle of all the movements, customs, and functions of your life, and that finally you must live only for Him, in Him and by Him, in accordance with the divine words: *Nemo enim vestrum sibi vivit et nemo sibi moritur. Sive enim vivimus, sive morimur, Domini sumus. In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum, dominetur.*' ( 1 )

That you are one with this same Jesus, as the members are one with their head, and that consequently you must have but the one mind, the one soul, the one life, the one will, the one sentiment, the one heart . . . and that He Himself must be your mind, your heart, your love, your life, your all."(2)

Another consequence of our incorporation in Christ

(1). Rom. xiv, 7-9.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VI, pp. 113.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

95-

is that we associate ourselves with His relations and take our place in His genealogy and His parentage, so that His Father becomes our father. By creation we were servants of God, by baptism we become His children. He would have us call Him "father," and this name is no vain title, for at baptism He infuses into us a new life which is a participation in the life of His Divine Son, and He extends to us the love He bears for this well-beloved Son. The Saviour Himself has told us as much in express terms in the beautiful prayer He addressed to His Father after the Last Supper: *"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and the world may know that thou hast sent me and has loved them, as thou hast also loved me."* (1) St. John delighted to savour these last words, and he translated them in his own way when he said that the Father loves us "with the very heart" with which He loves His Son. He added that after regenerating us the Heavenly Father continues to bear us in His Heart and upon His breast, and in this connection he loved to quote the lofty words of Isaias: *"Weaken unto me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who are carried by my bowels, are borne up by my womb. Even to your old age I am the same, and to your grey hairs I will carry you. I have made you, and I will bear: I will carry and will save."* (2)

### Baptism and the Holy spirit.

And after giving us His Father to be our own father, the Divine Master gives us His Holy Spirit to be our spirit. Already, in the Old Testament, God had promised

(1). John xvii, 23.

(2). Isaias xlii, 3-4. Cf. The Office of the Feast of the Heart of Jesus, the 2nd lesson for the octave day; and *Entretiens intérieurs*, No. 9.

96-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

ised us this Holy Spirit(1); but at baptism He communicates It to us to be, in some sort, our spirit and our heart and to make us share in the most intimate virtues and dispositions of Jesus.

"Being children of God," says St. John Eudes, "and being but one with the Son of God as the members with their head, it necessarily follows that we ought to be animated by the same spirit. Therefore St. Paul says: *'And because you are sons, God hath sent the spirit of his Son into your hearts'* (2); and elsewhere: *'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.'* (3) And so the Holy Ghost has been given to us to be the spirit of our spirit, the heart of our heart and the soul of our soul, and to be ever with us and in us, not merely as in His temple, but as in a part of His body, i.e. in a part of the body of Jesus Christ, which is His and must be animated by Him, since the members and all the parts of the body must be animated by the same spirit as that which animates the head."(4)

Finally Jesus makes us members of His family, giving us His Mother to be our mother, His Church to be our second mother, His angels and saints to be our brothers and protectors. And, in fact, from the moment of our regeneration in the baptismal font the Blessed Virgin and Holy Church both

show us (each in their own way) a truly maternal tenderness and solicitude, while the angels and saints for their part watch over us as over their own brethren. And constantly this consoling teaching is to be found in the Saint's writings.

These wonderful privileges are accompanied by an

(1). Gal. iv, 6.

(2). Rom. viii, 9.

(3). OEuvres complètes, II, p. 172.

(4). Ezech. xxxvi. Cf. the Epistle of the Mass for the Heart of Jesus and the 1st lesson of the Office.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

97-

### Interior purification.

interior the Christian the living representation of Jesus. For at baptism the Divine Master purifies us from the stain of original sin and, if necessary, from any actual sins that we have committed; He gives us a new being by clothing us in sanctifying grace, that grace which St. Peter calls a "participation in the very nature of God." To this He adds infused virtues which, like faculties in the natural order, put us in a position to fulfil the acts of the super natural life, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost the object of which is to make us susceptible and docile to the action of the Holy Ghost. All these gifts, which theologians compare to the sails that enable a ship to respond to the breezes that catch them, are at the same time bonds which complete our union with Christ, perfections which make our souls the image of His own, and principles of activity which all contribute, each in its own way, to the blossoming of His life in our own.

And then the action of Jesus within us is completed by the workings of actual grace which stirs us and helps us to practise the Christian virtues, for "like the vine in its branches and the head in its members, the Divine Master never ceases to pour into the souls of the just a vivifying force that precedes, accompanies, and follows all their virtuous acts".(1)

And yet all that is but a beginning and a preparation: eternal happiness is the goal to which Jesus wishes to guide us. He awaits us in heaven to associate us with His glorious life and to make us His co-heirs, the heirs of His Father. As members of Jesus Christ we can effectively have no other end than His, and this

(1). *Conc. Trid., sess. VI, ch. xvi.*

98-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

end is participation in the intimate life of God, and in the happiness that He finds in the contemplation and love of His divine perfections. Thence it follows, as St. John Eudes remarked, that baptism, by incorporating us with Jesus and giving us, in Him and by Him, a new being and a new life, introduces us into a totally new world.

"God," he says, "has placed the Christian in a new world. What is this new world of the Christian? It is God with all His perfections; it is the bosom of God; it is Jesus Christ the Man-God, considered in Himself, in His life, in His mysteries, and also in His body which is the Church Triumphant, Militant, and Suffering. That is the world of the new man.... In the world of Adam there are skies, stars, and elements. In the Christian's world the sky is God and the bosom of God; the sun is Jesus; the moon is Mary; the planets and stars are the saints; the earth is the Sacred Humanity of Jesus; the water is Christian grace; the air is the Holy Spirit; fire is love and charity; the bread that we eat is the Body of Christ; the wine that we drink is His blood; the clothes that we wear are Jesus Christ: *Quicumque enim*

*in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis.* There are no poor and no plebeians in the Christian's world; all true Christians are infinitely rich: *Omnia vestra sunt.* They are all noble, all princes, and all kings."(1)

## B. THE BAPTISMAL VOW

In return for the benefits which it brings us, our incorporation with Jesus imposes on us the obligation

(1). *Œuvres complètes*, II, p. 179.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

99-

of dwelling in Him and continuing His life, as do the members in regard to their head.

"Jesus, Son of God and Son of man," says St. John, "being not only our God, Saviour, and Sovereign Lord, but also our head and we His members ... it necessarily follows that, just as the members are animated by the spirit of their head and live with his life, so we also must be animated with the spirit of Jesus, live His life, walk in His ways, adopt His sentiments and inclinations, and do all our actions with the dispositions with which He performs His; in a word we must continue and fulfil the life, the religion and the devotion to which He consecrated Himself while upon earth."(1)

To that we formally pledge ourselves, either in person or by our god-parents, when we receive baptism, and it is a solemn engagement which St. John stresses strongly in several of his works.

"Ye must," he writes in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, "have a close and most intimate union with Jesus throughout our life and adhere perfectly to Him in all our actions. That is the solemn vow and public profession that we make in the presence of the whole Church at baptism. For then, as we are told by St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and the Catechism of the Council of Trent, (2)

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, p. 2, n. 1.

(2). St. Augustine: "Voventur autem omnia quae offeruntur Deo, maxime Sancti altaris oblatio; quae, sacramento praedicatur nostrum illud votum maximum, quo nos vivimus in Christo esse mansuros, utique in compage corporis Christi- (Epist. 149-alias 59-ad Paulinum n. 16). And St. Thomas says: "In baptismo vovent homines abrenuntiare diabolo et pompis ejus et fidem servare.... Sub voto baptizatorum cadit abrenuntiare pompis diaboli et fidem Christi servare" (Summa, IIa IIae, 88, 1 ad primum). The Catechism tells us: "Aequum est nos ipsos, non secus ac, mancipia, Redemptori nostro et Domino in perpetuum addicere et consecrare. Et quidem, cum baptismo initiaremur, ante ecclesiae fores id professi sumus: declaravimus enim nos Satanae et mundo renuntiare, et Jesu Christo totos nos tradere. Quod si ut christianae militae adscriberemur, tam sancta et solemni professione nos ipsos Domino nostro devovimus; quo supplicio digni erimus, si . . . ex mundi et diaboli praeceptis ac legibus vixerimus" (*Catec. Conc. Trid.*, p. 1, a. 2, n. 18-19). Cf. Bérulle, *Narré*, n. xxiv, Migne, col 615.

## 100- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

we solemnly vow to renounce Satan and all his works and to adhere to Christ, as do the members to their head, and to give ourselves up entirely to Him so as to dwell in Him. But to profess this is to profess to be faithful to His dispositions and intentions, to His laws and maxims, to His spirit and guidance, to His life, His qualities, and His virtues, and indeed to everything that He has done and suffered. . . . In a word, *Christianismus est Professio vitae Christi*, Christianity is a profession of the life of Christ, as St. Gregory of Nyssa tell us. (1) And St. Bernard assures us that Our Lord does not admit among His professed followers those who do not live according to His life: *Non inter suos deputat Professores quos vitae suae cernit desertores.*"

And in another work he writes: (2) "Men you have entered into alliance with God by the holy contract of baptism you have offered, given, and consecrated yourself to His divine Majesty, and you are obliged to two important things. For, firstly, you have promised by the mouths of your godparents to renounce Satan and all his pomps and works. Secondly, you have promised to adhere to Christ by means of faith, hope and charity . . . and to follow Him not merely as a servant follows his master, but as a member follows its head, and consequently to live with His life.... For as the life of the arm is a continuation and extension of

(1). *Initio operis ad Harmonium*. (Marginal note by the author.)

(2). *Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu*, ch. iv.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

101 -

the life of the head, so the Christian life is a continuation of the life of Jesus upon earth. So that whoever has been grafted on to this divine tree and incorporated with this adorable head by holy baptism must live with His life and walk in His footsteps: *Qui dicit se in ipso manere, debet, sicut ille ambulavit, et ipse ambulare.*"

### **The offering Christ made of Himself.**

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* the Saint analyses the profession made by Jesus on His entry into the world, and he observes that Jesus made this profession in His name and in the name of all the members of His mystical Body. And so, in becoming members of that body, we at least implicitly make the same profession. He reduces this to three points:

"Christ devoted Himself to fulfilling perfectly the will of His Father, and in that He found all His happiness.

"He devoted Himself to serving His Father and to serving mankind for love of His Father, choosing the lowly and abject status of a servant so as the better to give honour and homage to the supreme majesty of His Father by this abasement. He devoted Himself to loving and glorifying His Father and to causing Him to be loved and glorified in this world, to doing all His actions for the pure glory and love of His Father and to doing them with the holiest, purest, and most divine dispositions. . . .

«Finally He devoted Himself to being entirely immolated and sacrificed for the sole glory of His Father, desiring to be a victim and to suffer in this character every kind of contempt, humiliation, privation, interior and exterior mortification, and lastly a cruel and shameful death...

## 102- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

### **Consequent obligations on our part.**

"Consequently by vowing to adhere to Jesus and to dwell in Him, which, as St. Augustine says,(1) is the greatest of our vows, *votum maximum nostrum*, we undertake three great obligations, most holy and divine, on which we should frequently reflect:

"1. We oblige ourselves, with Christ, never to do our own will, but always to submit ourselves to the will of God and to obey everybody else in whatsoever is not contrary to God's law, finding therein all our happiness.

"2. We profess ourselves the servants of God, of His Son, and of all the members of Christ, in accordance with St. Paul's phrase: *Nos servos vestros per Jesum*, ( 2 ) and in consequence of this no Christian has anything of his own, any more than a slave has, and has no right to make any use whatever of himself, the members of his body, the powers of his soul, his life, time, or temporal goods, save only for Jesus Christ and His members, i.e., all those who believe in Him.

"3. We oblige ourselves to be victims continually sacrificed for the glory of God, *spirituales hostias*, as St. Peter says. *Obsecro vos, fratres, per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem*, is the entreaty of St. Paul.(3) And what is here said of our bodies must also be said of our souls, and therefore we are obliged to glorify and love God with all the powers of our bodies and souls, to do so to the utmost of our ability, to cause Him to be glorified and loved as much as we possibly can, in all our actions and affairs to seek only His pure glory and pure love, to live in such a way that our lives may be a

(3). Loc. cit.

(2) 11 Cor. iv, 5.

(3). Rom. xii, 1.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

103 -

continual sacrifice of praise and love for Him, and to be ready to be immolated, consumed and annihilated for His glory." (1)

And so St. John concludes from the baptismal vow that the business of the Christian life is to bring about the formation of Jesus within us. ---The mystery of mysteries and work of works," he says, "is the formation of Jesus, as is indicated for us by St. Paul's words: *Filioli, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis*. ( 2 ) That is the greatest mystery and the greatest work done in heaven and on earth by the most exalted persons on earth and in heaven, viz.: the Eternal Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Most Blessed Virgin and Holy Church.

### The formation of Jesus within us.

"It is the greatest action done by the Eternal Father in all eternity during which He is continually occupied in producing His Son in Himself. And outside Himself He has done nothing more admirable than the formation of His Son within the most pure Virgin at the moment of the Incarnation. So also the most excellent work performed on earth by the Son of God is the formation of Himself within His Holy Mother and in His Eucharist. It is also the most noble operation by the Holy Ghost who formed Jesus within the womb of the Virgin, who, in her turn, never did anything, and never will do anything, more lofty than her co-operation in this divine and wonderful formation of Jesus within her. Similarly it is the holiest and greatest work performed by Holy Church which has no more important work than the production of Christ in the Eucharist by

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, Part II, n. xxxviii. Cf. Part VII, n. xiii.

(2). Gal. iv, 19.

104 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

the mouth of her priests, in a certain and admirable manner, and the formation of Him in the hearts of her children, for in all her functions she has no other end than the formation of Jesus in the souls of all Christians.

"And so, our principal desire, care, and occupation must be to form Jesus within us, i.e., to make Him live and reign within us so that His spirit, devotion, sentiments, inclinations, virtues, and

dispositions are supreme in us. To this end all our pious exercises must tend; that is the work that God places in our hands and at which He would have us labour continually."(1)

### C. RENOUNCING THE OLD ADAM (2)

If we are to live the life of Jesus we must above all renounce sin and all that leads to it. Hence we must renounce the devil, the world and especially that which Scripture calls *concupiscence, the flesh, or the old man*, which means everything in us that is vicious. For not only did the sin of Adam strip human nature of the supernatural gifts with which it had been endowed by God, it also perverted it, thereby depriving man of his primitive rectitude, which is the reason why our natural inclinations are now disordered and tend without regulation to what is inferior. This depraving of our nature constitutes a permanent obstacle to our welfare and a continual incitement to evil, so that there is within us, in our sensuality and pride, our obstinacy and self-will, and generally in everything in us that comes from ourselves, the principle of all sins, the germ

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xl.

(2). On this question see *Le Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. vi-ix, xxv-xxviii; and *Méditations sur l'humilité*, as well as *Regulae vitae christianae et sacerdotalis*, I, ch. ii.

### THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

105-

of all vices and, as St. John Eudes says, a veritable "Antichrist."

#### **The corruption of nature by sin.**

"If we look at ourselves in the light of God, « he energetically says, we shall see that of ourselves,' as sinners, we are so many incarnate devils, so many Lucifers and Antichrists, having nothing in ourselves, of ourselves, that is not contrary to Christ; we shall see that we bear within us a demon, a Lucifer, an Antichrist, namely our own will, our pride, our self-love, which are in fact worse than all the demons, worse than Lucifer, worse than Antichrist, because the malice of all these comes from self-will, pride and self-love. We shall see that of ourselves we are a hell full of horror, of malediction, of sin, and of abomination; that in principle and in germ we have within us all the sins of earth and hell, since the corruption sown in us by original sin is the root and source of every kind of sin ...; we shall see, too, that in consequence of that, if God did not bear us continually in the arms of His mercy, if He did not perform a perpetual miracle to keep us from falling into sin, we would precipitate ourselves every hour into an abyss of all sorts of iniquity.» 2

(1). By this expression, which constantly recurs in his writings when treating of renunciation or humility, St. John distinguishes very clearly that within us which is the work of God and that which is the work of Adam or our own, i.e. the flesh, concupiscence, or the old man. The latter, which is the sequel of sin, must be destroyed as completely as possible; while the other, on the contrary, has to be consecrated to God and employed in His service.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxvi. The gravity of the corruption of nature caused by the sin of Adam is disputed. Nowadays, when naturalism prevails, the tendency is to belittle it; whereas in the seventeenth century it seems to have been sometimes exaggerated. However that may be, it is obvious from the passage just quoted and from others that we will later quote, that our Saint, like most of his contemporaries, extends the corruption of nature by original sin as far as orthodoxy allows.



### Hence the renouncing ourselves.

It follows from this corruption of nature by sin that our only way of salvation is to renounce ourselves and to give our necessity of selves to Jesus so that we may act under His influence. St. John never ceases to repeat this; he would have us make constant efforts to combat the instincts of depraved nature which are the great obstacle to the life of Jesus within us. And as these instincts are part of ourselves 'are indeed ourselves as deformed by sin, he urges us to labour unwearingly to go out from ourselves, to strip ourselves of ourselves and, as he says in his vigorous language, "annihilate ourselves."

"We must labour," he says,---to annihilate ourselves, i.e., our own feelings, self-will, self-love, pride and vanity, all our perverse inclinations and habits, all the desires and instincts of depraved nature, and everything that is of ourselves. For since we have of ourselves nothing in us that is not depraved and corrupted by sin, and is consequently contrary to Christ and opposed to His glory and love, everything must be destroyed and consumed so that Jesus Christ may perfectly live and reign within us."

And he adds: «This is the first principle and the first step of the Christian life, and is what is called in Scripture and the writings of the Fathers 'losing oneself,' 'dying to self,' and renouncing self. It must be one of our chief cares, one of the principal exercises to which we must give ourselves by the practice of abnegation, humiliation, and both interior and exterior mortification, for it is one of the most powerful means of forming and establishing Jesus within us.» (1)

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xli.

### THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

107-

So, too, in *Le Coeur admirable*, he writes: "Whoever would find a place in the true earthly Paradise, i.e., in the Paradise of the Second Adam which is the Heart of His most holy Mother, must desert the race and genealogy of his first father and enter that of his second. He must cease to be a son of Adam that he may become a child of Jesus, and must die to the corrupted and depraved life of the old man, to his evil and perverse spirit, his irregular inclinations, and all that comes from himself, so that he may live by the holy and heavenly life of the new man, may be animated by his spirit and be guided by his sentiments and inclinations: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu*. This death seems to be terrifying, this flaming sword in the hand of the cherubim seems formidable, but its effect is very different to its appearance. For it is a sword of love, the sword that has wounded and slain all true lovers of Jesus, that is, all the saints. It wounded them that it might heal them, it killed them to bring them to life; it made them die to sin, to the world, to themselves, and to everything that was not God, so as to make them live with the life of God. It struck them, in fact, with a desirable and precious death: *Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus*, with a death which is not death but is life and the source of life."(1)

### How to effect this.

This annihilation of all that is vicious in us is the work of a lifetime and calls for incessant efforts, for the flesh dies but slowly and it is only the saints who succeed in overcoming it completely. And so it does not suffice to renounce our corrupt nature from time to time, we must, as Père Eudes always explained,

(1) *OEuvres complètes*, VI, pp. 240-241.

live in the habitual practice of renunciation and mortification, which alone can lead us to durable results.

And so that we may bring this conflict with the flesh to a happy conclusion St. John advises us to begin all our actions with a formal act of renunciation followed by an act of oblation to Jesus: "At the beginning of your actions," he writes, "be careful to raise your heart to Jesus and to tell Him that you renounce yourself, your self-love and pride, i.e. all your own particular dispositions and intentions. And tell Him also that you give yourself to Him, to His holy love and His divine Spirit, and that you wish to perform all your actions in the dispositions and with the intentions with which He did His. By this means you will give Him much glory in all your undertakings and in a little time will advance far in the ways of grace."(1)

Every time that Père Eudes puts forward a method for the carrying out of a pious exercise or a virtuous act he introduces those two acts of renunciation of self and of oblation to Jesus, as is proved by a glance at *Le Royaume de Jésus* or the *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*, or by studying in his *Manuel de Prières* the various ways of beginning and ending prayer and the acts suggested for the examination before midday.

But we must not forget that however great our efforts may be, they can but second the action of grace without which they would remain sterile. In the supernatural order we must await everything from Jesus, even the destruction of the obstacles that oppose His action, and that is why Père Eudes, while advising us to do everything that depends on us for  
(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VI, n. 1.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

109 -

conquering the old man, urges us to ask Jesus to deliver us and to free us from him. And so he says: "Annihilate yourself often at the feet of Jesus, annihilate all that is in you, and beg Him by the great love with which He annihilated Himself to use . . . His great power to annihilate our old selves and to establish Himself within us, saying to Him: 'O Good Jesus, I adore Thee in Thy divine annihilation as described by Thy Apostle: *Exinanivit semetipsum*. I adore Thy great and omnipotent love for Thy Father and for us, which has thus annihilated Thee. I give myself and abandon myself entirely to the power of this divine love, so that it may annihilate me totally. O most powerful and good Jesus, use Thy great power and infinite goodness to annihilate me and to establish Thyself within me, thereby to root out my self-love, my own will, my pride, and all my passions, sentiments and inclinations, so that Thy holy love, Thy sacred will, Thy divine spirit, Thy profound humility and all Thy other virtues may reign within me."(1)

Similarly in *Le Cœur admirable* are these words: "O Jesus, it is with all our heart that we renounce our first father (Adam), who is not our true father since he bequeathed us death before giving us life. Thou art our true Father, Thou who has suffered death in order to give us life; and we wish to be Thy true children. But this we cannot be if we do not cease to be children of Adam, and if he does not die within us. O Jesus, Thou art the cherubim placed by God Thy Father at the gate of the second Paradise; the flaming sword is  
(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xli. Compare this prayer with the prayer *Contere prorsus in nobis* which we recite before the midday examen. Cf. *OEuvres complètes*, III, p. 287.

in Thy hand. Strike, then, strike with that sword the old Adam, the man of sin and of perdition, he who is directly contrary to Thee and who consequently is a true Antichrist. If this Antichrist does not die in us Thou canst not live within us, O Jesus, and Thou wilt live within us only in the measure in which he dies. Slay him, then, within us, so that Thou mayest live completely in us and that we may say with Thy Apostle: *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.*" ( 1 )

The law of mortification obviously extends to the whole of man. The body requires to be mastered as well as the soul, but as St. John is generally addressing pious souls to whom corporal mortification is familiar he seldom speaks of other than spiritual mortification. It is our pride, self-love, and self-will that he would have us attack, and that is the more understandable in that the whole of his spiritual teaching aims at causing the spirit of Jesus, the love of Jesus and the divine will to reign within us.

#### D. THE OBLATION OF SELF TO JESUS

By killing the old Adam within us, renunciation clears away the chief obstacle to the life of Jesus in us, but for the exercising and developing of this life we must remain united to the divine Master, submit ourselves to His action and let ourselves be guided by Him. That is what is implied by that adherence or oblation so much stressed by writers of the French School.

"Under the present dispensation," writes Bérulle, If mankind is sanctified outside itself, it is sanctified in

(1). *OEuvres complètes*, VI, p. 241.

#### THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

111 -

Jesus Christ. *Et secundum mensuram donationis Christi*. . . . Every man . . . must be detached from himself and emptied of self, he must be appropriated to Jesus, subsisting in Jesus, grafted to Jesus, living in Jesus, he must work in Jesus, and fructify in Jesus."(1)

#### Close adherence to Christ.

Elsewhere he exhorts his readers: "Give yourself entirely to Christ's spirit which impresses on souls a living image and perfect resemblance of its own conditions on earth. There He is unknown, abased and humiliated there He is a captive, suffering and dependent and He well knows how to work in us through His spirit . . . producing a life of suffering and subjection, of captivity and dependence, thereby honouring His condition in the conditions to which He is pleased to reduce us and honouring Himself in us. *Open* your soul to His operations, *abandon it entirely* to His intentions, and knowing your own acts to be too feeble to be able to honour Him, give yourself up to the efficacious power of His spirit, so that He may deign to make use of you to honour Himself by means of His power and operations."(2)

And again he writes: "Jesus alone is our fulfilment and we must bind ourselves to Him as being by His divinity the foundation of our existence, by His humanity our link with God; the spirit of our spirit, the life of our life, the fullness of our capacity. Our first knowledge must be that of our own deficient and imperfect condition ' and our first movement must be to Jesus as our all in all. And in this search for Jesus, this adherence to Him, this profound and continual dependence upon Him, is our life, our strength and all

(1). *OEuvres*, Migne, col. 914.

(2). *OEuvres*, Migne, col. 1054.

our power to act. Never must we act save as united to Him, directed by Him, and from Him drawing our inspiration to think, to speak, and to work, so that without Him we can neither exist nor labour for our salvation."(1)

St. John echoes his master: "We must acquire a most intimate union with Jesus, a most perfect adherence and application to Him throughout our life, in all our exercises, and in all our actions."(2) Plainly what the Saint asks of us is not mere habitual adherence to Christ by sanctifying grace, but an actual adherence expressly renewed in each of our acts of devotion, and even in everything we do. And this adherence consists of two acts which he never separates from each other. The first is an act of oblation which consists in offering ourselves, giving ourselves, abandoning ourselves to Jesus and to His holy Spirit; while the second is a prayer by which we formally ask Him to take possession of us and to make us live with His life.

Consider, for example, the first disposition that he demands for prayer: "We are most unworthy to appear before the face of God, to see Him or to be seen or heard by Him, and . . . of ourselves we can have no good thought or perform any good act in the least pleasing to Him. Therefore, we must annihilate ourselves at His feet, giving ourselves to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and begging Him that He Himself will annihilate us and will establish Himself in us, so that it may be He Himself who prays within us."(3)

So, too, with the practice of virtues: "Give yourself

(1). *OEuvres*, Migne, col. 118 1. This passage and those that precede it are taken from Bremond's *L'Ecole française*, pp. 131 sq.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. XXXV111.

(3). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xvi.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

113 -

often to Jesus," says the Saint, "with a lively desire to practise this virtue with all the perfection that He asks of you, and beg Him to destroy in you all that is contrary to this same virtue, and to establish Himself in you for His pure glory."(1)

The Saint does not use different language when treating of the way of honouring Christ's mysteries: "We must," he tells us, "give ourselves to Jesus if we would honour the mystery we have to honour in every way that He desires. And when we have used all the capacity that it pleases Him to give us for honouring this same mystery, we must beg Him to deign Himself to use the power and holy inventions of His spirit and His love for honouring Himself in us. For this end we must ask Him to destroy in us everything that is contrary to the glory of this mystery, to produce in us by this mystery all the graces and effects that He desires to produce in us, and to rule us in accordance with the spirit and grace of this mystery. Similarly we must beseech Him to impress upon our souls an image and participation of this mystery, to consummate this mystery in us, and finally to accomplish all the designs that He has in regard to us in this same mystery, granting that we may do and suffer all that pleases Him for this end."(2)

We have already pointed out the necessity of self renunciation and of making an act of adherence to Jesus: only this is capable of delivering us from the influence of the old Adam and of destroying him within us. Listen to the Saint's recommendation on this point:

"Renounce yourself entirely, then; renounce your

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxiii.

(2). *Ibid.*, III, n. ix.

**Self-immolation.**

self-will and all the power and capability that you think you feel in yourself. For all the power that Adam left in human nature is but impotence; the feeling of it within us is but illusion, presumption, and a false opinion of our selves; and we can never have true power and real liberty to do good save by renouncing ourselves and departing from ourselves and from all that is our own, so as to live in the spirit and the virtue of Jesus Christ.

"And when you have made this renunciation, then adore Christ, give yourself entirely to Him, and beg Him to take possession of all the rights of Adam within you and your own also, since He has acquired the rights of sinners by His blood and by His death; ask Him therefore to be pleased to dwell within you in place of Adam., to free you from your own nature, and to take all that you are for His own use. Protest to Him that you desire to lay in His hands all that you are, and that you wish to relinquish your own spirit (which is a spirit of pride and vanity) together with all your intentions, inclinations and dispositions, so as henceforth to live only in His spirit, in His intentions, and in His divine and adorable inclinations and dispositions.

"Beg Him, therefore, to draw you out of yourself as from a fire by His wonderful mercy, so as to bring you into Himself and to establish you in His spirit of humility, and that, not for your interest or satisfaction, but for His pleasure and for His pure glory. Ask Him also to use His divine power to destroy in you your pride and not to rely on your infirmity for establishing His glory by the way of perfect humility within you. And remembering that, of yourself, as a sinner, you are an incarnate devil, a Lucifer and an Antichrist . . .

**THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US**

115-

by reason of the iniquity, pride and self-love which is always in each one of us, place yourself often, but especially at the beginning of the day, at the feet of Jesus and His Holy Mother, saying to them:

'O Jesus, O Mother of Jesus, hold fast this miserable demon beneath your feet, crush this serpent, kill this Antichrist with the breath of your mouth, bind this Lucifer so that he may do nothing to-day contrary to your holy glory.' "(1)

After that we are not surprised to find constantly in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, the *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*, and the *Manuel de piété*, acts of oblation to Jesus accompanied by the prayer we have just quoted, and preceded by an act of self-renunciation. Such acts as these, when they express and (by reviving) strengthen the intimate dispositions of the soul, are for St. John, as for Cardinal de Bérulle, the chief means to be used for forming Jesus within us and for living His life.

**Till we have  
offered ourselves  
completely to  
Christ we can do  
nothing.**

Not that the Saint dispenses us from the efforts necessary for forming us to the practice of piety and Christian virtues; on the contrary, he would have us do everything that depends on our selves for arriving at that goal, striving for our part as though we had nothing to expect on the part of God. But the essential thing in his eyes is that we should break away from our own selves and offer ourselves to Jesus, who is the principal author of all the good that we do. Our own task is to place ourselves at His

disposition as docile instruments to be used at His pleasure; not to oppose His workings, but meekly to follow His inspirations and to let our  
(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxviii.

116-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

selves be guided by Him after the fashion of a child with its mother. That is the best way in which human liberty can co-operate in the work of sanctification that Jesus would accomplish in us. Without despising particular methods, St. John only gives a secondary importance to them, and in *Le Royaume de Jésus* he does not hesitate to write that "The practice of practices, the secret of secrets, the devotion of devotions is not to be attached to any particular practice or devotion, but to take great care in all your devotions to give yourself to the Holy Spirit of Jesus . . . so that He may have full power and liberty to act in you according to His desires and to instil into you such dispositions and sentiments of devotion as He may wish, guiding you by whatever ways He pleases." (1)

### E. IMITATION OF JESUS (2)

If Jesus is to live in us it does not suffice that we submit ourselves to the action of His grace; we must, as we have said, co-operate with it to the best of our ability, striving to conform ourselves to the divine head of whom we have the honour to be members. St. John presents Our Lord to us as the *Book of Life*, on which we must always keep our eyes, as the *Example* that we must copy, as the *Prototype* whose characteristics we must reproduce, and as the *Supreme Law* to which we must submit all our actions.

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VI, n. xviii.

(2). Some writers have distinguished imitation from adherence, as being two things that are mutually exclusive. They are certainly two distinct things, but they complement and require each other. Adherence is the oblation of self to Jesus; it submits us to His grace, it even anticipates this by offering us to its action. Imitation is a free and considered act by which, under the action of grace, we strive to enter into the thoughts and sentiments of Jesus and to regulate our lives by His. By the first of these we offer ourselves to Jesus in order that He may *impress* on us an image of His life; but by the second, we strive with the help of grace to *express* in ourselves the life of Jesus. But it goes without saying that adherence itself like every supernatural act, is due to the action of divine grace.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

117-

It is true that all spiritual writers recommend the imitation of Jesus Christ, but many of them, in tracing the rules of Christian life and perfection, confine themselves to setting out the evangelical precepts and counsels, and citing the examples afforded by the Saviour's life rather as a stimulant to virtue than as a rule of life. This was not Père Eudes' method. Like Bérulle and Condren, he never separated the teaching of Jesus from His Person and His life. From the very start he places his readers in the presence of the Divine Master and demands that they order their lives in harmony with His.

### Conformity

**with the dispositions  
of Our Lord.**

Above all, it is necessary that we learn to think and to desire as He does; that is what St. Paul demands in the famous words that our Saint loved to quote, and which he applied to the cult of the Sacred Heart: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu*, clothe yourself with the sentiments of Christ. The Saviour's thoughts become our own by faith which is a participation in His knowledge and which makes us see things with His eyes. By hatred of sin and by renunciation of the world and self we enter into His feelings. Those, in fact, were the dominating sentiments entertained in the holy soul of Jesus by the

immense love for His Father with which it burned. There, then, is where our conformity with the Divine Master must begin, and together with prayer, which was the constant

118-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

occupation of the Incarnate Word, this constitutes, in the eyes of St. John, the foundations of the Christian life.

These fundamental dispositions sketch, as it were, the outlines of the image of Jesus in the Christian soul, but the picture is completed in the soul by the industry with which it clothes itself with the Saviour's virtues for the Christian virtues, are, for P&e Eudes, only the continuation and extension in each one of us of the virtues of Jesus. He would not have us consider them merely in themselves, in their intrinsic excellence, as do the pagan philosophers; it is in Jesus, who is their principle and complete model, that we must study them, and it is for the purpose of making ourselves similar to Him and for glorifying His Father, as He Himself did, that we must strive to practise them.

Conformity with the Divine Master is brought about in us by our participation in the various conditions and mysteries of His life. St. John, in fact, teaches that the mysteries of Jesus, as well as His life and virtues, must be renewed and completed in Christians: "It is a truth worthy of notice," he writes,---that the mysteries of Jesus are not yet in a state of perfect completion and accomplishment; for though they are perfect and complete in the Person of Jesus, we who are His members do not possess them perfectly, nor does His Church, which is His mystical Body. For the Son of God intends that we and all His Church should share, extend and continue the mystery of His Incarnation, and those of His birth, and His childhood . . . and all His other mysteries."(1)

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, III, n. iv.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

119-

### **Meditation on the mysteries of Christ.**

At bottom the whole of the Christian life is a participation in the Saviour's mysteries. Mystically dead with Him at Holy baptism, we have with Him to lead a new and heavenly life. Whatever the circumstances in which we find ourselves we must spiritually conform to the Saviour's mysteries by applying ourselves to expressing in our lives the virtues which shone so brilliantly in each of those mysteries. Moreover, the Saint advises us to meditate assiduously on the mysteries of Jesus; and, as we have said, he counsels us not to limit our reflections to exterior facts which only give the external appearance of the mysteries, but to penetrate their spirit and roots by considering the thoughts, affections, and interior occupations of Jesus in the various mysteries, as well as the special grace attached to each of them and the fruits that we should acquire from them. In short, to follow the true rule of Christian life we must go to the very Heart of Jesus and, so far as possible, examine its intimate dispositions: "Jesus," says St. John, "gave me His Heart to be ... the model and rule of my life and of my actions. I wish to keep my eyes on this rule and to study it carefully, so as to follow it faithfully."(1)

Furthermore, as we are members of Jesus Christ and continuators of His life, we must, according to St. John, always and everywhere look upon ourselves "as His representatives," and do each of our actions, whether small or great, "in His name and in His spirit," i.e. "with His intentions and dispositions."

Many spiritual writers advise us, before taking any

(1). *OEuvres complètes*, VIII, p. 318.

### What would Jesus do in our place?

action, to put ourselves mentally in the presence of death or of eternity, and by this means the thought of our last end becomes the rule and test of the whole moral life. Certainly this is an excellent way of sanctifying our actions, and Père Eudes does not fail to recommend it. But he prefers that at every occurrence we should ask ourselves what Jesus would do in our place, and to act accordingly: "Christians," he writes, "being members of Jesus Christ, hold His place upon earth. They represent His Person, and consequently they ought to do all that He does . . . whatever He would do in their place. just as an ambassador, holding the position and representing the person of his king, must act and speak in his name, i.e., as his king would act and speak if he were present." (1) Therefore, in St. John's view, to act in a Christian manner is to act as Christ would, with the same intentions and dispositions as He, or, to use the Saint's phrase, "in His spirit."

Consequently he invites us to pray with the dispositions that Jesus had when praying; when confessing, to permeate ourselves with those feelings of hatred for sin which filled His soul during the Agony in the Garden; when assisting at Mass, to unite ourselves with the dispositions of both priest and Victim. And so, in all our labours, in our recreation, our goings and comings, and in even our commonest actions such as going to bed or getting up, sleeping or eating, we ought, in his opinion, to raise up our hearts to Jesus and to conform ourselves to the sentiments which animated Him when performing the same actions.

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xvii.

### THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

121 -

"Our Holy Redeemer," he wrote in *Le Coeur admirable*, "desires to transform Himself into us and to transform us into Himself.... In His mercy . . . He would associate us with Him and make us His cooperators in the great work of this marvellous transformation. That is why He gives this commandment to all Christians: *Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum*:(1) imprint upon yourself exteriorly and interiorly a living image of my interior and exterior life. Notice that Our Redeemer did not say: 'Put my seal upon your heart and upon your arm,' but rather: 'Put me myself as a seal upon your heart and upon your arm. As I am the image of my Father and the divine character of His substance, let your heart also be a living image of me, let it live with my life, let it be animated with my spirit, let it be filled with my sentiments, and be embraced by my love and charity. And put me also as a seal upon your arm, i.e., let your exterior be a portrait of my exterior, of my modesty, my humility, my sweetness, my affability, let it copy the mortification of my senses and of the holiness that was always manifested in my exterior deportment.' " (2)

### F. UNION WITH JESUS

Between the Christian life and the life of Jesus, St. John marks out in addition to the ties formed by dependence and conformity others which it is important to study because of the practical consequences that follow from them. These fresh ties or relationships are those of society and union with Jesus.

(1) *Cant.* vii, 6.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VII, pp. 228 sq.



To grasp thoroughly this new aspect of Christian life we must recall once more that Christians are members of a moral body, or, as we generally say, of a mystical body of which Christ is the head. Now in a moral body it is obvious that each member has his own life and his own activities; and yet the life of each is associated with the life of the others and especially with that of the head. But in addition to this, each member, and especially the head, acts in the name and to the advantage of all, so that both head and members work in concert, mutually supporting each other and thereby contributing to their reciprocal perfection.

### **The Communion of Saints.**

That is precisely what happens in the supernatural order. Though its principle and rule is Jesus, the Christian life is no less our own personal life, as the Council of Trent declares.<sup>(1)</sup> We have it by the Saviour's liberality, but it is ours and it is we who are primarily interested in its preservation and development. But our spiritual life does not unfold itself in solitary isolation; it is intimately bound up with that of all the faithful, and especially with that of Jesus, the divine Head of whom we are members.

Whether we are aware of it or not, when we act in a Christian manner it is not merely in our own name that we act, but also in the name of Christ, as His representatives, His ambassadors, and the continuators of His life, and our action profits Him. Not that it adds anything to the fullness of His personal life or perfects

(1). «Unica formalis causa (justificationis) est justitia Dei, non quia ipse justus est, sed quia justos nos facit, qua videlicet ab eo donati ... vere justi nominamur et sumus, justitiam in nobis recipientes, unusquisque suam secundum mensuram, quam Spiritus Sanctus partitur singulis prout vult.» Conc. Trid., sess. VI, cap. vii.

### **THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US**

123-

Him in Himself, but it procures for Him, outside Himself, that extension of life and complement of perfection which the head finds in members that are obedient to its influence. It is in this sense that the Church is called by St. Paul *the fullness of Christ*, and that we all meet, in his phrase, in the perfection of the Divine Master.<sup>(1)</sup>

But, in return, the whole life of Jesus turns to our advantage. As the religious Head of all humanity, He has associated His members with all the acts of His life and has caused them to benefit by the holiness with which He accomplished them. "The Saviour," says Bossuet in his *Reflections on the Agony of Jesus Christ*, "charged Himself not only with the sins, but also with all the interests, obligations, and duties of His children.... Their agony was, on the Cross, distinctly present to the eyes of His Heart: He foresaw the nature of the illness from which they must die; and, as He knew well how greatly the pains and symptoms of a violent or sudden illness would, with the senses, hamper the highest faculties of the soul and make them weak and powerless in their prostration, how can we gauge the measure the extent and the force of the charity with which He regarded their agony as inseparable from His own? All that He then did, He did as a fulfilment of their obligations and as doing what they would not be able to do when their time came. He offered on behalf of His children all His agony and its consequences, by a movement of love which He communicated to them for their profit if they should be in such a condition as to be able to share in it, and if their obscured reason made

(1). Eph. iv, 13.

them incapable of actually entering into His dispositions. He made this act of love on their behalf in the eyes of His Father so as to assist them in their helplessness."(1)

And what Bossuet says of the Agony of Our Lord must be extended to apply to all the conditions and actions of His life on earth. Always and everywhere He acted in His capacity as our head and in the name of the members of His mystical Body as well as in His own personal name. And that is why (as well as in order to give us an example to follow in every situation that can arise) the Divine Master deigned to experience all the phases of human life and to subject Himself to all its necessities. He wanted in His own person to sanctify our whole life, and to supply for our insufficiency by rendering to the Father, for Himself and for us, the particular duties demanded by the various conditions of human life.

**We profit by all  
the actions of  
Christ.**

St. John took great pleasure in the thought of this. He often recurs to it in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, but especially does he insist on it in the meditations that he invites us to make on the subject of our birth and baptism, and in those that he proposes as a preparation for death. For it is, in fact, at the two (1). In his booklet, *L'École française* (p. 11), M. Letourneau compares the ideas on death held respectively by St. Francis de Sales and by Bossuet, and expresses himself thus: -Proceeding by comparison, read first St. Francis' meditation on *Death* in *The Devout Life*. There you will find wise reflections on the uncertainty of the time of our death, on the parting we must then make from relations and friends, on the decay of the body, and on the necessity of being converted and of abandoning oneself to God. It is all most judicious and practical. But then see the very different tone taken by Bossuet, who tells you that you must imitate Jesus in His death, which was the *supreme sacrifice* of human nature." The ideas of Bossuet are those of all the French school, and they are to be found in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, VII, n. Xviii- xxxi.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

125-

extremes of our span of life that we have the most need of finding in Jesus a source whence to supplement our helplessness. The child can do nothing, and generally the dying cannot do much. What a joy, then, to know that Jesus, on entering the world, consecrated to the Father not only the beginning of His own life but also the beginning of ours! What a consolation to know that if sickness prevent us in our last moments from reflecting on God, Jesus has in advance accepted death in our name and has placed our soul with His own within the hands of our common Father! And so it is also with all the rest of our life; for, as St. John tells us, «since the office of the head is to perform all his actions on His own behalf and on behalf of his members,» (1) Our Lord in His prayers, His works, and His sufferings acted for us as well as for Himself, and thereby He made good in advance the deficiencies and imperfections that are in all our works. The Divine Master Himself taught this truth one day to St. Margaret Mary when He said: "I make you heiress of my Heart and of all its treasures both in this world and for all eternity, permitting you to make use of it according to your desires.... It will make reparation for, and supply for, all your failings and will acquit you of your obligations." (2)

In order to share in this divine assistance by which the Saviour makes good our deficiencies it suffices, strictly speaking, to be habitually united to Him by sanctifying grace; for the smallest degree of grace makes us living members of Christ, and so long as they are not separated from him, the members always

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VII, n. ii.

(2). *Vie et OEuvres de la Sainte* (Gauthey), I, p. 173.

profit, even without their knowledge, by what is done by their head.(1)

However, actual union with Jesus Christ remarkably enlarges the channel by which His favours reach us, and this union St. John incessantly recommended to his disciples. He advised them never to lose sight of the Divine Master, to consider themselves in everything as His members, and to have recourse to every kind of pious method for living and dying with Him. (2)

**First means of  
bringing about  
this profitable  
union.**

The first means that he points out for thus associating our actions with those of Jesus is that of reminding ourselves in the the various circumstances of our lives of what Christ did for us in similar circumstances, so that we may not merely conform our conduct to His but also identify ourselves with everything that He did in our name. Thus, since when offering Himself to His Father at His entry into the world He at the same time offered each of the members of His mystical Body as so many victims ready to be sacrificed for His glory, it is our duty to accept and to ratify this oblation of our lives that He made to God the Father. And so we find Père Eudes addressing Christ thus: "O my divine Head, in Thy temporal birth Thou hast offered for me to Thy Father all the duties that I should have offered to Him in my own, and Thou hast practised the acts and exercises that I should have practised. With all my heart I consent and adhere to all that Thou didst then do for me; I ratify and approve it with all my will,

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, V, n. x. Cf. Bossuet: *Réflexion sur l'agonie de Notre-Seigneur*.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, III, n. i, et passim.

**THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US**

127 -

and I desire to sign it with the last drop of my blood. "(1)

**Second means of  
effecting the same.**

Next the Saint reminds us that the life of Jesus belongs to us, and that we can use it as our own for fulfilling our obligations. In actual fact in giving Himself to us Our Lord conferred on us a real right over all His works. Besides, He is our head and we are His members. Now, the head and the members make but one, and even as the head can dispose at its will of what belongs to its members, so in the same way the members can make use of what belongs to the head. Jesus, therefore, is ours, and we can always offer His external works and internal dispositions to His Father, thereby supplementing the poverty of our homage and making reparation for the multitude of our failings. Listen to Père Eudes on this point: "I well know what I will do. I have a Jesus who has in Himself an infinite treasury of virtues, merits, and holy works, and who has been given to me to be my treasure, my virtue, my sanctification, my redemption and my reparation. I will offer Him to the Eternal Father, to the Holy Spirit, to the Blessed Virgin, to all the Angels and to all the Saints in reparation and satisfaction for all the sins of which I have been guilty in their regard. O Holy Father, O Divine Spirit, I offer you all the love and honour that my Jesus gave You throughout His life by all His divine thoughts, words and deeds, by the divine use He made of all the parts of His body and soul, by the virtues which He exercised, and by all the sufferings that He bore, in satisfaction for all the offences that I have committed against You in all my life. '(2)

(1). *Ibid.*, VII, n. ii.

(2). *Ibid.*, VII, n. xxi.

So convinced was Père Eudes of the reality of the rights that Christ has given us over His Person and His life, and also over the person and life of every member of His mystical Body, that he believed we can make use of the heart, the soul, and all the powers of the Divine Master and of His members to render to God the cult of adoration and of love which His infinite goodness demands. And so, after urging us to repeat as a chaplet the following words which are the practical expression of the first of God's commandments, and which he later inserted in the *Ave, Cor sanctissimum*: "I love Thee, O my God, with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength," he goes on to give us this commentary:

"In saying the words '*with all my heart*' we must understand it of the Heart of Jesus, of that of the Blessed Virgin, and of the hearts of all the angels and saints in heaven and on earth, which all together have but one single heart with the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, by reason of the union that subsists between all these hearts. And that Heart is ours, for St. Paul assures us that everything without exception is ours: *Omnia vestra sunt*; (1) and consequently we can and must make use of it wherewith to love God." (2)

It is unnecessary to point out the grandeur and beauty of these views. They surprise us a little at first because in these days we are accustomed to restrain our relations with Christ. We see in Him only the Redeemer who has made satisfaction for our sins, and the God who has a right to our adoration; whereas He is, in addition, the Head whose life must be united to ours

(1). 1 Cor. iii, 22.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, IV, n. xii.

## THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US

129-

in order to cover our failings and to give us the perfection that will make us pleasing in the eyes of the Heavenly Father.

### Third means for the same end.

A last means of benefiting by the merits of Christ and the saints is to address ourselves directly to them, begging them to make reparation for all our iniquities and to glorify God in our place. On this, Père Eudes writes: "This is the most pleasing prayer that we can make them, and to none other do they hearken more willingly." (1) It assures us a special part in the love and the praises that they continually render to God, for this God of goodness regards as coming from us the adoration that is rendered to Him at our request and in our name. (2) St. John especially urges us to end all our devotions with a prayer of this kind. He would have us, for example, at the end of our morning prayers ask Jesus and His saints to make good all the faults of which we have been guilty during this holy exercise and to continue it in our name throughout the day. And similarly in the evening, when we go to rest, he desires us to invite them to glorify God on our behalf while we sleep through the night. (3)

As regards himself, the Saint feared lest he should appear egoistic in his pious practices, and that is why, following the example of Christ, he offered all his devotions not only for himself but for others. He considered this a means of giving God more glory and of enabling his neighbours to profit by whatever good he (St. John) should do. Moreover, he most strongly recommends

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, I, n. iv.

(2). Ibid., loc. cit.

(3). Ibid., I, n. xii.

this eminently Catholic practice to us (1) which he had learnt from Cardinal de Bérulle, and which, moreover, Our Lord Himself taught us when He showed us in the *Our Father* that we should not separate our own interests from those of our brethren.

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VII. Meditation on the subject of our birth.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRAYER

#### A. PRAYER IN GENERAL

ST. JOHN did not write any separate book on prayer, but the few pages devoted to the subject in *Le Royaume de Jésus* enable us to give an account of his ideas on it. Moreover, that book is full of prayers and meditations that make it, in M. Joly's words, "a manual of prayer" and show us the theoretical ideas of the author reduced to practice.

In that volume the Saint uses the word "prayer" in its widest sense so that he applies it to every kind of prayer, whatever may be the acts of which it is composed and the manner in which it is offered. In his eyes spiritual meditation and the reading of good books are true prayers for they arouse in us sentiments of piety and acts of love of God.

Prayer is often defined as a request made of God for things that we need, and some Christians restrict prayer to this limit. Such a prayer is certainly good, and the Divine Master recommends it in the Gospels: "Ask and you shall receive," He said to His apostles, "seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you";<sup>(1)</sup> and on another occasion he reproached them for having made no requests: "Hitherto you

(1). *Matt.* vii, 7.

#### THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive."<sup>(1)</sup>

#### **St. John's definition of prayer.**

But, excellent as the prayer of petition may be, it is not the whole of prayer, nor even its main element. St. John gives us a much wider idea of prayer which he takes from Catholic tradition. "Prayer," he says, "is a respectful and loving elevation of the mind and heart to God; a sweet and holy communication of the Christian soul with its God."<sup>(2)</sup>

As a rule, in actual fact, a Christian speaks to God in prayer in the style of the *Our Father*, and God replies by putting into his mind good thoughts, or acts of faith, confidence, love, and the like. But it may happen in prayer that the mind and heart are raised to God with a more or less active feeling of adoration and love which finds no expression in either external or internal words, and yet this is most certainly prayer. And that is why the Saint begins by telling us that prayer is "a respectful and loving elevation of the mind and heart to God."

After defining prayer St. John goes on to describe in detail the elements that go to compose it: "In prayer," he says, "the Christian soul considers and contemplates (3) God in His divine perfections, in His mysteries

(1). *John* xvi, 24.

(2). St. Augustine, St. John Damascene, and many subsequent writers define prayer as *Ascensus mentis ad Deum*, but in adopting this definition St. John Eudes develops it in his own way. He remarks that it is a *respectful* and *loving* elevation, and an elevation of the *heart* as well as of the mind, and this indeed is how everyone considers it. And the second part of his definition (an intercourse with God) is also

classical, and is to be found in St. Francis de Sales' *Treatise of the Love of God*, as well as in the writings of St. Teresa and many others. On the idea of prayer, see Bremond, *Histoire du sentiment religieux*, VII, pp. 5 sq.

(3). He is not here dealing, at any rate exclusively, with infused contemplation. St. John often uses the word *contemplation* in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, but in its widest sense. By it he means attentive consideration (apparently without reasoning) of the divine perfections or of the mysteries of Our Lord and of His Holy Mother.

## **PRAYER**

133-

and in His works; it adores Him, blesses Him, loves Him and glorifies Him, giving itself to Him and humbling itself before Him by reason of its sins and ingratitude; and it begs Him to have mercy and to teach it to model itself upon Him, imitating His virtues and perfections. Finally, it asks everything it needs for serving and loving God."

These few lines, inserted almost accidentally in one of the chapters of *Le Royaume de Jésus*, really contain the germ of a complete theory of prayer, to which we will return when dealing with the subject of mental prayer. For the moment we may merely note that according to St. John prayer is before all and above all an exercise the object of which is to render to God that tribute of adoration and love, of satisfaction and thanksgiving, to which He has a right. It is only when he has drily performed these duties that a Christian may turn to his own needs and ask for their fulfilment, and he does so less from self-interest than from a desire to be able to love and to serve God. For, as St. John (like Cardinal de Bérulle and his followers) frequently reminds us: "the interests of God must be dearer to us than our own." (1) Accordingly prayer in his view is profoundly *theocentric*.

### **The theocentric character of prayer.**

Then the Saint portrays the excellence of prayer so defined. "Prayer," he says, "is a participation in the life of the angels and saints, in the life of Jesus and His most holy Mother, and even in the life of God Himself and of the Three Divine Persons.

(1). Cf. *supra*, p. 54.

134-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

For the life of the angels and saints, of Christ and His Blessed Mother, is nothing else but a continual exercise of prayer and of contemplation, since they are unceasingly occupied in contemplating, glorifying and loving God, and asking for us whatever may be necessary for us. And the Three Divine Persons are perpetually occupied in contemplating, glorifying and loving each other, all of which acts are the primary and principal elements of prayer."

Those last words, intentionally placed last, stress still more, if possible, the theocentric character of prayer as conceived by our Saint, and show us that in his view it is primarily and principally an exercise of contemplation and love, resulting from the charity with which our hearts are flooded by the Holy Ghost. Seen in this light it is truly a participation in the life of the angels and saints and a foretaste of the life of heaven.

"Prayer," continues the Saint, "is perfect felicity, sovereign happiness, and truly heaven upon earth. By this divine exercise the Christian soul is united to God, who is its centre, end, and sovereign good. Therein it possesses Him and is possessed by Him; therein it fulfils its duties to Him, its homage, its adoration, and its love, and therein it receives from Him its lights and blessings, and the thousand

manifestations of the exceeding great love that God has for it. Therein, finally, God takes His delight in us in accordance with His own words: 'My delight is to be with the children of men,'<sup>(1)</sup> and makes us understand by experience that true joy and perfect happiness are to be found in God, a hundred or even a thousand years of the false plea  
(1). Prov. viii, 31.

## PRAYER

135-

sure of the world not being worth a single moment of the real delights that God gives to souls who put all their happiness in conversing with Him by means of prayer."<sup>(1)</sup>

Of course prayer has its difficulties and trials, as Père Eudes well knew: he devoted a chapter of *Le Royaume de Jésus* to spiritual dryness and afflictions. But whether it be easy or laborious, delightful or arid, prayer is always an exercise of praise and love of God, and even when we are deprived of the sweetness of sensible devotion the Saint would have us find all our happiness in conversing with God in prayer.

### The necessity of prayer.

He adds that prayer is "the true and proper function of a man and of a Christian, for man is created only for God and for union with Him, and a Christian is only on earth in order there to continue what Christ did while He was upon earth." Therefore prayer is the basis of a truly human life, and above all the foundation of a Christian life. It is true that if we are to be really Christian we must add to prayer the practice of virtue and the fulfilment of our daily duties; but it is prayer which makes us love and practise virtue and gives us the necessary courage to face the demands of duty however formidable these may be.

And the Saint concludes with this pressing admonition: "That is why as forcibly as I possibly can I exhort you who read these lines and conjure you in the name of God, that since our most lovable Jesus deigns to find His delight in being with us and in conversing with us by means of prayer, you do not deprive Him of His pleasure, but find out by experience how true is the  
(1). Part II, n. xliii.

136

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Holy Spirit's declaration that 'her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness.'<sup>(1)</sup> Look on this matter as the first, the most necessary, the most pressing and most important of all your affairs, and free yourself so far as possible from other less necessary affairs so as to give as much time as you possibly can to this, especially in the morning, in the evening, and shortly before dinner."<sup>(2)</sup>

### B. MENTAL PRAYER

Mental prayer is internal prayer which consists, not in the recitation of a formula, but in purely interior acts in which language has none but a purely accidental part, as, for instance, happens when we make use of a formula to arouse our attention or to stimulate our devotion.

It has always been held in high honour by pious souls, and especially in religious communities; but it is since the fifteenth century that the custom has arisen in many institutes of devoting a fixed time every day to the regular practice of mental prayer; and it was for the purpose of helping souls to fulfil this duty fruitfully that there grew up what we now call "methods of prayer."



St. John considered mental prayer of capital importance, and called it "the mother and nurse of true piety;"(3) indeed in his *Memorial de la vie ecclésiastique* he boldly declared it to be "as necessary for the soul of a Christian, and much more so for that of a priest and pastor, as is material bread for the body."(4) So, too, in his *Bon*

(1). *Wisdom, VIII, 16.*

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xi.

(3). *Oeuvres complètes*, III, p. 264.

(4 ). *Ibid.*, III, p. 54.

## PRAYER

137 -

*Confesseur*, after showing that piety is indispensable to o.ll who propose to hear confessions ' he adds these strong words: "But what is piety? If you would be acquainted with it and possess it you must practise mental prayer. Then you will soon know and possess it. But I declare to you that so long as you do not know by experience what mental prayer is you will not know what true piety is and you will not be fit to hear confessions. " ( 1 )

### Fruits of prayer.

He is no less outspoken in his *Prédicateur apostolique*: "It is in prayer," he says, "that God so enlightens our minds that we are able to see the importance and the beauty of Christian virtue; it is therein, too, that He possesses Himself of our hearts so that we may taste of and love that virtue. And when we are fully persuaded of this and powerfully influenced by it, then we have a wonderful power of making it intelligible to others and of firmly impressing it in their hearts. The truths with which God enlightens our minds, and by the consideration of which we are moved to serve and to love Him, have an incomparably greater power of inflaming our hearts than have those which we derive solely from books without having meditated and pondered upon them before God. There is almost as much difference between these two sets of truths as there is between well-cooked and well-seasoned dishes and those that are totally unprepared."(2)

He considered that ecclesiastical and religious communities absolutely require mental prayer, and that without it they cannot survive: "Without prayer," he one day wrote to the superior of one of his houses, "it

(1). *Ibid.*, IV, p. 224.

(2). *Ibid.*, IV., pp. 77-78.

138-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

is impossible for a Congregation to subsist in the spirit of piety and virtue which is necessary for it if it is to be pleasing to God and useful to the Church." And he added: "There is little difference between making half an hour's prayer and not making it, yet nothing is more necessary for ecclesiastics, and I know of no seminary in which they do not make an hour's mental prayer. (1)

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* also the Saint strongly recommends pious souls to practise mental prayer. "This manner of prayer," he tells them, "is so holy, so useful and so full of blessings that its value cannot be expressed in words. And therefore, if God draws you to it and gives you this grace, you ought to thank Him as having given you a very great gift. If He has not yet given you this gift, beg Him to do so and for your part do everything you can to correspond to His grace and to practise this holy exercise which God will teach you more clearly than will all the books and all the teachers in the world if you will cast yourself at His feet with humility, confidence and purity of heart."(2)

(1). *Oeuvres complètes*, X, pp. 482-283.

(2). These words show that the Saint does not attach very much importance to treatises on, and

consequently to methods of prayer. Not that he despises them. He advises his priests to give retreatants and beginners in the spiritual life the guidance they require for commencing the practice of prayer, and he even suggests to them that they should give them the sixth volume of Louis of Grenada's *Memorial of the Christian Life*. He also advises that beginners should be given subjects of prayer suited to their capabilities, and he would have them give an account of their prayer. But in spite of all this he only attaches secondary importance to these means of training. For him as, indeed, for everyone else, the true master of prayer is the Holy Spirit, and it is for Him to teach us to make it well. Cf. *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, p. 6, ch. ii; and p. 13, ch. 1v.

## PRAYER

139-

### The nature of mental prayer.

St. John does not dwell at any length on the nature of mental prayer, but the few lines given to the subject in *Le Royaume de Jésus* have a clarity and precision that leave nothing to be desired. "In mental prayer," he says, "the soul occupies itself interiorly with God, taking as its subject one of the divine perfections, or some mystery, virtue, or saying of the Son of God, or something that He has done or is now still doing in the order of glory, grace, or nature, in His Holy Mother, in the Saints, in His Church, or in the natural world. The soul first uses its understanding to consider quietly, attentively and perseveringly the truths to be discovered in this selected subject that are capable of exciting it to love God and to detest its sins. Then it causes the heart and the will to produce diverse acts and affections of adoration, praise, love, humility, contrition, oblation and the like, together with the resolution of fleeing from evil and doing good, according as the Spirit of God shall suggest to it." (1)

With all their brevity these few lines plainly show the Saint's mind on the subject of prayer; they tell us what should be its subject and of what acts it should be composed. Let us glance, then, at the author's teaching on both these points. In the first place he would have us take as the subject of our prayer one of the divine perfections, a mystery, a virtue, or a saying of the Incarnate Word, or else consider how He operates in His saints, in His Church, or in the natural world. In brief, he would have us occupy ourselves in our meditations with God and the Incarnate Word. He seems to exclude purely moral subjects, which instead of draw

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xii.

140-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

ing souls to God and His love, throw it back upon itself and plunge it into preoccupation with its own personal interests. Nor would he have us limit ourselves in our prayers to considering in themselves the Christian virtues, the evangelical truths or the example of the Saints, but he wants us always to consider them in their relations with the Incarnate Word. In his eyes the Christian virtues are a participation in the virtues of Jesus, the Gospel truths are words of instruction that have fallen from His lips, and the examples left by the saints are the fruits of Christ's sanctifying action in each of them; and it was in this way that he was accustomed to consider them in his works and his letters. And thereby we see that his views on prayer were in perfect harmony with his teaching on devotion to the Incarnate Word and the life of Christ within us.

## **Acts of the intellect and the will.**

As for the acts that go to make up prayer: these are of two kinds, springing respectively from the intellect and the will. It is true that, strictly speaking, prayer consists in the affections of the will acting under the influence of grace; but the will is a blind faculty, and if it is to be attached to what is good the intellect must present that good to it and make it recognise it. And so we should begin our prayer with acts of the intellect, eluding our understanding," as he says, "to consider attentively and perseveringly the truths it discovers in those subjects that are capable of exciting it to love God and to detest its sins, which truths it discovers in the subject under consideration." Thus we should not dwell on purely speculative truths: to do so would be to make our meditation a study, whereas it ought to

## **PRAYER**

141 -

be an exercise Of Piety. The only truths which should engage our attention are those which can move us to love and serve God, and these we should consider with gentle and insistent attention; gentle, because prayer should be made quietly, without striving or fatigue; and insistent, because otherwise the heart will remain cold and will soon stray off to other matters.

Later on we shall see what the Saint asks us to consider in the mysteries of the Incarnate Word, but for the present we may note that he does not ask of us wise and profound considerations, but very simple and easy reflections. Prayer, in fact, is within the grasp of all pious souls; provided that they know the mysteries and the teaching of the Incarnate Word they know enough to be able to make first-rate prayer. "O Jesus, my Lord," writes our Saint, "Thou art entirely lovable, infinitely lovable, and infinitely worthy of being loved. It is enough, my God, that I have this knowledge. What need have I of great learning, of internal illuminations and considerations? It suffices me to know that my Jesus is entirely lovable, and that there is nothing in Him that is not worthy of being infinitely loved. Let my mind, then, be content with this knowledge; but let my heart never weary of loving Him who can never be sufficiently loved. " (1)

There are to be found in the Saint's works, and especially in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, some meditations complete in themselves, which are models of mental prayer, and it is obvious at a glance that their "points" are extremely simple and well within the range of all minds. This is the case, for example, with the meditations  
(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, IV, n. viii.

142-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

tions set out in *Le Royaume de Jésus* for each day of the week and for devotions on the subject of baptism. Unfortunately, for want of understanding these principles many souls are never trained to prayer, for they try to make use of learned reflections which are beyond their capability and which have nothing in common with prayer.(1)

As for the acts of the will demanded by prayer, they may be reduced to three. The first is an act of adoration united to acts of praise, thanksgiving, reparation, and (especially) love. We have to adore Jesus in all His mysteries, in all His virtues and works, because He is our God and therefore always has a right to the supreme worship owed by the creature to his Creator. We must praise and glorify Him because of His infinite perfections, we must thank Him for His benefactions and above all for the glory that He procures His Father; we must ask His pardon for our ingratitude and our sins, and lastly protest that we love Him with our whole

(1). "God be praised!" said St. Vincent de Paul one day, repeating these three words four or five times over, for he had just been told by M. Coglée, a priest of his society, that he devoted himself in his prayer chiefly to making acts of affection. St. Vincent greatly praised this method and said that that was the way in which we must act in meditation, not beguiling ourselves by looking for reasonings, but arousing the affections by acts of love of God, of humility, of sorrow for sin, and the like. For of what use are reasonings to us when we are persuaded of the truth of the matter on which we are meditating? "Oh," he said, "how I wish that the company (of St. Sulpice) would make a practice of promptly following the lights given by God and not leave these for the purpose of beguiling themselves by looking for reasons that are useless to us since we have no need of them! ...I beg all priests to ask this grace for the company to-day in their Masses, and all the clerical students and brethren in the seminary to pray for it when they are assisting at Mass and receiving Holy Communion. And let their second intention in communicating be to obtain this grace from God for our little company." *Entretiens*, Vol. XI, p. 401. Quoted by Pourrat: *La spiritualité chrétienne*, III, p. 584.

## PRAYER

143 -

heart and that we want to use all that we are and all that we have for the purpose of loving him.

The second act is what the Saint calls oblation, and by that he means not only the giving and consecration of self to Jesus, but also and more particularly an act by which, renouncing all power of disposing of ourselves or of acting of our own accord, we give ourselves up to Him entirely, so that He can take possession of us, eradicate in us everything opposed to His influence, make us sharers in His mysteries and virtues, and guide us in everything as the head guides the members that it vivifies. It is, in short, that "adherence- so strongly recommended by Bérulle and his school. To this oblation is naturally added a request to Jesus to take possession of our heart and to establish therein His life and virtues. It is true that this request is already virtually included in the oblation of which we speak, but St. John almost always makes it the subject of a formal act, as for instance in the *Ave Cor*, (1) and in many of the prayers that he prints in *Le Royaume de Jésus* and in the *Manuel* that he wrote for his congregation of priests.

The last act involved in prayer is a resolution of fleeing from evil and of doing good, imitating the example of the Divine Master and putting His holy teaching into practice. This shows us that the Saint had the same view of prayer as had Père de Condren, M. Olier and all the followers of Cardinal de Bérulle. (2)

(1). In the *Ave Cor* we find after acts of adoration, praise, thanksgiving and love, these words: "Tibi cor nostrum offerimus, donamus, consecramus, immolamus; accipe et posside illud totum, et purifica et illumina et sanctifica ut in ipso vivas et regnes et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen." This is that oblation or adherence which we have just explained.

(2). On the method of prayer followed by the French school, see *Règlements de l'Oratoire* in Bérulle's *OEuvres* (Migne col. 1638-1643); also the *Avis to Bourgoing's Meditations sur les vérités et excellences de Jésus-Christ* (reprinted by Bremond in his *Introduction à l'étude de la prière*); Olier: *Catéchisme chrétien pour la vie intérieure*, II, vi-viii; *Introduction à la vie et aux vertus chrétiennes*, ch. iv; *Amelotte: Vie du Père de Condren*, 11, ch. xviii; and Letourneau: *La méthode d'oraison. mentale du Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice*. In this last book Letourneau quotes a large number of the texts that we have just indicated. In the Sulpician system oblation or adherence is called «communion» and the resolutions are styled «co-operation»; but if the names are different, the doctrine is identically the same.

144 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

But in that there is no cause for surprise, for prayer, as taught by this school, is but a putting into practice in our relations with God of the principles that sum up St. John's spiritual teaching.

We might add that the various elements in prayer unite and interact throughout its whole course, so that in St. John's view there is no necessity to make our considerations and our affective acts two distinct matters. The intellect and the will have to work together, as they do in the meditations given in *Le Royaume de Jésus*. Nor is it necessary to separate the various acts of the will so as to make them in the order we have just shown. For they also combine and intermingle, and we may even say that in practice each of them calls up the other two, implicitly contains them and can suffice for the making of a good prayer.

**How to meditate  
on the mysteries:  
seven  
considerations.**

Let us now turn to the mysteries which St. John says must be "the subject of our contemplation and adoration,- "the object of all our pious exercises," the "daily bread and nourishment of our spiritual life," and consequently the ordinary subject-matter of our mental prayer. To help us in meditating on these mysteries the Saint points out seven things which we have to consider and to honour in each of them.

**PRAYER**

145 -

**The first  
consideration:  
the external  
aspect.**

Of these the first is the body or external aspect of the mystery, which St. John explains as being "all that externally happened in the mystery. For example, the external aspect of the mystery of Our Lord's birth includes the nakedness, poverty, cold, helplessness and insignificance in which He was born, the baby clothes with which He was covered, His lying on the manger straw between the ass and the ox, His tears and infant cries, the little movements of His sacred hands and feet, the first use He made of His eyes, His mouth, and His other senses, His repose upon the breast of His Blessed Mother, the refreshment He drew thence, the sweet kisses and embraces that He received from her and from St. Joseph, the visit of the shepherds, and everything else that was said and done exteriorly in the stable at Bethlehem on that night that saw the birth of the Son of God."

Père Eudes then adds: "All that deserves to be considered and honoured, for there is nothing of small moment in the mysteries of Jesus, in them everything is important, divine, and adorable. And if the Son of God takes the trouble to give His mind and His Heart (which, it would seem, should only take note of what is divine) to considering and counting our every step and even the hairs of our heads, as He Himself assures us; and if He writes in His Heart and preserves as treasures the least actions that we perform for Him, so as to honour and glorify them for ever in heaven: with what care, in that case, should we apply our minds and hearts to considering, adoring and glorifying the smallest occurrences in His life and mysteries

**146 - THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

since there is nothing in these that is not infinitely great and admirable, and which does not deserve infinite honour and adoration."

**The second:  
the interior spirit of  
the mystery.**

The second feature that we must consider in each mystery is, in St. John's words, the « interior spirit of which is the particular virtue, power the mystery. and brace in that mystery, proper and peculiar to it, each mystery having its own particular virtue and spirit. Included also in this interior spirit are the thoughts, and intentions, the affections, sentiments, dispositions, and interior occupations with which it was performed; in a word all that passed interiorly in regard to it in the mind, the heart, and the holy soul of Jesus when He performed that mystery, as well as in the minds and hearts of all who were there present.»

"It is this," the Saint proceeds, "that must be chiefly considered and honoured in the mysteries of Jesus: and yet it is precisely this that is least considered and honoured. For many content themselves with contemplating the exterior body without passing on to the interior spirit of these mysteries, though this last is the principle, the foundation, the substance, the life and the truth of the mystery, whereas the external body is but the shell, the accidental accessory and appearance of the mystery. The external body is fugitive and temporal, but the interior spirit to be found in each mystery is permanent and eternal."(!0

(1). These views on the interior spirit of the various are common to all spiritual writers of the French school. "They love," says M. Letourneau, «to penetrate the very *interior* of the sensible mysteries of Jesus, contemplating its life of supernatural grace, and examining in it the marvels of that divine life which flows from the head into the members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ." *L'École française*, p. 7. Cf. Bérulle in Migne, col. 1052 sq.; and Bremond: *L'École française*, p. 70 sq.

**PRAYER**

147 -

**The other  
considerations**

The third thing to be honoured in Our Lord's mysteries is composed of the effects that He has produced and still continually produces by each of them.

The fourth comprises the particular designs entertained by Jesus in each of His mysteries.

The fifth is the share and the special part taken by the Blessed Virgin in each mystery. «Forshe,» says St. John, "has a quite particular and extraordinary part in all her Son's states and mysteries. She alone has a greater share therein than all the angels, the saints, and the whole world put together; for the Son of God worked in her greater and more wonderful things by each of His mysteries than He worked in all the angels, in all the saints and in all the rest of the world. Moreover, Our Blessed Lady has by herself given greater honour to all her Son's mysteries than have all the angels, the saints, and the rest of the world together."

The sixth thing that we have to consider in His mysteries is the part played therein by the angels and saints particularly connected with each mystery.

Lastly, the seventh matter to be considered and revered is the singular and special part that we have in these mysteries. "For we," says St. John, "have a quite special part in every one of Our Lord's mysteries, inasmuch as in each of them the Son of God had some idea, some plan, or some particular aspect of His love to reveal for each of us. He desired therein to communi

cate certain graces to us and to give us certain special favours both on earth and in heaven."(1)

Obviously the Saint does not seek to persuade us to consider all these things in our meditations. From them every one is free to choose those which most attract him or correspond to his particular needs and to concentrate his thoughts and his love on these. And in due proportion it goes without saying that these principles equally apply to other possible subjects of prayer, especially to the mysteries of the Blessed Virgin, the Christian virtues, and the teachings of Our Divine Master.

**Prayer is  
adoration and  
love.**

Such is the view of prayer given us by St. John and the method of practising it that he proposes, and we have already said that these are also the views of the whole French School. Prayer, for all writers of this School, is before all else adoration and love: it is profoundly theocentric. Moreover, it is a means of increasing the life of Jesus within us, and that is why all these writers stress the necessity of oblation or adherence of self to Jesus, as explained by Cardinal de Bérulle. But since participation in the life of Jesus demands real efforts to permeate ourselves with His thoughts and virtues, it implies serious resolutions that will ensure its efficacy.

We may add that prayer, as conceived by the followers of Cardinal de Bérulle, gives little opportunity to the imagination or to the discursive element. All it demands of the intellect is certain considerations entirely based on the doctrinal information given us by the Gospels without any admixture of the artificial or

(1) *Royaume de Jésus*, III, n. vii.

## PRAYER

149-

the arbitrary. The intellect need only be filled with the spirit of prayer in order that the heart, in its turn, may thence derive an increase of love and of generosity in the service of God.

## C. THE DIVINE OFFICE

In the opinion of St. John vocal prayer is scarcely less useful than mental prayer, provided that the heart prays as well as the tongue, in which case prayer is, in fact, both vocal and mental. But if they are recited out of mere routine and without attention, vocal prayers leave us more dissipated and colder than we were before we began them: and that is why, apart from those that are of obligation, the Saint advises us to make but few, and to accustom ourselves to making these in a holy fashion, with great attention and application, engaging the mind and heart in various holy thoughts and affections while the tongue speaks.(1)

The principal vocal prayer, at least for priests and religious, is, of course, the Divine Office, and St. John made it the subject of a special book which was never printed and which has now been lost. But he also treats of it at some length in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, (2) and from this book Pierre Hérambourg drew all that he tells us of the way in which the Saint recited his Office. The author stresses the preparation that is necessary if we are to say it in a holy fashion:

"The chief reason," he says, "why we are very often worried by distractions and useless and extravagant thoughts in our vocal prayers is that our minds must always be occupied by some thoughts, whether good or

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, a. xiii.

(2). VI, n. xxxi-xxxiii.

150-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

bad. Therefore, if evil and useless thoughts are to be excluded, we must take great care from the beginning of our prayer to give our minds and hearts entirely to Jesus so that He may fully possess them; and for our part we must accustom ourselves to filling our minds with good thoughts and holy affections, being careful not to let ourselves perform so holy an action slackly and imperfectly, or out of mere habit and routine rather than from piety and devotion."

### **Dignity and value of the Divine Office.**

With this object in view he invites us to remind our selves that recitation of the Divine Office is «one of the holiest actions performed in heaven and on earth. So grand and lofty is it that not only does it continually and eternally occupy the vast host of angels and saints in heaven as well as the Queen of Angels and Saints, the Blessed Virgin; but it also occupies through all eternity the Three Divine Persons of the Sacred Trinity who unceasingly praise, bless and glorify each other. The Divine Office is holy and divine, and consequently should be chanted or recited in a holy and divine manner, that is, with holy and divine dispositions.»

The Saint might have stressed the special nature of the Divine Office by reminding us that it is the official prayer of the Church, and he also might have insisted on its doctrinal wealth, the examples of virtue that it puts before us, and the devotional spirit of the prayers that go to comprise it. In this respect it is specially suitable for strengthening faith and piety. But he omits these considerations, some of which have a motive of self-interest, and he confines himself to the general consideration, applicable to all prayer, that

## **PRAYER**

151-

recitation of the Office is a holy and divine action that must be performed in a holy fashion.

Then he reminds us that we are unworthy and incapable of carrying out this duty as it should be done, and again he exhorts us to renounce ourselves and to give ourselves to Jesus so that He may praise God in us and for us:

### **We are unworthy to recite it.**

"Considering," he says, "the dignity and holiness of this action, acknowledge that, of yourself, you have no worthiness or capacity in you for performing it in a holy way, and that everything in you that comes from yourself is opposed to this, and even that you are quite up-worthy of presenting yourself before God and of appearing before such lofty majesty. Therefore annihilate yourself at His feet, give yourself to Jesus, and beg Him to empty you of self and to establish Himself in you, so that He Himself may perform this work, praising and glorifying His Father and Himself in you, He alone being worthy to do that. Give yourself up to the zeal and love with which He unceasingly praises His Father in heaven and on earth, beneath the earth and throughout the world. For, strictly speaking, there is but the



one Jesus praising and glorifying God throughout the universe: He praises and glorifies Him eternally in heaven, by Himself and by His Holy Mother, by His angels and by His saints. So, too, He continually praises and blesses Him upon earth, by Himself in the Blessed Sacrament upon our altars, wherein He perpetually praises and adores His Father, and also by all holy souls on earth who praise God whether in public or in private. Moreover, He praises and magnifies Him in the nether regions where He is

152 -

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

in His Divine Person and where He perpetually acts in regard to His Father even as He does in heaven. Finally, He praises and exalts Him unceasingly throughout the world, which is filled with His presence and divine majesty, and with the perpetual praises and benedictions that He everywhere renders to His Father.

"Unite yourself with all these praises rendered by Jesus to His Father and with the Most Holy Trinity everywhere and at all times, and unite yourself also with His humility, attention, love, purity and holiness, together with all the other divine dispositions with which Jesus is ever filled in His praise of His Father."

**A suggested  
method of  
reciting it.**

And then St. John shows us «an excellent way" of saying the Divine Office. It consists in devoting the various Hours of the Office to the principal mysteries of the life of Jesus: the first nocturne to the divine life which He has from all eternity in the bosom of His Father, the second to His life in the world before the Incarnation, the third to His hidden life within Mary; Lauds may be devoted to His Sacred Childhood, Prime to His hidden and laborious life at Nazareth, Terce to His public life, Sext to His Passion, and None to His death and burial. Finally Vespers may be consecrated to His life on earth in the Eucharist and in the members of His mystical Body; and Compline to "the state and dominion that is His throughout the world, in heaven, on earth, in purgatory, in hell, in the world of nature, of grace, and of glory, over mankind, the angels and all creatures; and generally in honour of all that He has been, is, and will be in His divinity and His humanity, and of all that He has done and will do eternally in regard to His Father,

## **PRAYER**

153-

Himself, the Holy Ghost, His Blessed Mother, His angels and saints, and all creatures."

"When saying each part of the Office," St. John says elsewhere, "we must apply our mind to considering that part of the life of Jesus in honour of which we are saying it; that is, we must consider what happened in Jesus during that part of His life, His thoughts and plans, affections and dispositions, the actions that He performed, the virtues He practised, His interior occupation in regard to His Father, to Himself, to the Holy Spirit, to His Blessed Mother, and to His angels and saints, and especially the thoughts, designs, and love that He entertained in regard to you in particular. We must also consider the glory and praise given Him during that part of His life by His Father, by the Holy Spirit, by His Holy Mother, and by the angels and saints."

And after considering all that passed during that part of His life, "we must," the Saint continues, "think of ourselves; and realising how remote are our lives from the holiness and perfection of that of our Head, whom we are obliged to imitate, we have to abase ourselves profoundly and to ask His pardon. Then we must give ourselves to Him so as to honour and imitate that portion of His life with the

perfection that He asks of us; beg Him to imprint Himself on us and to glorify Himself in us by eradicating in us everything that could hamper His action in us; and finally we must unite ourselves with all the praises that have been given, are being given, and will be given to Him in that part of His life by the Father, the Holy Spirit, etc."

St. John then adds: "If it is part of the temporal

154-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

life of Jesus that we are honouring in our Office, we must, when we give ourselves to Him to honour that part of His life, offer and consecrate to Him the corresponding part of our own life in honour of that part of His; begging Him to destroy everything evil in that part of our life and to bring it about that everything in that part of our life may render glory and homage to all that passed in the corresponding part of His life. "

In fact St. John advises us to join to the recitation of the Office prayer that is purely mental and independent of the Office itself: and though he assigns a special subject to it he looks upon it in the same light as ordinary mental prayer. And this is but the view of those theologians who tell us to give our attention above all, not to the words that we pronounce (although they must be pronounced carefully), nor to their meaning, but to God to whom our prayer is addressed.

The Saint then goes on to say that this method of praying is very easy and does not lengthen the recitation of the Office. ---Notice,- he says,---that it is not necessary ... when doing all this to stop or to interrupt your recitation of the Office; for it can all be done by giving your mind to these practices while you continue to chant or recite the Office, so that whether you have much or little experience in making such interior acts you will need no extra time for this particular act. On the contrary, the time that you give to it will seem very short because of the great sweetness and fruitfulness that you will discover in thus interiorly giving your mind and heart to Jesus, who is the source of all benediction and consolation.

But the Saint also shows us another way of worthily

## **PRAYER**

155 -

### **A second method.**

reciting the Divine Office: as we recite each hour we can unite ourselves with the praises given to Jesus in heaven, on earth, and in the nether regions by His Father, by the Holy Ghost, by His Blessed Mother, His angels, His saints, and by all creation. And he advises that we should do it by acts similar in all due proportion to those he has just described.

For the holy recitation of the Little Office of Our Lady or of the Rosary he recommends practices of the same sort that will be found in Part VI of *Le Royaume de Jésus*.

## **D. THE HABIT OF PRAYER**

### **How to pray always.**

Yet another way of praying, as St. John tells us, consists in "performing all our actions in a Christian and holy manner, offering even the smallest of them to Our Lord when we begin them, and

from time to time raising our hearts to Him as we perform these actions... For to do them in this way is to do them in the spirit of prayer and to be continually praying, thereby fulfilling the commandment of Our Lord who would have us 'pray without ceasing.'(1) This is an excellent and very simple way of being always in the presence of God.» (2)

Elsewhere the Saint returns to the same thought: "By means of the aforesaid practices, and by frequent elevations of the mind and heart to God, your whole life will belong to Jesus, all your actions will glorify Him, you will walk always before Him, and you will

(1).1 Thess. v, 17,

(2) Royaume de Jésus, 1, n. xiv.

156 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

always be in His presence; for this is the true and the simplest means of being always in God's presence and of continually loving Him.

"I know quite well that he who is in the grace of God and who offers Him every morning all that he is about to do throughout the day, even though during the day he gives no thought to God, none the less thereby causes all his actions to glorify God (so long as they are not of themselves evil). But since Our Lord Jesus has offered for us to His Father all His actions upon earth, and thinks of us and loves us every moment, that man would need to have very little knowledge and love of Jesus to think of Him only once or twice a day. Certainly, if we truly love our Adorable Saviour we must find all our happiness in thinking of Him and in frequently raising our minds and hearts to Him, which can be done without any trouble or forcing of the mind, but quite easily and gently. For with the help of His grace which is never lacking, and with a little care and fidelity on our part, we become so accustomed to this holy practice that it almost becomes part of our nature.

### Ejaculatory prayer.

"To prove that, I will tell you the true story of a priest I knew whose name is written in the book of life. This priest, by the constant exercise of this practice, reached the stage at which he could, while taking his meals, easily make acts of love of Jesus almost as many as the morsels he put in his mouth; and this he did not only without any forcing of his mind or any inconvenience or any harm to his health, but even with such facility and gentleness that it in no way prevented him from speaking and from taking charitable recreation

## PRAYER

157 -

with his neighbour whenever in company or whenever the occasion presented itself. I do not tell you this in order that you might do the same, for then you would at once say that I was asking something very difficult of you; but I tell you so that you may know the great power of a holy habit, and how wrong the world is in imagining a thousand difficulties and trials where in reality there is but charm and delight."(1)

So we see that for St. John the habit or spirit of prayer is a duty of thankfulness and a necessity of the heart. He constantly recommends it. In very truth his book *Le Royaume de Jésus* is nothing but an initiation into the interior life and the habit of prayer. And the same may be said of his *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*. And what the Saint so insistently recommended he himself was the first to practise; it is, in fact, perfectly clear, and Père Hérambourg definitely asserts as much, that the priest in the story just quoted is none other than the Saint himself.

## E. HOLY MASS

Holy Mass, which St. Francis de Sales calls "the sun of pious exercises," is a prayer; but it is a prayer of a particular kind, for it is the sacrifice of the new law and the representation and continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross. St. John gives several pages of *Le Royaume de Jésus* (2) to showing us how to assist at it with most profit. Here, as everywhere, he rests his teaching on the great principle that being members of Jesus Christ we make but one with Him:

"As soon as you leave your house to go to Mass," he  
(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VI, n. xix.  
(2). VI, n. xxiv-xxx.

158-

### THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

says, "you must reflect that you are going not merely to assist or to witness, but that you are actually going to perform an action which is the most holy and divine, the greatest and most important, the loftiest and most wonderful that can be done in heaven or on earth. And reflect, too, that consequently it must be performed in a holy and sacred way, i.e. with holy and sacred dispositions, and with the utmost care and application of mind and heart, as being the most important affair on earth. I said 'you are going to perform,' for every Christian being but one with Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest, and consequently being a sharer in His divine Priesthood (for which reason all are called priests in Scripture), he has a right not only to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, but also to perform with the priest what the latter does, that is, to offer with him and even with Christ the Sacrifice which is offered to God on the altar. "

**All who attend  
both sacrificers  
and victims.**

A little further on the Saint reminds us: "You must remember that Christians being one **are** with Jesus, as the members with their head, for which reason they share in all His qualities, and Jesus in this sacrifice being both priest and victim; so, similarly, all those who assist at that Sacrifice must assist as priests or sacrificers for the purpose of offering with Christ, the Sovereign Priest, the very Sacrifice that He offers. And also they are present as holocausts and victims, making but one victim, just as they make but one priest, with Jesus Christ, and so they must be immolated and sacrificed with the same Jesus Christ to the glory of God."

The Saint then goes on to explain what we must do

## PRAYER

159 -

in our double character of priest and victim: "And therefore," he says, "since you share in the divine Priesthood of Jesus Christ and as a Christian and a member of Christ bear the name and character of priest, you must exercise that character and use the right that it gives you of offering to God, along with the priest at the altar and even with Our Lord, the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood which is offered to Him in Holy Mass. Moreover, you must offer it, so far as is possible, with the very dispositions with which it is offered to Him by Jesus Christ. And how holy and divine are those dispositions! What humility they express, what purity and holiness, what detachment from self and from all creation, what attention to God, what charity for mankind, and what love for His Father! Unite yourself by desire and intention with those dispositions of Jesus, beg Him to impress them on you, so that you may offer the divine Sacrifice with Him, in union with His own dispositions.

## **Intentions at Mass.**

"Unite yourself also with the intentions for which He offers it. He has five principal intentions, of which the first is to honour

His Father in all that He is in Himself and in all things, and to render Him an honour, a glory, and a love that is worthy of Him. The second is to give Him thanks that are worthy of His goodness, and of all the benefits He has ever conferred on creatures. The third is fully to satisfy for all the sins of the world. The fourth is for the fulfilment of His plans and His will. And the fifth is to pray for all that is necessary for mankind, whether for the soul or for the body. In conformity with these intentions you should offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass:

160-

### **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

«(1) In honour of the Most Holy Trinity, in honour of all that Jesus is in Himself, in all His states, mysteries, qualities, virtues, actions, and sufferings, and in honour of all that He is and all that He does, either in mercy or in justice, in His Holy Mother, in all the angels and saints, in His Church (Triumphant, Militant, and Suffering), and in all creation in heaven, on earth, or in hell:

«(2) in thanksgiving to God for all the blessings and graces, temporal or eternal, that He ever communicated to the Sacred Humanity of His Son, to the Blessed Virgin, to all angels and men, to all creatures and especially to yourself;

«(3) in satisfaction to His divine justice for all your sins, for the sins of the whole world, and especially for those of the poor souls in Purgatory;

«(4) for the accomplishment of all His plans and desires, especially His plans in regard to yourself;

«(5) to obtain from His bounty all the graces necessary for you and for all men, so that He may be served and honoured by all with all the perfection that He demands from each of us.»

"That," continues St. John, "is what you must do as priest. But besides that, you must, as victim, when offering Jesus as a victim to the Father in Holy Mass, offer yourself also with Him as a victim; or rather beseech Jesus to come into you and draw you into Himself, so that He unites Himself to you and unites and incorporates you with Him as a victim, to sacrifice you with Himself to the glory of His Father.

«And because the victim to be sacrificed must be

## **PRAYER**

161-

### **The spirit of sacrifice must be in us.**

slain and then consumed in the fire ask Him to cause you to die to your self, i.e. to your passions, to your self-love, and to all that displeases Him; ask Him to consume you in the sacred fire of His divine love, and to bring it about that henceforth your whole life may be a perpetual sacrifice of praise, of glory and of love for His Father and for Himself.»

And after recommending the reader to communicate sacramentally or at least spiritually, the Saint concludes with these words: "After thanking Our Lord for the graces given you during Mass, go your way with the firm resolution of thoroughly utilising the day in His service, and with the thought in your mind that henceforth you have to be a victim that is both dead and alive: dead to all that is not God, and alive in God and for God, totally consecrated and sacrificed to the pure glory and the most pure love of God. Protest to Our Lord that this is your desire and that you offer yourself to Him to do and to suffer for this purpose all that He pleases. Beg Him to bring this about in you by His great mercy; beseech Him to give you the grace to raise your heart frequently to Him throughout the day, to do nothing save for His glory, to die rather than offend Him; and implore Him, for this purpose, to give you His Sacred Blessing."

And so we see that the Saint would have us add to the spirit of prayer the spirit of sacrifice. For it is by this two-fold means that we are enabled to lead a holy life entirely conformed to that of our head, which life is itself a continual prayer and a perpetually renewed sacrifice.

162-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES.

### F. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Taken by itself examination of conscience is not prayer, but in practice it is always accompanied by prayers intended to ensure its success. Furthermore, it is often, especially in the evening, one of the elements of prayer; and sometimes, as we shall see, it is even changed almost entirely into prayer.

St. John introduced into his Congregation of priests the three examinations customary in the Oratory, to wit: that of the morning, the examination before midday, and that of the evening. His view of them was the same as that of Bérulle and Condren, but in his *Manuel de Piété* he determined the subject and fixed the method more precisely than did they.

#### How to make the morning examination.

The morning examination is anticipatory and follows the conclusion of the morning's prayer. This is how the Saint requires it to be practised: "Let every one make an anticipatory examination, that is, let him foresee the faults into which he is accustomed to fall and the occasions of it that are likely to occur during the day; as also the virtues that he is particularly called upon to practise, especially humility, obedience, charity, and meekness. Let him make a resolution of avoiding the one and embracing the other, and let him ask the necessary grace from God." (1)

These four virtues mentioned by the Saint are those which he loved to contemplate in the Heart of Jesus and the practice of which he specially recommended. This is shown by the beautiful prayer that superiors of his houses recite every day during the visit to the

(1). *Oeuvres complètes*, 111, 272.

## PRAYER

163-

Blessed Sacrament that follows supper: *Christus Jesus, mitis et humilis Corde, propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, humiliavit semetipsum factus obediens usque ad mortem crucis: itaque omnia nostra in humilitate et obediencia et charitate et mansuetudine fiant.* (1) We shall shortly see that they also form the principal subject of the evening examination.

## **The evening examination.**

This takes place at the evening prayer and concerns itself with the faults committed during the day. It begins with an act of adoration and of respectful submission to the Sovereign judge: "Let us adore Our Lord Jesus Christ," cries the Saint, "as our sovereign judge and submit ourselves to His power of judging us. Let us adore and bless Him in the judgment that He exercises, and in the sentence that He will pronounce on us at the hour of death, whatever it may be; and let us beg Him to make us sharers in the light, by which He will make us see our sins, and in His divine justice, so that we may know and detest the sins we have this day committed."

Therein we can see the spirit of the French School, preoccupied before all else with giving to Jesus the honour that is His due and always careful to place His interests before our own, and to urge generous souls to the practice of pure love.

There then follows the actual examination itself "Let us examine ourselves," he says, "on the faults we have committed to-day in thought, word, and deed, and especially on those to which we are most addicted, and on those that we have committed contrary to the  
(1). Ibid., 111, 311.

164-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

resolutions taken during the morning prayer, and against *humility, obedience, charity and meekness.*"

The examination concludes with an act of contrition and of amendment: "Let us beg God," writes the Saint, "to give us a true spirit of repentance and contrition. Let us give ourselves to the Son of God to share with Him the humiliation, contrition, and penitence that He bore for our sins. Let us detest them because He detests them. Let us promise to correct them by means of His grace out of love for Him; and let us offer to the Eternal Father the life and virtues, the passion and death of His Son together with the merits of His Blessed Mother and of all the Church in satisfaction for our offences.

"Let us beg the Most Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, our good angels, and all the angels and saints to supply for our deficiencies, to ask pardon for us from God, and to obtain for us the grace of a true conversion."

**Inspired by desire  
for the glory of  
God rather than  
our own  
sanctification.**

The spirit that inspires these acts is always the same. They all tend to the glory of God more than to our personal sanctification and lead to the kindling of pure love.

This examination is followed by prayers animated by the same spirit which express, together with sorrow for past sins, a desire for a true and sincere conversion. These are the prayers in question:

*Peccavimus, Domine, peccavimus in coelum et coram te. Parce, clementissime Pater, Parce famulis tuis, quos redemisti pretioso sanguine dilectissimi Filii tui, et Propitius esto nobis vilissimis peccatoribus, peccata nostra*

*toto corde detestantibus propter te et tibi soli vivere cupientibus.*

*V. Converte nos, Deus salutaris noster.*

*R. Et averte iram tuam a nobis.*

*OREMUS. Respice, quaesumus, Domine, super hanc familiam tuam, toto corde tibi prostratam et ex nulla virtute sua subsistentem, sed in sola misericordia tua confidentem; ut eam, beata Maria semper virgine intercedente, cum beatis Gabriele, Joseph, ac omnibus sanctis, ab omni iniquitate emundes atque custodias et a te nunquam separari permittas, sed corde magno et animo volenti tuae facias inhaerere voluntati. Per Dominum. ( 1 )*

**The midday  
examination:  
our interior  
dispositions.**

The examination made before noon follows the recitation of the litanies of the Holy Name of Jesus or other litanies in honour of certain mysteries of the Incarnate Word. Its subject is not the faults committed, but the interior dispositions which ought to animate us in all the details of our lives. The subject varies in accordance with the weeks and days of the month.

Thus, during the first week, the examination concerns the particular virtues we ought to practise and also the mysteries and saints that we ought to honour during the year or the month. The object is the same for every day of the week.

During the second week the subject is God and His attributes, so that on Sunday it is the Blessed Trinity that is considered, on Monday the Divine Will, on Tuesday God's love for Himself, on Wednesday His love for His creatures, on Thursday the Divine Mercy, (1). *Oeuvres complètes*, III, pp. 313-315.

166-

**THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

on Friday the Divine justice, and on Saturday the holiness of God.

In the third week the examen bears on the qualities and titles of the Incarnate Word. Thus St. John invites us to adore Jesus on the various days of the week respectively as the only Son of the Father, as the principle of the Holy Ghost, as our Redeemer, as our Superior and Father, as our Head, as Priest and Victim, and as the only Son of Mary.

During the fourth week we are to reflect on the virtues of Jesus, taking respectively for each successive day His love for His Father, His humility, His patience, His dearest virtue, namely purity, His charity for mankind, His obedience, and His love for His Holy Mother.

As for the way this examination is made: it is always the same. The Saint explains it in a very short but precise phrase in which he enumerates the acts to be made. These are four in number: adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, and an offering of self, or, if you like, adherence. Here are a few passages from his writings that will serve as examples and will show better than any analysis the method recommended by the Saint:



**Suggested "acts"  
for this  
examination.**

"Let us adore Our Lord Jesus Christ in the particular virtues that we have to practise this year and this month, and also in the mysteries and saints we have to honour.

"Let us thank Him for the honour He has given His Father by the practice of these virtues, by these mysteries and these saints; and also for the favours He gave these same saints, and the graces He has given us by their intercession and by these same mysteries.

**PRAYER**

167 -

"Let us ask pardon of Him for the faults committed against the aforesaid virtues.

"Let us give ourselves to Him to honour these mysteries and saints and to practise these virtues with all the perfection that He asks of us, and beg Him to eradicate in us everything that can hinder us, and to give us the necessary grace. For this end let us invoke the prayers of our saints for this month....

"Let us adore with Jesus the Most Holy Trinity, all that it is in Itself and in all Its works in heaven, on earth, and in hell. Let us rejoice in It, thank It, ask pardon of It, and give ourselves to Its infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, so that It may destroy in us everything displeasing to It, and may possess and rule us, and establish for ever the rule of Its glory in our souls and bodies....

"Let us adore Jesus as the only Son of God and as one God with His Father and the Holy Ghost; as our Creator, preserver and governor, also as our Brother who has made us children of God and has given us His Father to be our Father. Let us thank Him for that, and ask His pardon for our misuse of His favours. Let us give ourselves to Him and beseech Him to make us sharers of His love for His Father and of His zeal for His glory....

"Let us adore Jesus in His most pure love of His Father and in the perfect submission He has always had to the Divine Will, and thank Him for the honour rendered to the Father by the practice of these virtues, asking His pardon at the same time for the faults we have committed against these same virtues. Let us give ourselves to Him so as to share in this love and submission; and let us beg the Blessed Virgin, the

168-

**THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

angels and the saints, to obtain for us this grace ...(1)

It is clear that examination of conscience has no place, or very little place, in all this. Rather does this exercise comprise a summary view of the imperfect way in which we have acquitted ourselves of certain duties incumbent upon us as Christians or as priests. Fundamentally it reduces itself to a prayer with a special subject, the acts of which, however, are those recommended by all the masters of the French School.

(1) *Oeuvres complètes*, 111, 286. This is all certainly a kind of particular examen, but it in no way resembles the particular examen and the spiritual book-keeping to be found in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, which St. John never mentions at all.

## CHAPTER V

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

**St. John was  
always practical.**

ST. JOHN often wrote of the Christian virtues, but always from a practical point of view (1), and it is useless to search his works for a dogmatic study on the nature of the virtues, their origin and progress, or their connections with each other and with sanctifying grace. For the Saint put speculative questions on one side, and concerned himself solely with what can help souls to acquire true and solid virtues. He has much to say on this subject in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, and begins by showing the excellence of the Christian virtues in general and how to practise them. Then he attends particularly to those which seem to him to be the most necessary and most important. We will here do the same, and in explaining his doctrine need scarcely do more than let him speak for himself.

### A. THE EXCELLENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES AND HOW TO PRACTISE THEM

Since the Christian life is but a participation in the life of Jesus, the Christian virtues, in which that life

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxii-xxxvii; *Regulae vitae christianae et sacerdotalis*, Part II; *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, III, IV, V. See also *Constitutions de Notre-Dame de Charité*, *L'Enfance admirable*, *Le Coeur admirable*, *Méditations sur l'humilité*, etc.

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

finds its full development, are also simply a continuation and reproduction in each of us of the Saviour's virtues. It is in His school that we must study them, it is on His grace that we must rely if we are to practise them, and it is through love of Him that we must exercise them.

St. John Eudes sadly observes that even amongst the faithful true and solid virtues are rare. "There are," he says, "many persons who esteem virtue, desire it, seek it, and take great trouble and labour to acquire it, and yet we see very few who are adorned by true and solid Christian virtues." And, asking the reason for this, he replies that "one of the main causes is that these persons conduct their search for virtue not so much in the spirit of Christianity as in that of the pagan philosophers and of heretics, that is to say not so much in the spirit of Jesus Christ and of the divine grace that He has acquired for us by His Blood, as in that of human nature and reason." (1) And he fixes on

(1). We see many who either every day or every week very carefully select certain virtues to be practised, and who keep a sharp look-out to see whether they neglect any opportunities that arise for practising them, and note their falls carefully for the purpose of confessing them and, if possible, of avoiding them for the future. But after practising this for a long time it is clear that they have derived little profit from it, *because they forget the inner aspect of the matter and do not enter into the spirit of the virtue in question, nor do they practise it with the suitable and necessary dispositions. . . . Every virtue has a spirit which is its essence or rather its soul and the form that vivifies and perfects it. Now those who would live the life of grace and acquire solid and Christian virtues must most carefully attend to these dispositions so as to make them their own, if they are to perform their actions perfectly; for without this, virtue is but external and superficial. And, moreover, they must know and seek the spirit of virtue or (as some say) its essence, so that when they practise this same virtue they can do so with its own spirit: that is to say, as they perform the external action they can have the internal*

sentiment or spirit of the virtue in question" (Quarré: *Le trésor spirituel*, 1638, pp. 157-158). Père Quarré's teaching is obviously the same as that of St. John Eudes. Both of them tell us that *external* acts of virtue are nothing without its *internal dispositions*, which constitute what they term "the spirit of grace," "the spirit of virtue," or "the spirit of Jesus." « For in their eyes the spirit of Jesus means the intimate dispositions of His Heart or the Holy Ghost which communicates them to Him. This is, in fact, a commentary on St. Paul's saying: *Qui Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei*. Let us note in passing that these principles are constantly to be found in the teachings of the French school, and that is why writers of that school so often speak to us of the Christian spirit, the spirit of prayer, the interior spirit, the spirit of the various mysteries, and the spirit of the virtues.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

171 -

three points as the source of the error of those who pursue virtue in too natural and human a manner:

### **Mistaken attitude towards the virtues.**

---1. They look upon virtue," he says, -simply with the eyes of human reason, esteem it as something in itself most excellent, in conformity with reason and necessary for the perfection of man to distinguish him from the beasts who are governed purely by the senses; and by these considerations, which are more human than Christian, they move themselves to desire and to acquire it.

---2. They persuade themselves that they can acquire it by their own efforts, by taking pains, by vigilance, by reflection, resolution and actual practice. And therein they greatly deceive themselves, for they ignore the fact that it is impossible for us to perform the smallest act of Christian virtue without the help of divine grace.

---3. They love virtue and strive to acquire it, but not so much for God and for His glory as for themselves, i.e., for the sake of their own merit, self-interest, and satisfaction, and for the purpose of making themselves more worthy and accomplished; which is the way in which pagans, and heretics, desire and seek it. Even

172-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

the very devils desire it in this way, for, being full of pride, they desire everything that can serve to make them more distinguished and outstanding. And so, since virtue is a most noble and excellent thing, they desire to have it: not in order that they may be more pleasing to God, but out of a spirit of pride and of self-esteem."(1)

The virtues acquired by acting in this way are not Christian virtues; they are natural and purely human virtues: human in the idea formed of them, in their principle, and in their end, which is self-love. «They have no foundation and no stability,» says St. John, "for they rest only on the weak human mind and reason and on the shifting sand of self-love and vanity."

### **The true view of virtue.**

But Christians who in the search for virtue act in accordance with the spirit of Jesus Christ, take a very different course. As St. John tells us:

«1. They consider virtue, not merely in itself, but in its principle and source, that is to say in Jesus who is the source of all grace, who eminently and in a sovereign degree possesses every kind of virtue,

and in whom virtue is of infinite worth. For since everything in Jesus

(1). M. Henri Bremond seems to think that these words are directed against St. Ignatius and his followers. Such is not our opinion. St. John is not attacking any writer, or any school of asceticism; he attacks only the purely natural *spirit* with which certain persons, including Christians, and even Religious, seek after virtue. So little does he attack the school of St. Ignatius that he ranks the works of Rodriguez and *Le saint travail des mains* of Père Thomas Le Blanc amongst the books that he would have in the hands of the novices of his Congregation. So, too, he would have the treatises on humility and obedience by Rodriguez and Le Blanc read in the houses of his institute after the reading of the *Constitutions* which is obligatory twice every year. Cf. Bremond: *L'École française*, pp. 135 sq. *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, Oct. 1922, p. 423; and Eudes *Oeuvres complètes*, IX, pp. 252, 264, 301.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

173-

is holy, divine and adorable, virtue is sanctified and deified in Him and consequently is worthy of infinite honour and adoration. And therefore, if we consider virtue in Jesus Christ, that consideration will be infinitely more potent in leading us to esteem, love, and seek it, than if we were to regard it merely in respect to its intrinsic excellence, and the esteem in which it is held by human reason.

"2. Those who are guided by the Christian spirit in practising the virtues know very well that they cannot perform the smallest act of virtue by themselves; that, on the contrary, if God should withdraw Himself from them, they would at once fall into an abyss of all sorts of vices; and that since virtue is a pure gift of God they must ask for it confidently and perseveringly. Therefore they continually ask God for the virtues that they require, without ever wearying; and at the same time for their part they bring the greatest possible care, vigilance, and toil to their efforts at acquiring it. Yet they take good care not to trust to, or to rely on, their own carefulness or practices, their desires or resolutions, nor even to the prayers they offer to God on this subject; but they await everything from the pure goodness of God, and are in no way anxious when they cannot perceive in themselves the virtues they desire.(1)

(1). The principle here pronounced by St. John is often to be found in his works. For instance, here is how he repeats it in connection with confidence in God: «we must take as much care,» he says, «and must so labour, as if we expected no help from God; and yet we must no more depend on our own care and labour than if we had done nothing at all, but expect everything solely from God's mercy.» The same teaching is attributed to St. Ignatius, who says: "*Haec Prima sit agendorum regulae: Sic Deo fide, quasi rerum successus omnis a te, nihil a Deo penderet; ita tamen iis operam omnem admove, quasi tu nihil, Deus omnia solus sit factur.*» Or, as Père Brou translates this. «The golden rule of action is: To have the utmost

174-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Instead of being troubled and discouraged, they rest peacefully and humbly before God, realising that it is due to their own fault and their own faithlessness. For they know that if God treated them as they deserved, not only would He give them none of the things for which they asked, but He would even deprive them of all the graces He had ever given them. They know, in fact, that He shows them too much kindness in not entirely rejecting and abandoning them. And this knowledge kindles a new fire of love in them, and a new confidence in that infinite goodness, together with an ardent desire to seek in every possible way the virtues necessary to them if they are to serve and glorify Him.

«3. It is not for their own sakes, for their own satisfaction or reward that they desire virtue and frequently strive to practise interior and exterior acts of love of God, of charity towards their neighbour, of patience, obedience, and humility, and of mortification and the other Christian virtues. They do this, not for their own sakes, but for God's pleasure and for His interests, in order to make themselves similar to their Head, who is Jesus Christ, to glorify Him, and to continue the exercise of

the virtues which He put into practice upon earth; and it is in this that Christian virtue properly

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

175-

consists. For, just as the Christian life is nothing else but a continuation of the life of Christ, so, too, Christian virtues are a continuation and completion of His virtues. And if virtues are to be put into practice in a Christian manner, it must be in the spirit in which Jesus practised them and with the motives and intentions that were His. Thus Christian humility is seen to be a continuation of the Humility of Our Lord; Christian charity a continuation of His charity, and so with the other virtues."

And the Saint sums up his teaching with these words:

"In short, Christian virtues are the actual virtues of Christ, with which we must be clothed, and which He communicates to those who adhere to Him, who ask for them with humility and confidence, and who try to practise them as He practised them." Thus, then, union, prayer, and practice are the ways recommended by St. John for acquiring these virtues.

But so as to be sure of being correctly understood, and for the purpose of helping simple souls to apply these principles, he illustrates in a separate chapter in greater detail how we should practise virtue:

### How to acquire a particular virtue.

"When," says the Saint, "you desire to advance in perfection in regard to a given virtue:

1. Adore it in Our Lord, and reflect how marked was this virtue in Him, and with what perfection He exercised it throughout His life.

2. Seeing yourself so remote from this perfection, humble yourself before Him, asking His pardon for all your failures in practising this virtue, acknowledging that you have no power of yourself to practise it in

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, 11, n. xxii.

176-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

the slightest degree, and that you are quite unworthy of receiving the necessary grace, and begging Him, none the less, to give you in His great mercy the grace to practise this virtue whenever occasion shall arise.

3. Often give yourself to Jesus with a great desire of practising this virtue with all the perfection that He asks of you, and beg Him to destroy in you everything contrary to it, and to establish it firmly in you for His pure glory.

4. Take care actually to practise this virtue by interior acts and exterior consequences, uniting yourself to the dispositions and intentions with which Jesus Christ exercised these same virtues."

And, with his usual wisdom, he adds: "Whenever you commit some fault contrary to that virtue, be not troubled or discouraged but humble yourself before God, asking His pardon for it and offering Him in satisfaction for your fault all the honour that His Beloved Son and Holy Mother rendered to Him by the exercise of this same virtue. Then give yourself to Jesus with a new desire of being faithful to Him henceforth in the practice of that virtue, and beg Him in His great mercy to repair your fault and to give you new grace with which the better to practise that virtue as occasion offers."(1)

There we see the fundamental principles of the French School applied to the Christian virtues. Whether it be a matter of the idea of the Christian life, of prayer, the virtues, or of any other pious exercise, we find them always and everywhere.

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxiii.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

177-

### B. THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES IN PARTICULAR

The Christian virtues of which St. John treats in particular in *Le Royaume de Jésus* are humility, confidence in God, submission to the divine will, charity towards our neighbour, zeal and love of the cross.

It may perhaps cause surprise that he does not deal with faith, with love of God, or with religion, which, with hope, are the most excellent of the virtues. The reason is that before broaching the virtues the Saint discusses what he calls the *foundations* of the Christian life, and these, in his view, are faith, charity with its accompanying dispositions (hatred of sin, of the world, and of self), and finally prayer, which is one of the acts of the virtue of religion.

**The foundations  
of a Christian  
life: faith, hatred  
of sin, prayer.**

"The first foundation of the Christian life," he writes, "is faith. For St. Paul tells us that 'without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is'. (1) 'Faith,' says the same Apostle, 'is the substance of things to be hoped for'; (2) it is indeed the foundation stone of the house and the kingdom of Christ. It is a heavenly and divine light, a participation in the eternal inaccessible light from the countenance of God; or, in Scriptural terms, faith is 'the light of thy countenance, O Lord, (which) is signed upon us'. (3) It is a communication, and as it were an extension of the light and the divine knowledge which was infused into the holy soul of Jesus at the moment of His Incarnation. It is the science of salvation, of the Saints, of God, which Christ drew from the bosom of His Father,

(2). Heb. xi, 6.

(3). Heb. xi, 1.

(4) Ps. iv, 7.

178-

### THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

and which He brought to us on earth to dissipate our darkness, to illuminate our hearts, and to give us the knowledge necessary to us if we are to serve and love God perfectly. Thereby He would subject our minds to the truths which He taught us and still teaches us both in His own Person and through His Church. By this means He would express, continue and complete in us that voluntary submission, docility, and subjection displayed by His human mind in regard to the lights communicated to Him by His Eternal Father and the truths taught Him by the Father. So it is that faith, which is given to us for the purpose of leading our minds to belief in the truths announced by God, is a continuation and a completion of the loving and perfect submission of the human mind of Jesus to the truths, declared to Him by His Eternal Father.

"And it is this light, this divine knowledge, that gives us, so far as is possible in this life, perfect knowledge of everything that is in God and outside God. Reason and human science too often deceive us, because they have too weak and limited a light to enable them to attain to a knowledge of the

things of God, which are infinite and incomprehensible. Moreover, in consequence of the corruption of sin, human science and reason are too full of shadows and obscurities to be able to have a true knowledge even of the things that are outside God. But since the light of faith is a participation in the truth and light of God, it cannot deceive us, rather does it make us see things as God sees them, that is to say in all their truth and as they appear in the eyes of God."

Then, having briefly summed up the teachings of faith on God, Jesus Christ, the Church and ourselves,

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

179-

the Saint thus concludes: "We have, then, to see all things not in the vanity of our senses, nor with the eyes of the flesh, nor with the limited and deceptive view of science and reason, but in the truth of God and with the eyes of Christ, i.e., with that true light that He draws from the bosom of the Father, with which He sees and knows everything. This He communicates to us so that we may see and know all things even as He sees and knows them."

So it was with St. John Eudes. He lived in the supernatural world and looked at everything from the point of view of faith. His books are little more than an exposition of the purest teaching of the Gospels which he strove to inculcate in his readers, and with which he would have them be penetrated to the marrow.

**Our actions must  
be governed by  
faith.**

But faith is not merely a light for the intellect, it is also a rule of conduct to which we must conform our whole life if we wish it to be really a copy and a continuation of that of Jesus: "Just as we must see all things in the light of faith," says the Saint, "if we are truly to know them, so also we must regulate all our actions by this same light if we are to do them in a holy fashion. For, as God rules His actions by His divine wisdom, as the angels rule theirs by their angelic intelligence, men of the world by worldly maxims, and the voluptuous by their senses, so also Christians must rule themselves by the light with which their Head, Jesus Christ, governs himself, i.e. by the faith that is a participation in the knowledge and the light of Christ.

"That is why we have to strive by every means fully to comprehend this divine science, and never to under

180-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

take anything save under its control. For that purpose we should place ourselves at the feet of God at the beginning of our actions (especially the more important ones), adoring Him as the author and consummator of faith, and as the true light, the Father of lights, who enlightens all men coming into the world.

"We must remember, too, that of ourselves we are but shadows and that all the lights of human reason, knowledge, and even experience are frequently but obscurities and illusions, on which we can place no confidence. Let us renounce worldly wisdom and the prudence of the flesh; let us beg Jesus to destroy them in us as being His enemies and not to allow us to follow their laws and maxims. Let us rather beseech Him to enlighten us with His heavenly light, to guide us by His divine wisdom, to make us know what is most agreeable to Him, and to give us grace and strength to stand bravely by His words and promises, to be deaf always to all considerations and persuasions of human prudence, courageously preferring the truths and maxims of the faith He teaches us by His Gospel and by His Church to the

reasonings and speeches of men who are guided by worldly principles."

Furthermore the Saint invites us to read on our knees See all things with every day a chapter of the Life of the eyes of Jesus. Jesus, i.e., of the New Testament, so that, as he says, 'We may learn the details of His life, and, by reflecting on His actions, His virtues, and His words, note the rules and maxims which He followed and which He would have us follow. For Christian prudence consists in renouncing the maxims of worldly prudence, in invoking the spirit of Jesus Christ that He may enlighten us and guide us by

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

181-

His maxims, and in asking Him to govern us by the truths He has taught us in pursuance of the virtues and actions that He practised."(1)

The faith teaches us to think like Jesus, to see all things "with His eyes," but that alone is not sufficient. If we are to be truly Christian we must clothe ourselves with His feelings, in accordance with St. Paul's exhortation: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu.* (2 )"But," writes St. John Eudes, "Jesus Christ had in Himself two kinds of extremely contrary feelings: infinite love for His Father and for us, and extreme hatred of what is contrary to the glory of His Father and our salvation, i.e., sin. For since He infinitely loved His Father and us, so He infinitely hated sin. So greatly does He love His Father, and so greatly does He love us, that He performed infinitely great things, suffered appalling torments, and lived a life supremely precious for the glory of God and our love. On the other hand, so great was His horror of sin that He came down from heaven to earth, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, lived for thirty-four years a life full of toil, of contempt and of suffering, shed His blood to the last drop, and died the most shameful and cruel of all deaths; and all that through His hatred of sin and His extreme desire to eradicate it in us.» (3)

Consequently hatred of sin and of all that leads to it, i.e., the world and the flesh, is a fundamental condition of every Christian life. St. John explains this with his usual lucidity and vigour. And if he does not dwell on positive love of God at this point, it is because his book *Le Royaume de Jésus* entirely turns on that sub

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. iv, v.

(2). *Phil.* ii, 5.

(3). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. vi,

## 182- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

ject. In it the author constantly praises the practice of pure love.

The same is true of the virtue of religion. St. John does not devote a special chapter to it, but he deals with prayer, the Divine Office, Holy Mass, and Christian devotion, and those are the chief exercises that go to make up the virtue of religion. And in the later editions of that book the author inserted a long chapter on Devotion to Holy Places, and this completed his teaching on the point.

## C. HUMILITY

Humility is one of the virtues on which St. John most frequently dwelt. In his books on the Christian life and on devotion to the Sacred Hearts, in the Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, in his prayers and offices, humility always has a prominent place, so necessary did this virtue seem to him for the leading of a truly Christian life.



## **The most necessary of all the virtues.**

He states, indeed, in *Le Royaume de Jésus* (1) that it is the most necessary of all the virtues, the virtue *par excellence* of Jesus Christ, and the proper and special virtue of Christians since it is the guardian of all graces and of all other virtues, and draws down the most abundant benedictions upon souls. It is, too, with holy love, the true measure of sanctity: "Give me," he says, "a truly humble soul, and I will declare him to be truly holy, adorned with every kind of virtue. In such a one God is greatly glorified, and in him Jesus dwells. For such a one is His treasure and paradise of delights," (1). 11, n. xxv-xxviii.

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

183-

and will be greatly exalted in the kingdom of God, according to the promise of Eternal Truth that 'he who humbles himself shall be exalted.' On the other hand, a soul devoid of humility is a soul without virtue, it is a hell, a dwelling-place of demons, and an abyss, of every kind of vice."

"Finally," he writes, "we may in some sort say that humility is the mother of Jesus, for it was by it that the Blessed Virgin was made worthy of giving Him birth. Moreover it is by this virtue that we shall become worthy of forming Him in our souls and of making Him live and reign in our hearts."

### **(a) Humility of the mind.**

Now, in humility the Saint distinguished two elements: humility of the mind and humility of the heart. Strictly speaking, humility of the mind is not the virtue of humility, it is only its condition, but a very necessary condition. It consists in a profound realisation of what we are in the eyes of God: "For," says St. John, "if we are to know ourselves thoroughly we must see ourselves not as we seem to be to the eyes and the deceptive judgment of men, and to the vanity and presumption of our own minds, but as we are in the eyes and judgment of God. And to do this, we must see ourselves in the light and truth of God, by means of faith."

Realisation of ourselves demands that we should reflect on what we are as human beings and on what we are as children of Adam and sinners. As human beings, we are but dust and nothingness, since we are creatures of God and derive from Him whatever of good there is in us. Of ourselves we have nothing, we can do nothing, we are nothing. For the creature, having

## **184- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

issued from nothingness, is nothing, has nothing, and can do nothing of itself.

And as children of Adam and sinners, our condition is even more lamentable. St. John, who on this point as on so many others is in accord with all the writers of the French school, perhaps exaggerates the corruption of nature by original sin. At all events he speaks of it in very strong terms:

### **Our miserable conditions as children of Adam.**

"As children of Adam and sinners," he writes, 'we are born in original sin, enemies of God and subjects of the devil. Thus we are held in abomination by heaven and earth, and are incapable of doing

any good or of avoiding any evil by our own powers. Our only means of salvation is to renounce Adam and all that we derive from him, to renounce ourselves, our self-will and our own powers, so as to give ourselves to Jesus and to share His spirit and His power.... So it is that by the just judgment of God we bear all the load of iniquity that Scripture calls the kingdom of death, which hinders us from doing works of freedom and life, i.e. of the true freedom and life which is that of the sons of God; we can but do the works of death and captivity, works that are far removed from the grace of God, His justice and His holiness.(1) How great is our misery and worthlessness, since it has made it necessary for the Son of God to purchase for us with His blood the smallest thought of serving God, and even permission for us to present ourselves before Him!"

'These last words strikingly tone down whatever might seem exaggerated in the picture of our original downfall drawn by the author. Understood in this way, there is nothing in his words that could displease the most suspicious of theologians.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

185-

He goes on to add that "as children of Adam and sinners, we do not deserve to live or that the earth should support us, we do not deserve that God should think of us, or even that He should take the trouble of exercising His justice in regard to us. Well might the holy man job be astonished that God should deign to open His eyes to behold us and should take the trouble of judging us: '*Dignum ducis super hujusmodi aperire oculos tuos, et adducere eum tecum in judicium.*' (1) He does us a favour in allowing us into His presence and in allowing the earth to support us. If He did not work a miracle everything would contribute to our ruin and perdition; for there is that in sin which, withdrawing us from obedience to God, deprives us of all our rights, from which it follows that our existence, our lives, our souls, our bodies and all our powers no longer belong to us. Thus the sun no longer owes us its light, the stars their help, nor the earth its support; the air is no longer bound to enable us to breathe, the other elements are not bound to give us their various qualities, nor the plants their fruits, nor animals their services. Rather in such conditions must all creatures make war on us and use all their strength against us, since we employ ours against God, that so creation may avenge the injury we inflict on its Creator. The revenge which at the end of time the whole world will take on sinners ought to be brought to bear on us every day that we commit new sins; and in punishment of a single sin God might justly deprive us of life and of all the temporal and spiritual graces He has given us, and visit us with the direst punishments."

### Folly of pride.

After sketching this sombre picture, the Saint  
(1). Job. xiv, 3.

## 186- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

expresses his astonishment that any man can become proud. "How strange it is," he exclaims, "to see creatures so mean and miserable as are we, trying to exalt themselves and to enhance their dignity I Truly the Holy Spirit has good reason for telling us by the pen of the Wise Man that He holds in aversion and horror a poverty-stricken man who is proud. For if pride is insupportable when found in anyone, what must it be in one whom poverty calls to an extreme humility. And yet it is a vice that is common to all men, although, however great they may appear in the eyes of the world, they always bear with them the marks of their infamy, namely their sinfulness, which should lead them to the utmost self abasement before God and before all creatures. But, alas, sin makes us so vile and so infamous that we by no means desire to recognise our misery, thereby resembling Satan who, although by his slavery to sin he is the most worthless of creatures, is yet so proud as to refuse to accept his ignominy. This is what causes God to have such a horror of pride and vanity, for, knowing our baseness and worthlessness,

it is utterly insupportable to Him to see so vile a creature trying to aggrandise himself. And it is particularly hateful to Him in view of the fact that He who is greatness itself humbled Himself down to nothingness. After that, it is more than insupportable to Him to see nothingness trying to magnify itself."

Yet the Saint hastens to add: "But although as a man and as a child of Adam and a sinner you are such one as I have just pictured, yet as a child of God and member of Jesus Christ, if you are in His grace, you have in you a most noble and sublime being and life,

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

187-

and you possess an infinitely rich and precious treasure. And although humility makes you know what you are in yourself and in Adam, yet it must not hide from you what you are in Christ and by Christ, and it does not compel you to ignore the graces that God gives you through His Son ... but rather to realise that all that you have of good comes to you from the pure mercy of God."

### **(b) Humility of the heart.**

Humility of the mind would be useless without humility of the heart; it would be what St. John calls a "diabolical humility." For the demons full well know their own nothingness and worthlessness. True humility, that which Our Lord would have us learn from Him, is humility of the heart. In a few lines St. John points out how to practise this humility.

"Humility of the heart," he says, -consists in loving our baseness and abjection, in being content to be obscure and contemptible, in treating ourselves as such, in rejoicing at being treated as such by others, so that we do not excuse or justify ourselves save in cases of great necessity, and never complain of anyone, remembering that since we have in us the source of all evil we deserve every kind of blame and harsh treatment. Therefore with all our heart we must love and embrace contempt, humiliation, shame, and everything that can abase us."

In *Le Royaume de Jésus*, in *Le Coeur admirable*, and in the *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie* the Saint recommends many acts of humility. However casually we glance at these, we perceive that they are in brief merely particular applications of rules laid

## **188- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

down by the author in the few but pregnant lines that we have just quoted.

Elsewhere the Saint warns us that humility of heart consists not only in loving humiliations, but also in hating and fleeing from all display and vanity: "I say all display," he adds, "for it is not sufficient to despise temporal display and to have a horror of the vanity of human praise, but we must have an even greater horror of the vanity that proceeds from spiritual things, and we must fear and flee everything in our pious exercises that appears striking or extraordinary in the eyes of others; I refer to such things as visions, ecstasies, revelations, the gift of working miracles and the like. And not only must we on no account desire or ask God for these extraordinary graces; but even if the soul should be offered such things by God, we must shrink into the depths of our nothingness, consider ourselves utterly unworthy of such favours, and beg Him to give us some other grace instead, some grace less striking in the eyes of men, that will make the soul more in conformity with the hidden and despised life that He Himself led upon earth. For, just as Our Lord delights in heaping His ordinary and extraordinary graces upon us in the excess of His bounty, so also He is greatly pleased when He sees that, moved by a true feeling of our unworthiness and a desire to resemble Him in His humility, we flee everything that

is great in the eyes of mankind. And if anyone has not got this disposition he will lay himself open to the deceptions and illusions of the spirit of vanity."(1)

(1). The Saint adds: "But notice that I here speak of extraordinary things, and not of actions that are common and usual with all true servants of God, such as communicating frequently, falling on our knees at least in the morning and evening to perform our duties to God (and this in any place or company in which we may happen to be), accompanying the Blessed Sacrament in the street when it is carried to the sick, mortifying the flesh by fasting, taking the discipline, or some other means. Other such common actions are saying our Rosary, praying in a church, or in a house, or by the wayside, serving and visiting prisoners and the sick, and many other works of piety. I say I do not refer to doing all these things, for we must take great care that in desiring to omit such actions under the pretext of a false humility, we do not omit them rather through a real cowardice."

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

189-

"Furthermore," says St. John, "true humility of heart consists in being humble in the way that Jesus Christ was humble when upon earth, i.e., in always choosing in all things whatever is vilest and most humiliating and in being ready to be as much humiliated as was Jesus in His Incarnation, in His Passion, and in His Death.

### **The example set by Our Lord.**

"In His Incarnation 'he emptied himself,' as St. Paul says, 'taking the form of a servant'; He chose to be born in a stable, He subjected Himself to the helplessness and insignificance of childhood, and underwent a thousand other humiliations. In His Passion He describes Himself as 'a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.'<sup>2</sup> He bore the anger and the judgment of His Father the severity of which was so great that it caused Him to sweat blood so that the soil of the Garden of Olives was saturated with it, As He Himself assures us, He subjected Himself to the powers of darkness, the devils, who, acting through the Jews whom they possessed and through Pilate and Herod whom they influenced, made Him suffer every conceivable indignity. And so Uncreated Wisdom was treated by Herod and the soldiers as an imbecile; He was scourged and nailed to the cross like a slave or a robber; and the Father, who normally

(1). Phil. ii, 7.

(2). Ps. xxi, 7.

## 190- THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

would be His support, deserted Him and looked on Him as though He had committed all the crimes in the world. And finally, to speak with the language of His Apostle, He was 'made a curse for us,'<sup>(1)</sup> and even (terrible degradation though it be!) He was made, as it were, to sin by the power and justice of God, for so St. Paul tells us: *Deus eum pro nobis Peccatum fecit*: 'Him, who knew no sin, he hath made sin for us' (2) which means that He bore not only the confusion and shame that sinners deserve, but also all the ignominies and infamies due to sin itself, which is the vilest and most ignominious state to which God can reduce even the greatest of His enemies. What a humiliation for a God, for the only Son of God, for the Sovereign Lord of the universe, to be reduced to such a state! O Lord Jesus is it possible that you so loved men that you went so far as this in your love for them? And you, man, how can it be that you still have any vanity, when you see your God thus abased for love of you? O my Saviour, let me be humbled with you, let me share your feelings of profound humility, and let me be ready to bear all the confusion and abasement that is fitting for the sinner and for sin itself!"

"Perfect Christian humility," the Saint concludes, consists in being disposed to desire to be

treated, not only as a sinner deserves, but also to bear all the ignominies and degradations due to sin itself, since Jesus our Head, the Saint of saints, and holiness itself, has borne them, and since we thoroughly deserve this treatment, being of ourselves but sinfulness and malediction. If these truths were only thoroughly impressed upon our minds, we would realise that we

(1). Gal. 111, 13.

(2). 11 Cor. v, 21.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

191 -

have good cause to cry out ... with St. Gertrude: 'Lord, one of the greatest miracles you have ever wrought is that the earth is permitted to bear me up.' "

Humility, then, as preached by the Saint, is not a matter for common souls. It calls for generous souls who give themselves entirely to Jesus and to His Holy Spirit, and who do not shrink from any sacrifice in walking in His footsteps and becoming perfect in His likeness.

### D. CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Confidence in God is one of the virtues of which souls stand most in need. St. John dwells lovingly on it in *his Royaume de Jésus*, and it may be said that this virtue is one of the dominant characteristics of his spirituality which resolves itself into love and confidence: a pure and generous love, and an unshakable confidence that leads the soul to abandon itself completely to God. This confidence that he strives to inculcate into souls goes so far that in his "preparation for death" he calls on his readers to celebrate in advance the happy day of their entry into Paradise.(1)

There is a close connection between confidence and humility, and this did not escape the Saint. For if humility is the mother of all the virtues, it is specially the mother of confidence in God. The sight of our incapacity for doing any good and of our inclination towards evil must, in fact, lead us to depart from ourselves so as to hide in Jesus and to seek strength

(1). It is clear that if the Saint, for the purpose of keeping us humble, paints a very dark picture of our original fall, he takes great care to raise us in our own eyes by reminding us of what we are in Christ, and he neglects no means of developing in us a true confidence in God. In short, his spirituality is extremely optimistic.

192 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

and support in Him. He has been given to us by the Eternal Father to be our redemption, our virtue, our sanctification and treasure, our life and our all. He Himself invites us to come to Him with all confidence, saying: ---Cometo me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you,"(1) and He assures us that He will not cast aside anyone who has recourse to Him: *Eum qui venit ad me non ejiciam foras.* (2)

### The grounds for confidence in God.

St. John, indeed, extracts and groups together in *Le Royaume de Jésus* the promises made by God to those who put their trust in Him, and after quoting numerous Scriptural texts he adds: "I should never end if I were to reproduce here all the other passages of Scripture in which God commends to us the virtue of confidence. It would seem that He can never sufficiently assure us in a thousand parts of the Bible how dear and delightful to Him this virtue is, and how He loves and cherishes those who trust Him and abandon themselves entirely to the Fatherly care of His divine Providence."

And after thus giving the promises contained in Holy Scripture, the Saint then quotes several beautiful passages taken from the writings of St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde: "We read," he says, "in the third book of St. Gertrude's *Revelations* that Our Blessed Lord one day told this great saint that the filial confidence shown in Him by a Christian soul is that eye of the Well-Beloved of which the Divine Spouse speaks in the *Canticle of Canticles*: 'Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes'; for He went on to say to her that 'He who has an assured confidence

(1). Matt. xi, 28.

(2). John vi, 37.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

193-

in me that I can and desire faithfully to assist him in everything, pierces my heart with an arrow of love; and so great an influence over me has this confidence that I can in no way absent myself from him."(1)

«And in St. Mechtilde's *Book on Special Grace* (2) we find that Jesus said to her: 'It is a special source of joy to me that men trust in my kindness and rely upon me. And consequently, I will specially succour in this life, and reward in the next life to an extent greater than he deserves, whoever greatly yet humbly trusts in me. The more anyone trusts in me and avails himself of my bounty, the more he will thereby profit, especially as it is impossible for a man not to obtain what he piously believes to have been promised him and hopes to obtain. And so, it is very useful for a man to hope for great things from me, and to put his trust completely in me.'

"And to this same saint, who asked God what was the chief thing that she should believe of His ineffable goodness, He replied: 'Believe with assurance that after death I will receive you even as the Father received His well-beloved Son, and that no father ever distributed all his means to his only son so completely and so affectionately as I shall make you a partaker in all that I have. He who firmly and with humble love believes that of my goodness, will be truly happy. (3)

"To strengthen us still more in this confidence,- continues the Saint, "our sweet and lovable Saviour adopts in regard to us the most gentle and loving titles and qualities that are possible; for He calls Himself and in fact is, our friend, advocate, healer, pastor brother, father, soul, mind, and the spouse of our souls,

(1). *Legatus pietatis*, Bk. III, vii.

(2). III, V.

(3). III, V.

194-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Similarly, He calls us His flock, His brethren, His children, His portion, His heritage, soul, and heart, and our souls He calls His spouses.-

Then to complete the task of convincing us of the love of Jesus for us, Père Eudes again has recourse to Holy Scripture and extracts there from certain texts which he later on introduced into his Office of the Sacred Heart:

**The mercy and the  
love of God shown  
in Scripture.**

"Jesus,- he says, -assures us in several parts of the Scriptures that He 'has care of all ... and does not give judgment unjustly,'(1) urging us to 'cast our care upon him, for he hath care of us ' (2)

'Hearken unto me ... who are carried by my bowels, are borne up by my womb. Even to your old age I am the same, and to your grey hairs I will carry you. I have made you, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.' (3) Not once or twice, but five times does he tell us in this same passage that he will bear us up. And elsewhere He asserts: 'Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands; thy walls are always before my eyes'; (4) 'he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye.' (5) Moreover He tells us not to be solicitous of what is necessary for feeding or clothing us, for He knows we need these things, and He will take care of us; (6) He says that He has counted the hairs of our heads and that none of these shall perish; (7) that His Father loves us as He loves Himself, and that He

(1). Wisdom, XII, 13.

(2). 1 Pet. v, 7.

(3). Isa. xlv, 3-4.

(4). Isa. xlix, 15.

(5). Zach. ii, 8.

(6). Matt. vi, 31-33.

(7). Matt. x, 30.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

195-

(Jesus) loves us as His Father loves Him; (1) that He desires us to be where He is, (2) i.e., that we should repose with Him in the bosom of His Father; that we shall sit with Him on His throne, (3) and that in a word we are all only one, being completely united with Him and with His Father. (4) If we have offended Him, He promises that if we return to Him with humility, sorrow, confidence in His goodness, and a resolution to shun sin henceforth, He will receive us, will embrace us, and forgetting all our sins will reclothe us in the robe of His grace and His love, which we have lost through our own fault. (5)

"In view of all that, who will not have confidence, and who will not abandon himself entirely to the care and the guidance of a friend, a brother, a father, a spouse, whose infinite wisdom knows what is most advantageous for us, foresees all that can happen to us, and guides us to the goal of our sovereign happiness? Does not His marvellous kindness wish us every good, and is He not sufficiently powerful to be able to deflect from us all evil that might happen to us, and to secure us the happiness that He desires to procure for us? "

And lest we should be tempted to see merely vain promises in all this, the Saint calls on us to reflect on what Jesus has done for us in His Incarnation, in His Passion, and in His death, and what He still does for us every day in the Holy Eucharist. And he concludes by inviting us to go to Jesus with all confidence:

"Let us," he says, "have a great desire firmly to acquire this divine virtue; let us have no fear, but courageously form ambitious plans for most perfectly

(1). John xv, 9; xvii, 26.

(2). John xvii, 24.

(3). Apoc. iii, 21.

(4). John xvii, 21-23.

(5). Ezech. xvii, 21; Luke xv, 22.

196-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

serving and loving our adorable and loving Jesus, and for undertaking great things for His glory, according as He may give us the power and the grace. For, although we can do nothing of ourselves, we can do everything in Him, and His help will not be lacking if we have confidence in His generosity.

## **Completely abandon yourself to God.**

"Let us put ourselves in His hands, entirely abandoning to the paternal care of His divine Providence all that concerns us in body and soul, temporally and spiritually, our health, our reputation, our goods, our affairs, those who are connected with us, and our past sins. Let us equally abandon to His care the advancement of our souls in virtue and in His love, our life and our death, our salvation even and our eternity, being assured that in His pure goodness He will take particular care of them, and that He will dispose all things in the best possible manner."

In these few words St. John contrives to say much, and fully illustrates what he means by confidence and by complete abandonment to the divine goodness. But he is always practical, and so he warns us that if confidence in God banishes all anxiety it does not dispense us from toil and effort:

"Let us take great care," he says, "not to depend on the power or favour of our friends, or on our wealth, our own ability, knowledge, or strength, nor to place our reliance on our good desires, our prayers and resolutions, or even on the confidence that we feel we have in God, nor yet on human means or on any created thing, but solely on the mercy of God. It is not that we should fail to make use of all these things and for our part do all that we can to conquer vice, to practise

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

197 -

virtue, and to fulfil the duties that God has entrusted to us and the obligations that attach to our position; but we must renounce all dependence and confidence that we might have in these things, and depend solely on the pure goodness of Our Lord. Consequently we must for our part take as much pains and care as if we expected nothing on the part of God; and yet none the less we must put no more trust in our own efforts than if we had done nothing at all but expected everything solely from God's mercy.

"And the Holy Spirit exhorts us in this sense, through the mouth of the Prophet-King, saying: *Revela Domino viam tuam, et spera in eo, et ipse faciet*; (1) and in another place: *jacta super Dominum curam tuam, et ipse te enutriet*. (2) So, too, speaking through the Prince of the Apostles, He urges us to cast all our care upon God, for He will take care of us: *Omnem sollicitudinem vestram Projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis*. (3) It is but what Our Lord said to St. Catherine of Siena: 'My daughter, forget yourself and think of me, and I will continually think of you'. (4)

"Take this as being applied to yourself. Make it your chief care to avoid everything that could displease Our Lord, and to serve and love Him perfectly, and He will turn everything, even your faults, to your advantage. Finally, confidence is a gift of God that follows humility and love. Therefore, ask it of God, and He will give it to you; and strive to do all your actions in a spirit of humility and for the pure love of God. Then will you soon taste the sweetness and peace that accompanies the virtue of trust in God."

(5)

(1). PS. xxxvi, 5.

(2). Ps. liv. 23.

(3). 1 Pet. v, 7.

(4). Raymond of Capua's *Life of the Saint*, I, ch. v.

(5). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. XXIX-XXX.



### E. SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL

Submission to the Will of God is another of St. John's favourite themes. He constantly returns to it, and made it one of the foundations of his Congregation of priests. As a motto, he gave his spiritual sons these beautiful words from Holy Scripture: *Colere Deum et facere voluntatem ejus corde magno et animo volenti*; and he told them always to put at the head of their letters: *May the divine will be our guide in everything*. He also ordered them to keep the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost in honour of the divine will.<sup>(1)</sup> For in truth the disposition that he most admired in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary was their perfect submission to the will of God; and he even had painted for the seminary at Coutances a picture showing the reign of the divine will in the Sacred Hearts. <sup>(2)</sup> He looked upon the divine will as his good mother and exhorted his spiritual children to do the same, as we see from this letter which he wrote to one of them while preaching a mission at Gatteville in the diocese of Coutances, telling them that he could not go to assist them:

"The adorable will of God (our good mother) has ordained this separation. May that holy will ever be blessed! I call it 'our good mother' for it is from her that we have received our being and life, both that of nature and that of grace. It is she who must govern us, and we must obey her and give ourselves up to her guidance with great confidence, for she has a truly maternal love for us. That is why I beg you, my

(1). *Oeuvres Complètes*, IX, pp. 74, 144, 146, 175.

(2). *Le Doré: Les Sacrés Coeurs et le V. Jean Eudes*, II, p. 377; and *Oeuvres complètes*, VII, p. 527, note.

### THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

199-

beloved brethren, to look upon her, to honour her, and to love her as our beloved mother, and that we make it our chief devotion to attach our minds and hearts firmly to her, to follow her faithfully in everything, and to obey all her orders *corde magno et animo volenti*. In so doing let us find our glory and our joy, and consider everything else as pure folly."<sup>(1)</sup>

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* (2) he observes that submission to God's will is the most universal of virtues, the use of which ought to be most habitual with us, "for," says he, "every hour there are occasions for renouncing our own will and submitting ourselves to that of God."

#### How God reveals

#### His will to us.

Elsewhere he remarks that the divine will is very easy to know and that God reveals it to us in five principal ways. These are: (1) by His commandments; (2) by the evangelic counsels (3) by the laws, rules and obligations of our state in life (4) by those in authority over us who are charged with our guidance; (5) by public or private events, whether great or small, with which we are connected, for nothing happens in this world save by the absolute will of God or by His permissive will. "And therefore,- says the Saint,---how ever little we open the eyes of faith it will be very easy for us always and everywhere to know the holy will of God, and this knowledge leads us to love that will and to submit ourselves to it."

So as to induce us to act in this way, St. John reminds us that the will of God, both His permissive will and His absolute will, is infinitely holy, just, adorable, and lovable, and that moreover, God wishes only what is conducive to His glory and the good of those who love

(1). *Oeuvres complètes*, X, p. 390.

(2). 11, n. xxxi-xxxiv.

200-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Him: *Diligentibus Deum omnia co-operantur in bonum*. Finally he recalls to us that---Our Lord undertook from the first moment of His life and His entry into the world, never to do His own will, but always that of His Father, as St. Paul testifies when writing to the Hebrews 'Wherefore, when he cometh into the world he saith . "Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will, O God. (1)' Similarly He Himself said: 'I came down from Heaven, not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent me.' (2) And to this He was true. Although His own will was holy and adorable, yet He gave it up completely in order to follow that of His Father, unceasingly protesting on all occasions (even as in the Garden of Olives on the eve of His death): 'Father, not my will, but thine be done.' (3)

### **Inducements to self-abandonment.**

"Now if we reflect well on these truths we will have great facility in submitting ourselves in everything to the adorable will of God. For, if we remember that God orders and disposes everything that happens in the world, that He does so for His glory and our greater good, and that His dispositions are most just and loving, then we will not attribute the happenings of life to chance, to the malice of the devil, or to man, but rather to the will of God. And we will love and embrace that will tenderly, knowing with certainty that it is most holy and lovable, that it orders and permits nothing save for our greater good and the greater glory of our good God. And that glory we must love before everything else, since we are only in the world for the purpose of loving and advancing the glory of God.

(1). Heb. x, 5-7.

(2). John vi, 38.

(3). Luke xxii, 42.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

201 -

"And if we attentively reflect that Jesus, our Head, abandoned and ignored a will so holy and divine as His own, so as to fulfil the rigorous and severe will of His Father in regard to Him, a will that involved His great sufferings and His cruel and shameful death; on behalf of His enemies; if we reflect on this, can we find any difficulty in giving up our own depraved will, corrupted as it is by sin, so that the holy, gentle, and lovable will of God may live and reign in its place?

"Therein," says the Saint, always faithful to his principles, -consists Christian submission and obedience; viz., in continuing that perfect submission and obedience that Jesus rendered, not only to the wishes that His Father revealed to Him by His own mouth, but also to those that He revealed to Him by His Holy Mother, by St. Joseph, by the angel that guided Him down into Egypt, by the Jews, by Herod, and by Pilate. For not only did He submit Himself to His Father, He also subjected Himself to all creatures for His Father's glory and for love of us."

### **An exhortation to practise this.**

Then St. John exhorts us to submit lovingly to the divine will in whatever way it may, be manifested to us: «Have,» says he, "a continual resolution of dying and suffering every kind of torment rather than contravene the smallest of God's commandments, and have a general disposition of following His counsels according to the light and grace that He gives you, your condition in life, and the advice you receive from your director.

"Respect and honour those who are in authority over you, as holding on earth Jesus Christ's place in regard to you; and follow their will as the will of Christ,

202-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

provided that they do not order what is manifestly contrary to what God orders or forbids.

"St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, goes much further than this, for he exhorts us to submit ourselves to every human creature, for love of God: *Subjecti estote omni humanae creaturo, Propter Deum*; ( 1 ) and St. Paul would have us consider all others our superiors: *Superiores sibi invicem arbitrantur*. ( 2 ) Following the divinely inspired teaching of these two great Apostles, we should respect and honour all kinds of people as our superiors, and be ready to renounce our own judgment and will in favour of theirs. For as Christians, who must live with the sentiments and dispositions of Christ, we must, with Him, be determined never to do our own will, but in everything to obey the will of God. And in case of doubt, i.e., when we are not certain what is the will of God in any given circumstances, we must do the will of someone else, considering all men our superiors and submitting to their will in whatever is possible and is not contrary to God's commands and the obligations of our state, but always giving the preference to those who have most authority and right over us.

**Submit yourself in  
all things to God's  
good pleasure.**

"Look upon the laws, rules, and obligations of your state, office or condition, as the infallible marks of what God asks of you. Jesus gave the most exact honour and obedience, and was most perfectly subject, not only to the rules which His Father gave Him and to the hours and minutes which the Father fixed for each of His actions, but also to human laws. So, too, do you subject yourself to the

(1). 1 Pet. ii, 13.

(2). Philip ii, 3.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

203-

rules and obligations of your condition, to the hours and moments at which you should fulfil the duties of your office, and even to human and civil laws. And do all that for love of Him who, through love of you, has preceded you in this subjection.

"In all that happens, whether by the absolute will of God or by His permissive will, adore, bless, and love both the one and the other, and with His beloved Son, and as far as possible with the same love, submission, and humility, say to Him: *Pater, non quod ego volo, sed quod tu; non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat*'. (1) And again: *Ita, Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te*. ( 2 )

"Whenever you feel any inclination or desire for anything, at once cast it from you at the feet of Jesus; and should the inclination be a powerful one, do not cease to renounce it and to beg Jesus to take it from you, until you feel yourself ready to desire the contrary, if He would have it so.

"And whenever there comes to you the thought or fear of losing your health, or your reputation, or your goods, your parents, your children, your friends, or anything of the sort, renounce your will at the feet of Jesus, and adore, love and bless His, as though what you fear had come to pass; and address Him in this fashion:

" 'O Jesus, I renounce all my desires and inclinations at your feet. With all my heart I adore, love and praise your most holy and lovable will; and, despite all my repugnance and contrary feelings, I

desire to love, bless and glorify you in all that it has pleased you to ordain, or shall please you to ordain henceforth for me and for those connected with me, in time and in eternity.

(1). Mark xxiv, 36; Luke xxii, 42.

(2). Matt. xi, 26.

204-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Blessed be your most holy will. Let my will be destroyed for ever, and may your will reign and be eternally fulfilled on earth as in heaven!'-

To practise submission to God's will in this manner is in itself a considerable accomplishment; but St. John exhorts us to rise yet higher and to find our joy in this submission:

"Not only," he says, "did Our Lord Jesus Christ do

**And do so, not  
with resignation,  
but with joy.**

the whole will of His Father, and submit to Him in everything for love of Him, but furthermore He found all His contentment and happiness in doing so: *Meus cibus est, ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me'*, (1) i.e., I know of nothing more desirable or more delightful than to do the will of my Father. For in fact in everything He did He found infinite contentment since they were His Father's will. In His sufferings He found joy and happiness of the spirit, because they were the good pleasure of His Father. And therefore the Holy Spirit when speaking of the day of His passion and death calls it 'the day of the joy of his heart. (2) Similarly, He found peace and contentment of heart in everything that He saw happen in the world, since He saw in everything only the most lovable will of His Father.

"So also, as Christians bound to adopt the feelings and dispositions of their Head, we must not only submit ourselves to God and to every circumstance for love of God, but also find all our happiness and Paradise in doing so. This is the sovereign perfection of Christian submission, as expressed by the prayer that we say every day: *Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra.*

(1). John, iv, 34.

(2). Cant. iii, 11.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

205-

Now, in heaven the Saints find such happiness in doing the will of God that many of them who see their fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wives and children, in hell, rejoice in the results that the justice of God has worked upon them; for since the Saints are but one with God, they have only His own feelings and will. But God wishes His justice to be exercised on those wretches who have thoroughly deserved it, and He takes infinite pleasure in the effects of His justice, as well as in those of His mercy. And that is why the Saints also find pleasure therein: *Laetabitur justus cum viderit vindictam; manus suas lavabit in sanguine peccatoris.'* (1) It is thus, then, that we must find our joy in the effects of the divine will, since we must try to accomplish it on earth as in heaven.

"That," remarks our Saint, "is the way always to live happily and to have heaven on earth. Certainly we would be very difficult to please, if we were not content with what satisfies God, the Angels and the Saints who rejoice not so much in the great glory that is theirs as in the fulfilment of the will of God in them, i.e., in the fact that God finds pleasure in glorifying them. And we will have no ground for complaint at being in the Paradise of the Mother of God, of the Son of God, and of the Eternal Father."

**This joy is not  
necessarily felt,  
but it resides in  
the will.**

But lest we should misunderstand his meaning in saying this, the Saint adds: «I do not say that you must experience a sensible contentment and joy in all that you do and suffer, and in all that happens in the world (that is the lot only of the Blessed); but I refer here to joy  
(1). Ps. lvii, 11.

206-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

and contentment of the spirit and of the will which, with the Grace of God, you can easily have, since you have only to say: 'My God, I desire for love of you to find all my contentment in willing, doing, or suffering this or that, because it is your will.' By that means you will find happiness of spirit and will in everything. And furthermore, if this practice be repeated several times it will lessen and eventually destroy the difficulty and natural repugnance that you feel in many matters, and will cause you to find sweetness and happiness, even sensible sweetness and happiness, in those things in which hitherto you felt but bitterness and aversion."

And he tells us that in acting thus: "you will begin your Paradise while yet in this world, you will enjoy perpetual peace and happiness, and you will do your actions as God performs His actions and as Jesus performed His when He was on earth, i.e., in a spirit of joy and contentment, which is what He desired for us and asked for us from the Father on the eve of His death, saying: *Ut habeant gaudium meum impletum in semetipsis.* ( 1 )

"That is supremely perfect Christian submission and pure love of God; for the sovereign degree of divine love consists in doing, suffering, and accepting everything for the love of God, with joy and contentment. And a man who has this holy view of what happens in the world, who in this disposition suffers the hardships that befall Him, and who performs his actions in this way, will give more glory and pleasure to God, and will advance further in one day in the way of His love, than he would in the whole of his life if he were to act in any other way."  
(1). 1 John xvii, 13.

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

207-

### **F. CHARITY FOR OUR NEIGHBOUR**

Love of God and love of our neighbour are quite inseparable. "These are not two loves," writes St. John, "they make but one single love. We must love our neighbour with the same heart and love as that with which we love God, for we have to love him, not in himself, or for himself, but in God and for God; or rather, it is God Himself whom we must love in our neighbour.

"That is the way in which Jesus loves us: He loves us in His Father and for His Father, or rather He loves His Father in us, and He wishes us to love each other even as He loves us. 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.' (1)

## **The model of Christian charity.**

"It is in this precisely," says Père Eudes, "that Christian charity consists: in loving each other as Jesus loves us. But He loves us so greatly that He gives us all His goods, His treasures, and Himself, and He uses all His powers and all the resources of His wisdom and goodness to benefit us. So great is His charity towards us that for a long time He endures our faithlessness with mildness and patience, and when we have fallen He is the first to seek us out, though thereby we have offended Him who has shown us nothing but kindness and seems in some sort even to prefer our happiness and interests to His own, since during His suffering life He underwent every kind of inconvenience, misery and torment to deliver us and to make us happy. In a word, so great is His love for us that He uses His whole life, His body and soul, His time and

(1). John XV, 11.

208 -

### **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

eternity, His divinity and His humanity, all that He is and has, for us, so that He is all charity and love for us in His thoughts, words, and deeds.

"There we see the model of Christian charity, and also what He expects of us when He commands us to love each other as He loves us. That is how we should love each other, doing to each other what Christ has done for us according as He gives us the power."

## **How to think of others.**

And then, to lead us to love our neighbour as we should, St. John invites us to see our neighbour in God and to see God in him: "See," he says, "your neighbour in God and God in him, i.e., regard him as having issued from the heart and the goodness of God, as a participation in God, as one created to return to God and to dwell one day in the bosom of God there to glorify Him eternally, one, in fact, in whom God will be glorified eternally, whether by His mercy or by His justice. Look upon him as one whom God loves, in whatever state he may be; for God loves all that He has created, even the very devils in so far as they are creatures, and he hates nothing that He has made. It is only sin, and He certainly did not make that, that He holds in horror. Look upon your neighbour as one who has issued from the same principle as you, as the child of the same Father, created for the same end, belonging to the same Lord, and bought at the same price: the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Remember that he is a member of the same Head, and of the same body, which is the Church of Christ; that he is nourished with the same food, the precious flesh and blood of Jesus; and that consequently you should have but one mind, one soul, and one heart with him.

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

209 -

Finally, look on him as one who is the Temple of the Living God, who bears in himself the image of the Most Holy Trinity and the character of Jesus Christ, who is, indeed, a portion of Jesus Christ, flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone. Reflect that it was for him that Christ so toiled and suffered, and that Our Lord recommends him to you as Himself, assuring you that 'what you do to the least of these (i.e. those who believe in Him), my brethren, you do it unto me.'"(1)

"If we truly weigh and consider the importance of these truths," cries the Saint, "what charity, what respect, and what honour we will show each other! Then would we really fear to offend Christian union and charity, either by thoughts, or words, or deeds, and would be ready to do and to suffer

everything for others. With what charity and patience we would bear with and excuse the faults of others; and with what gentleness, modesty, and restraint we would converse with each other, remembering St. Paul's words: 'Let every one of you please his neighbour unto good, to edification' (2) May Jesus, the God of love and of charity, impress these truths and dispositions on our minds and hearts!"

St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, briefly portrays true Christian charity: "Charity, - he says, "is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away.» (3)

St. John Eudes loved to quote this text, and he

(1). Matt. xxv, 40.

(2). Rom. xv, 2.

(3). 1 Cor. xiii, 4-8.

210 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

urges us to read it and frequently to meditate on it. In his *Coeur admirable* he dwells at rather greater length on the practice of charity.

### **Practical advice on charity.**

"Let your chief care," he says, "be to banish from your mind, your heart, your mouth, your ears, your hands, and all the powers of your soul and body, every thing that is in the smallest degree contrary to holy charity. Never let your mind judge or condemn any one, so that you yourself may not be judged or condemned. Permit no animosity, aversion, or coldness towards your neighbour to enter your heart, and as soon as you perceive any such thing renounce it immediately and make interior acts of charity.... Take great care not to let yourself say anything harsh or ill-natured, anything cutting or injurious. Hold all slander in detestation, and make sure that you never say anything to the disadvantage of another, and that you close your ears to everything that could wound charity. Set about so thoroughly mortifying the passion of anger that henceforth it has no part in you; and never let your self be led into contentions and arguments, but rather willingly ignore your own views and leave the field free to those of others.

"Above all, have a horror of accursed envy and jealousy, the detestable sin of Lucifer and Cain. At the very first moment in which you feel it within you, humble yourself greatly in the utmost confusion at finding yourself amongst the followers of Cain. Utterly renounce those pernicious feelings, rejoice in the advantages that God gives your neighbour, whether in matters temporal or spiritual; thank the divine goodness for them and beg God to increase them more and more.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

211 -

**It must be not  
merely negative  
but positive.**

"It is not enough that you should refrain from doing evil to your neighbour; charity obliges you to do him all the good, that you can, and Our Lord Himself commands you to love others as He loves you.

Therefore be quick to help your neighbour in his needs and to do for him all the good that you can; but take great care not to do it for your own satisfaction or interest, nor with the intention of receiving a like service from him, but purely in order to please God.

"Bear, with patience and gentleness, your neighbour's faults, so far as you can without wounding charity. When he speaks to you angrily reply without emotion. Strive to satisfy him so far as would be reasonable; and sometimes inconvenience yourself for his sake and deprive yourself of some satisfaction so as to please him. Always keep before your mind Our Lord's commandment: 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that calumniate and persecute you, bless those who speak evil of you, so that you may be children of my Heavenly Father who makes His sun to shine upon the evil as well as on the good.' And finally, try with all your heart to imitate Our Lord in the goodness, the kindness, the patience and the meekness that He continually shows you.» (1)

### **Sincerity.**

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* the Saint recommends us to transform into acts of charity the marks of honour that we give our neighbour. "When addressing or complimenting him," he says, "never allow your tongue to utter pleasing (1). *Oeuvres Complètes*, VII, pp. 476 sq.

212-

### **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

words that are not from your heart; for there is this difference between holy and Christian souls and those that are worldly, that while both use the same compliments and forms of speech in the ordinary intercourse of life, the former do so from the heart and in the spirit of charity and Christian truth, whereas the latter do so with the mouth only and in the spirit of lying and falseness."

And he elsewhere observes that to act in this Christian way a general intention suffices, without each time making a formal act of charity: "I do not say," he writes, "that it is always necessary to have your mind applied to making this intention every time that you address anyone or make a polite remark or do anyone a service, although it would be a very good thing to have this disposition; but, at least, have a general intention in the bottom of your soul to do everything in the spirit of the charity of Jesus, and try to renew it before God whenever He puts the thought of it into your mind. "

### **Readiness to forgive.**

And then, not only does the Saint remind us of the law of forgiving, but he urges us to go ourselves to those who have offended us, without waiting for them to make excuses. "If anyone has offended you," he writes, "or if you have offended anyone, do not wait till he comes to you; but remember that Our Lord said: 'If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother.' (1) And so as to obey these words of Our Saviour, as also in honour of (1). Matt. v, 24.

### **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

213-

the fact that He is the first to seek us out although in return for all the favours He bestows upon us He receives only every kind of offence from us, go you to seek out him who has offended you or whom you have offended, and be reconciled to him, being ready to speak with him with all kindness, peace, and



humility."(1)

### **Zeal for the salvation of souls.**

Connected with charity is zeal for the salvation of souls and indeed it is the most perfect exercise of charity. It is chiefly in his writings on the priesthood that St. John deals with this subject, and we shall see later on how lofty his views on it were. But he also touches on it in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, for zeal is in his eyes a virtue that must be practised by the laity also.

"Above all," he tells us, "have a very special charity for the souls of all men, but particularly the souls of those who are connected with you or dependent upon you, ensuring their salvation in every way that is open to you. For St. Paul tells us that 'if any man hath not care of his own and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.'(2) Remember that they cost the labours and sufferings of thirty-four years, the blood and life of a God, and also that the greatest, the divinest work and that most pleasing to Jesus of all that you can do in the world is to labour with Him for the salvation of the souls that are so dear and precious to Him. And therefore give yourself to Him to labour in every way that He asks of you. Consider yourself quite unworthy to be employed in so great a work; but when the opportunity arises of helping in the salvation of some poor soul (which will

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, nu. xxxv-xxxvi.

(2). 1 Tim. v, 8.

214-

### **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

be frequently, if you are careful), never let it pass by. First ask the necessary grace from Our Lord, and then busy yourself according to your condition and the power that He gives you, using all the care and affection that is possible, realising that it is of more consequence than if it were a matter of temporal goods, or of the corporal life of all the people in the world. Do all this for the pure love of Jesus so that God may be eternally loved and glorified by those souls, knowing that you should look upon it as a great favour and blessing to be allowed to use all your time, all your health, all your life and the treasures of the whole world, if you had them, to help in the salvation of a single soul. For Jesus Christ gave all His blood and devoted all His time, His life, and His strength for that soul.

"O Jesus, lover of souls and zealous for the salvation of the human race, implant your ardent zeal and charity for souls in the hearts of all Christians.» (1)

### **G. LOVE OF THE CROSS**

St. John's spiritual teaching is not meant for cowardly and nondescript souls who have a horror of hardship or of real effort. It is intended for generous souls who know how to deny themselves and do not shrink from sacrifice. Consequently we cannot be surprised to find that love of the cross finds an important place in his teaching. In *L'Enfance admirable* he warns us that "the cross of Jesus, which is the origin and source of Christian grace, is also its end, for grace is given us that we may crucify ourselves with Him." (2)

His *Royaume de Jésus* contains a profession of love of

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxxvii. (2). *Oeuvres complètes*, V, p. 351.

the cross which he invites us to renew frequently.(1) The crosses of life are numerous and varied, but the most difficult are those that we encounter in the spiritual life. St. John warns us that these will not be lacking to us:

**Crosses are a great favour from God.**

«The whole of the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Father and our Head, was full of toil bitterness, and sufferings, both exterior and interior, and therefore it is not reasonable that His children and members should travel another road. And He gives us not a cause for complaint but a great grace when He sends us what He Himself accepted in life, and makes us worthy of drinking with Him the chalice which His Father so lovingly gave Him. He gives it to us with as much love as that with which His Father gave it to Him. This, indeed, is how he shows His love for us, and marks His pleasure in the small services that we do Him.

"And so," continues the Saint, "do not deceive yourself and imagine that the way to God is strewn with roses and delights. You will find many thorns and much labour on your journey; but despite all this always love Our Lord faithfully, and His love will change the gall into honey, and the bitterness into sweetness. Do more than this: take a resolution of finding all your happiness throughout life in the cross and in trials, because by these you can most glorify God and prove your love, and because Jesus your Father, your Spouse, and your Head, found in these His joy and His paradise while in the world. Did not the Holy Spirit call the day of His Passion 'the day of the joy of his heart'?

(1). I, n. xxix.

216-

**THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

Leaving on one side the other crosses that may be laid upon us, the Saint concentrates on showing us the use we must make of "interior spiritual afflictions, such as dryness, sadness, weariness, interior fears and troubles, disgust with the things of God, and all the other spiritual crosses met with by souls who serve God. For it is extremely important to know how to make good use of these things, and to remain faithful to God while enduring them.--- Here, then, is the advice that he gives to souls of good will:

**How to profit by them.**

«1. Adore Jesus in the sufferings, privations and humiliations, the troubles and sadness that His holy soul bore, as He Himself testifies in the words: 'My soul is filled with evils; Now is my soul troubled; My soul is sorrowful even unto death.' Adore the dispositions of His divine soul while in this state, and the good use He made of it for the glory of His Father. Give yourself to Him that you may share these dispositions and may make good use of your trials, which He has made His own. Offer them to Him in honour of His own, and beg Him to unite them to His, to bless and sanctify them, to supply for your failures, and to use your crosses for the glory of His Father even as He used His own.

«2. Do not occupy yourself in seeking the particular cause of the state in which you are, or in examining your sins, but humble yourself in face of all your faults and infidelities in general, and adore the justice of God, being ready in homage to His justice to bear all the trials it may please Him to send you, and yet considering yourself quite unworthy that His justice should take the trouble to notice you. For we have to realise

that the smallest of our sins makes us deserve to be entirely forsaken by God. And when we are in a state of dryness and disgust with regard to the things of God, and can scarcely think of God or pray to Him save with a thousand distractions, we must remember that we are quite unworthy of any grace or consolation, that Our Lord does us a great favour in allowing the earth to support us, and that we have over and over again deserved to be with the damned who throughout all eternity can have only horrible and blasphemous thoughts of God. By such considerations we must profoundly humble ourselves before God when in this state of dryness.

«For that is God's plan for us,, when in that state, and that is what He expects of us. He would have us realise what we are when left to ourselves, and desires that we should become truly wise by a profound realisation of our nothingness, so that when He gives us some good thought, pious sentiment, or other grace, our pride and self-love shall not appropriate it, attributing it to our own carefulness and co-operation; but we shall refer it to Him, realising that it comes not from ourselves but solely from His mercy, and therefore putting all our trust in his pure goodness.

«3. Take great care not to let yourself be carried away by sadness and discouragement, but rejoice by reason of three things: Rejoice that Jesus is always Jesus, i.e., always God, always great and lovable, always in the same state of glory and of happiness, so that nothing can lessen His *joy*: *Scitote quoniam Dominus ipse est Deus*, and say to Him: 'It is enough for me to know that you are always Jesus. Be ever Jesus, and I shall be content whatever may befall me.'

"Rejoice also that Jesus is your God and is all yours, and that you belong to so good and kind a Lord, remembering the words of the Royal Prophet: *Beatus populus, cujus Dominus Deus ejus!*

**Never relax your  
service because of  
aridities.**

"And then rejoice in the knowledge that it is in these trials that you can most purely serve Him, and can show Him that you truly love Him simply for the love of Himself, and not for the consolations that He formerly gave you. And in order to show in practice the fidelity and purity of your love for Him, be careful to do all your ordinary actions with all the purity and perfection possible to you. So, too, the more coldness, cowardice, and weariness you feel in yourself, the greater recourse you must have to Him who is your strength and your all, the more completely you must give yourself to Him, and the more frequently you must raise your mind to Him. Do not cease to make frequent acts of love to Him, caring nought that you cannot make them with your previous fervour and consolation; for what does it matter whether you are happy or not, provided that Jesus is happy? Now very often what we do in this state of dryness and spiritual desolation pleases him more (provided that we try to do it with a pure intention of honouring Him) than that which we do with great fervour and sensible devotion; for the latter is generally accompanied by self-love, whereas the former is purified of this.

'Lastly, be in no way discouraged by the defects and cowardice of which you are guilty while in this state; but humble yourself before Our Lord, beg Him to repair them by His great mercy, and have confidence that in His bounty He will do it. Above all, always

preserve a firm resolution, whatever may happen, to serve and love Him perfectly, and to be faithful to Him to your last breath, trusting always that He will give you this grace by His great loving-kindness despite all your infidelities."(1)

## H. MARTYRDOM AND THE SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM

The grace of martyrdom is the most signal favour that Jesus can grant to His faithful servants; and these can give Him no greater mark of love than that of sacrificing their lives for Him. And so martyrdom is, as St. John says, the perfection and the consummation of the Christian life. But it is rare in our Christian countries, and for that reason spiritual writers do not generally discuss it. But in this St. John is an exception. He himself, in 1637, made a vow to endure martyrdom if the occasion should arise, and he thought that Christians should always be ready to suffer it for Christ. And so we get the chapters that are devoted to this topic in *Le Royaume de Jésus*. One hundred years after his death a violent persecution of the clergy broke out in France and many of his children had the honour of shedding their blood for Jesus Christ. Is it rash to suppose that meditation on the teachings of their Father had helped to prepare them for the heroic act that terminated their lives?

Leaving on one side the promises made to the martyrs, whom Our Lord, speaking through the Church, calls His saints, sancti mei, and the expositions given by St. John Eudes of the nature and conditions of martyrdom, we will confine ourselves here to the reasons which,

( 1 ) *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xiii.

220-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

should the occasion arise, oblige us to submit to it, and to the manner of preparing for it, or, which comes to the same thing, to the spirit of martyrdom.

**Why we must  
accept martyrdom,  
should the  
occasion arise.**

The reasons for undergoing martyrdom are numerous, and St. John indicates seven of them. The first one he mentions is that we belong to Jesus on many considerations, and that therefore we are obliged to live and to die for Him.

His second reason is that God created us for His glory and that we can do nothing better for His glory than to sacrifice our life to Him.

The third is that we are obliged to love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and with all our strength, and that the best means of doing this is to die for Him.

The fourth reason is that Jesus always had and still has a keen desire of suffering and dying for His Father's glory and for love of mankind, and since He can no longer do so Himself, He seeks souls in whom He can renew and continue His sacrifice.

The fifth flows from the profession we made at baptism "to cling to Jesus Christ, to follow and imitate Him, and consequently to be victims consecrated and sacrificed to His glory. Now this obliges us to follow and to imitate Him in His death as well as in His life, and to be always ready to sacrifice our

lives for Him . . . in accordance with the holy words: 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.' "(1)

The sixth is derived from the fact that we are members of Jesus Christ. "Jesus being our Head and  
(1). Ps. Xliii, 22.

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

221 -

we His members,- says our Saint, "just as we must live with His life, so we are obliged to die with His death since it is quite evident that the members must live and die with the life and death of their head, in accordance with St. Paul's words: 'Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus. . . . For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake; that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. ...(1)

The seventh is the most powerful reason, and it is the sanguinary martyrdom and most dolorous death suffered by Our Lord Jesus Christ for love of us on the cross. "For," says St. John, "this most loving Saviour was not content with using His life on our behalf, He also wished to die for love of us, and He died with the cruellest and most ignominious death that could possibly be. He laid down a life, a single moment of which was worth more than all the lives of men and angels, and, were it necessary, He would be ready to die again a thousand times. And, in fact, He is continually on our altars as a victim: there He is immolated every day and every hour, and will be until the day of judgment. The unbloody and no longer sorrowful Sacrifice of the altar will be offered up until the end of the world, to testify to us thereby that He is ready, if there be need, to be sacrificed just as often for love of us, with a sacrifice as bloody and dolorous as was that of the cross."

After these reflections St. John tells us that he is not surprised that so many Christians have rejoiced to suffer and to die for Jesus; and he adds: «But I am astonished to see that now our love of such a Saviour  
(1). 11 Cor. 1V, 10-11.

222 -

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

is so cold, so cowardly in suffering the smallest thing, so attached to such a miserable and mean life as is that of this world, and so far from being ready to sacrifice it for Him who gave up for us so worthy and so precious life. How can we call ourselves Christians and adore crucified God, a God agonising and dying on the Cross, a God who for love of us gives up so noble a life, and for the same purpose sacrifices Himself every day before our eyes upon our altars: how can we adore such an one and not be ready to sacrifice for Him all that is dearest to us in the world, even our very life which, moreover, belongs to Him for many reasons? Surely we are not truly Christians, if these are not our dispositions.-»

### **How to train our souls to be ready for it.**

As for the spirit of martyrdom in which every Christian should try to live, the Saint describes it as follows: "It is a strong and constant spirit which can neither be shaken nor overcome by promises or by threats, by gentleness or by sharpness, and which fears nothing save God and sin. It is a spirit of profound humility, which has a horror of vanity and of worldly glory, and loves contempt and humiliations. It is a spirit that is distrustful of self and full of trust in Our Lord Jesus, as being our strength in virtue of which we can do everything. It is a spirit of perfect detachment from the world and from everything in the world. For those who are to sacrifice their life to God must also sacrifice

everything else for Him. And it is a spirit of ardent love for our Lord Jesus Christ, a love that leads those animated with it to do and to suffer all things for love of Him who has done and suffered all things for them, and which so fires and intoxicates them that for love

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

223 -

of Him they desire and seek out mortifications and sufferings as a joy, and flee with horror from the Pleasures and delights of this world, as from hell.

"That is the spirit of martyrdom, and do you pray Our Lord, the King of Martyrs, to fill you with this spirit. Pray the Queen of Martyrs and also all the Martyrs themselves to obtain this spirit for you from the Son of God by their prayers. Have a special devotion to all the holy Martyrs, and also be careful to pray to God on behalf of all those who must endure martyrdom, that He may give them the spirit and grace of martyrdom. But especially pray for those who will have to suffer in the time of the persecution by Antichrist, which will be the most cruel of all persecutions.

"Finally, try by imitating them to make your life a perfect resemblance of the life of the Martyrs, and which is more, of the life of Jesus and Mary, the King and the Queen of Martyrs, so that they may make you worthy of being like them in your death."(1)

M. Joly relates that when about to write the life of Père Eudes he went to see a priest in Paris whose lengthy sufferings and supernatural lights were well known, and asked him if he knew his hero. The Abbé Huvelin (for he, it would seem, was the priest in question) replied: "He was a harsh saint." Yes a harsh saint. Not that he was hard with anyone, whoever they might be; his biographer tells us on the contrary that he was a model of gentleness. But with souls of good will he never hesitated to put forward Christian doctrine in its loftiest and most austere aspect, and what he preached to others he was himself the first to put into practice.

(1) *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xliv-xlvi

## CHAPTER VI

## THE PRIESTHOOD

ST. JOHN'S teachings on the priesthood scarcely differ from those of Cardinal de Bérulle and Père de Condren, (1) but he puts them forward in his own distinctive style and pushes them to their furthest consequences. In this chapter we will see what he has to say on the dignity and holiness of the priest, as well as on zeal for the salvation of souls, and also his view of the Feast of the Priesthood which he instituted.

(1) In his book *L'École française* (pp. 8-9), M. Letourneau praises his teaching on the priesthood in these terms: «I have certainly no thought of declaring that other schools do not also give us most praiseworthy teachings on the priesthood, its functions and obligations; and I am not ignorant of what many of the followers of St. Ignatius and of St. Alphonsus have written on this great subject. None the less, I am inclined to think that we French priests will find in our own French school the works that are most suited to our piety. It would be difficult to find elsewhere the brilliant guidance that has been given to us by this school from the appearance of M. Olier's *Traité des Saints Ordres* to that of Père Giraud's *Prêtre et Hostie*. Even St. Francis de Sales, so excellent, so luminous, and so perfect in all his books on the Christian life, offers us nothing similar on the priesthood. St. Alphonsus knew none of the works of this school save Père de Condren's little book on the Sacrifice of the Mass, which he praised to a remarkable extent; and we may well believe that if he had known the other writings of our masters on the priesthood of Jesus Christ he would have shown the same admiration.» Cf. Pourrat: *Le Sacerdoce*, Doctrine de l'École française, Paris, 1931.

## THE PRIESTHOOD

225 -

## A. THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIEST

When he treats of the priesthood St. John first presents it to us as the greatest and most admirable of all orders in heaven and on earth.

At a time when nobility of blood still enjoyed all its old prestige, and when human dignities allured many by their glamour, the Saint took pains to point out that the priesthood is the highest nobility and the most sublime dignity of which we can possibly conceive. He delighted in proclaiming that priests, sprung from the royal and divine blood of Jesus Christ, are the first-born of the sons of God, the high dignitaries of His palace, the chief officials of His court, and the ministers of His omnipotence. He also called them sovereign judges whose sentences shall endure for eternity, and princes and even kings in the kingdom of the Great King, since Jesus deigned to associate them with His own royalty as well as His priesthood, as St. Luke declares with the words: *Ego dispono vobis sicut disposuit mihi Pater meus regnum.* (1).

**The priesthood  
and the religious  
state.**

Though filled with veneration for the religious Orders which make the Church fragrant with the perfume of their virtues, and which at that time were renewing their fervour with admirable vigour, St. John would never expressly compare them with the priesthood. But his opinion on this point could never be doubted. However great and illustrious the religious Orders might be, their glory pales before that of the priesthood of which, as St. John (following Bérulle)

(1). Luke xxii, 29.

often repeated, Jesus Christ is the "Founder" and the "Head," and which is, as he also said, the first and the most holy of all the Orders, and that which "Sanctifies all the others," But the priesthood and the religious state are not mutually exclusive. Often, on the contrary, they are superimposed on each other, so that the same men can have the honour of belonging at once to a religious Order and to the divine Order of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. Possibly that is why Père Eudes always abstained from comparing the two.

### **Compared with the Angels,**

But, on the other hand, he did not hesitate to compare the priesthood with the angelic hierarchies and to proclaim the priest to be superior to Angels and Archangels, not in nature, but in greatness and power. Has a single one of them, he asked, received, like the priest, the power of effacing sin and of communicating the life of grace, of causing Jesus to be born within souls and of immolating Him every day upon the altar?(1) Those are powers of an entirely divine order which markedly raise up the priest above all the Angels in heaven.

### **and with Our Lady.**

He also loved to compare the priest with the Blessed Virgin. Not that he ever allowed himself to exalt the priest above the Mother of God in any respect whatever. On the contrary, every time that he places the priest above all the glories of earth or heaven, he expressly excepts the divine maternity.(2) But in the relationships of the priest with Jesus Christ and with

(1). *Memorial*, Preliminary chapter.

(2). *Idem.*, Part V. -Meditation on the obligations of Priests, et passim.

## **THE PRIESTHOOD**

227-

souls, he saw a participation in the double maternity of Mary, and that is why he loved to call her the - Mother" (1) and sometimes the "Queen" and the "sister" of priests, (2) and to hail them as "images of the Blessed Virgin." (3)

### **The Holy Trinity and the priesthood.**

But when he strove to grasp the greatness of the priesthood St. John went even higher, and ascended even to the adorable Trinity, contemplating therein the principle and end of the priesthood and of all its greatness. (4) He even went so far as to see in the

(1). *Manuel*, Part IV, For the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin. And *Memorial*, Part V. Meditation on devotion to Mary, *et passim*.

(2). Horum matrem te Mariam, Et sororem, et reginam Omnis laudet spiritus.

(From the Mass of the Priesthood.)

The expression "sister of priests- recalls that of "Virgin~priest" to be found in the hymn *Quam pulchre graditur*, sung at St. Sulpice on the Feast of the Presentation. One verse runs:

«Quid nos illaqueant improba gaudia? Cur nos jam pigeat vincula rumpere? Dux est Virgo sacerdos; Fas sit quo properat sequi.»

Pins IX makes use of this expression in a Brief dated August 25, 1873: «Adeo arete (Maria) se



junxit divini Filii sui sacrificio, ut *Virgo sacerdos* appellata fuerit ab Ecclesiae Patribus."

"*Imago Matris Virginis*, Lucerna Christi corporis, Caput, sinus, cor, ubera Quis tanta laudet munera?" (From the hymn for Matins in the Office of the Priesthood.)

Père Eudes added a note: "Sacerdotes Virginis Matris imago dicuntur, quia sicut per eam, sic per ipsos, Christus formatur, datur fidelibus, et Deo immolatur." Cf. *Mémorial*, Part V. Meditation on devotion to Mary.

(4). Hence the doxology of the hymns in the Office of the Priesthood

"Praesta, beata Trinitas, *Origo, finis omnium*, Patrum tenere semitas Nunc et per omne saeculum."

228-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

functions of the priest a sort of participation in the noblest operations of the three Divine Persons. For is not the priest's power of producing Our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist and of forming Him in the souls of the faithful, a striking image of the paternity of the Father? And in carrying out the sacerdotal functions does he not continue here below the work of the Incarnate Word? And similarly, does not his work of extending the kingdom of God in hearts, purifying them from the stain of sin, and infusing sanctifying grace into them: does not this closely associate him with the sanctifying action of the Holy Ghost? Such thoughts are often to be found in the Saint's writings. But nowhere has he set them out more precisely or with greater devotion than in this uplifting passage in his *Manuel de piété*:

"My God, Thou art the principle and source of all the dignity, power and holiness of the Christian priesthood, for from Thee proceeds all goodness. Thou art the end of all its functions, for they have no other end than the honour due to Thy divine Majesty. Thou art the consecration, the benediction, and the sanctification of all the priests of Thy Church. It is by the special election and vocation of Thy adorable will that they are chosen and called to such a lofty dignity. By a communication of Thy admirable Paternity, O Holy Father, they are made the fathers of the children of light. It is by participation in Thy divine priesthood, O Jesus, only Son of God, that they are the sacrificers of the Most High. It is by a special effusion of Thy divine holiness, O Holy Spirit, that they are the sanctifiers of souls. And it is in them and by them, O King of Heaven, that Thou makest Thyself visible upon

## THE PRIESTHOOD

229 -

earth and there dost perform works that belong only to infinite power and goodness. Finally, Thou art their portion, their treasure and their glory on earth and in heaven.' (1)

### Jesus Christ the source of the priesthood.

Of all the relations of the priest with the three Divine Persons the most important to note for an understanding of the Saint's teaching on the priesthood is that which unites the priest to the Incarnate Word. Jesus Christ is the «Sovereign Priest» He has been chosen from all eternity to be the sole mediator between God and man (2), and it is by Him that mankind must render to God the worship of adoration and love, of praise and expiation, of supplication and thanksgiving to which He has a right. Moreover, God has chosen to communicate through Him alone the graces needed by men for their salvation. Accordingly Jesus Christ received the fullness of the grace of the priesthood, and by a unique sacrifice He consummated the work of salvation that it was His mission to accomplish. (3) He came upon earth in the fullness of time, as St. Paul says, (4) and all the priesthoods previous to His own were but its shadow and figure, and if they could produce certain fruits, that was only by an anticipated application of the sacrifice of the cross. And since His ascent into Heaven Jesus has not ceased to be the Priest of the Most High; His priesthood is eternal and can never be abrogated or super

- (1). *Manuel*, Part IV. For the Feast of the Presentation.
- (2). "Unus Dens, unus mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus." I Tim. ii, 5.
- (3). "Una oblatione consumavit in sempiternum sanctificatos. Heb. x, 14.
- (4). "In dispensatione plenitudinis temporum." Eph. i, 10. Cf. Gal. iv, 4.

230 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

sedes. But, so that its functions upon earth may be continued, He has selected representatives, vicars, whom He associates in His dignity and clothes with His power, so that they can minister to divine worship in His name and in His place.

### **Unity of the Catholic priesthood with that of Christ.**

The Catholic priesthood, therefore, is not distinct from that of Jesus Christ; it is but an extension of it and a partial participation in it. There are not two priesthoods; there is but one, and that exists originally and supremely in Jesus Christ, and from Him is communicated to His ministers.

And this unity of the priesthood is clearly revealed to us in the Gospels. In his Epistle to the Hebrews St. Paul has made it perfectly clear though he puts it in a different way. St. John Eudes frequently touches on the subject and, indeed, we might say that all his teaching on the priesthood flows from it.

"You are of the royal and divine blood of Jesus Christ," he says, addressing priests; "you have a place in His genealogy; you are indeed His brothers and His members in a more eminent degree than are other Christians, for you are clothed with His royal priesthood, your priesthood is one with His, and you make but one priest together with the Supreme Priest. So much is this the case that just as there is but one priesthood in the Christian religion—*Unum est sacerdotium*, (1) which is originally and supremely in Jesus Christ and by extension and communication in other priests, so also, strictly speaking, there is but one priest, and that is Jesus Christ, the Supreme Priest, all other priests being but one with Him." (2)

(1). Symmach, *Epistola ad Eonium*.

(2). *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter.

## THE PRIESTHOOD

231 -

### **The priest is «*alter Christus*.»**

The effect of the priesthood is, then, to unite the priest with Jesus Christ in a very special manner. Already, by the character and grace of baptism, the Christian has contracted a close union with the Divine Master; as a member of His mystical Body he is called to continue, here below amid trials, and above in glory, the divine life of Our Blessed Lord. But by baptism the Christian is associated with the life of the Saviour only for his personal advantage and, so to speak, by a private title. The priestly character perfects this union, for by ordination Jesus associates His ministers in the exercise of His mediation between God and man, and to His dignity as an official and as religious head of the human race. By this means the priest becomes, with Jesus and by Jesus, the sacrificer of the Most High, the teacher and light of the world, judge of consciences, shepherd and physician of souls, minister of the sacraments and saviour of his brethren. And so he finds himself associated with the most glorious

prerogatives of the Incarnate Word Whose place he truly holds in the eyes of God and of man: *Sacerdos alter Christus*.

No other reflection is found so often as this in the writings of St. John: "You have," he tells priests, "a very special alliance with Jesus Christ, who is the institutor, founder, head and superior of your holy Order. Not only does the adorable Saviour associate you with Himself in the greatest works He performed while upon earth, and which He still performs now in heaven and upon earth, but He also makes you sharers in the highest perfections and noblest qualities that His Father has given to Him." (1) *Le Bon Confesseur*, ch. i.

232-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

"You are," he says elsewhere,---the noblest portion of the mystical body of the Son of God. You are the eyes, the mouth, the tongue, the heart of His Church, or rather, you are the eyes, the mouth, the tongue, and the heart of Jesus Himself. You are His eyes, because it is by you that this Good Shepherd continually watches over His flock; it is by you that He guides it; it is by you that He saves those of His sheep that are within the claws of the infernal wolf, and that He weeps tears over the death of His beloved Lazarus, i.e., over souls that are dead through sin.

"You are His mouth and His tongue, for by you He speaks to men and continues to preach the same Gospel as He Himself preached while yet upon earth.

"You are His heart, for it is by you that He gives true life, the life of grace upon earth and the life of glory in heaven, to all true members of His body. What marvels, what favours are these What grandeur there is in the priestly dignity!"

And again he says "You are the oracles of the Eternal word, prophets of holy wisdom." (2) You are (1) *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter. The same thought is also found in the first part wherein the author speaks of the qualities of a good shepherd. And we find it also expressed in verse in the hymn for Matins of the Office of the Priesthood:

"Imago Matris Virginis,  
Lucerna Christi corporis,  
Caput, sinus, cor, ubera:  
Quis tanta laudet munera?"

And in the hymn for the Second Vespers of the Feast we read

Pupilla vos charissima,  
Os, lingua, cor, et viscera,  
Manusque Regis gloriae:  
Sponsi, patres Ecclesiae.

(2). *Mémorial*, dedicated to the holy priests of the Church Triumphant. The same idea is to be seen in these two strophes of the Hymn for Lauds:

"Vos sacra caeli buccina A Prole missa Virginis, Legatione caelica, Areana Jesu panditis.

"Vos Spiritus oracula, Tormenta Christi bellica; Per vos patent mysteria, Per vos fugantur crimina."

## THE PRIESTHOOD

233-

living and true images of Jesus Christ. (1) You are other Christs living and working in the world, for you bear the most noble of His names, which is that of Saviour, and represent His Person, taking His place, and being clothed with His royalty and His priesthood. So, too, you act in His name and on His behalf, you are employed in the greatest of all His works, and it is your lot to continue upon earth all

the priestly functions which He once exercised thereon."(2)

Looked at in this light, the priesthood appears truly great. It has been very justly remarked that God's masterpiece is Jesus Christ, and that the greatest, the holiest, and the most august thing in Jesus Christ is His priesthood. What an honour for any man to be associated to that! And how greatly are the functions of a holy priest ennobled when it can be said that they are accomplished in the name of, and on behalf of Jesus Christ!

### **The wonderful powers of the priesthood.**

And then, too, consider the marvellous powers that are given by the Supreme Priest to His ministers. He gives them the power of regenerating souls by delivering them from sin and clothing them with sanctifying grace, which, in certain respects, is a more excellent work than the creation of the world.

(1). *Mémorial*, loc. cit.

(2). *Mémorial*, ibid.

234-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

But still more wonderful is the fact that He, the Creator of heaven and earth, submits Himself to the authority of priests, and they, at their pleasure, make Him descend upon the altar, carry Him wherever they please, distribute Him to the faithful, and, which is more, sacrifice Him to His Father as though they had supreme power over Him. "Is it not true," cries St. John when he considers such prodigies, "is it not true that priests can say with Jesus Christ, though in a different sense: 'All power is given to me in heaven, on earth, and under the earth'? In heaven, because they have the keys of heaven and can open or shut it to whomsoever they please; upon earth, for every day they produce thereon effects which require divine power: such effects as the remission of sins, the communication of grace, and the formation of Jesus in hearts and in the Blessed Sacrament; and beneath the earth, because they can trample hell under foot and expel all the powers of darkness from both bodies and souls"? (1)

### **The dignity of the priesthood.**

From that it follows that the Catholic priest has something of the divine in him. His alliance with the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, his close union with the Incarnate Word, the divine authority that he enjoys, the in some respects infinite power that he exercises over the real and the mystical Body of Jesus make him truly "a little God on earth." (2) The Fathers of the Church said as much long ago, and Père Eudes approvingly quotes them. Of all the descriptions of a

(1). *Mémorial*, *Prelim.* chapter, Part V: Meditation on the obligations of Priests.

(2). *Mémorial*, Part I: The qualities of a good Pastor.

## **THE PRIESTHOOD**

235-

priest that have been written, he especially liked that left us by St. Gregory of Nazianzen: *Deus deos efficiens*, and he loved to quote it to the priests of his Congregation. (1) To them, indeed, it was specially applicable for they were vowed to the work of training the clergy in seminaries. But it is also applicable to all priests. Deified, as it were, by their priesthood, they are called upon to deify all Christians by forming Jesus Christ in their hearts; and for that reason our Saint suggests to them this saying by St. Gregory of Nazianzen as summing-up his teaching on the greatness of the priesthood, and

also as a programme of perfection that they have to realise in themselves and in the faithful committed to their charge.(2)

## B. THE HOLINESS OF A PRIEST

Pope St. Leo in a famous sermon, after setting out the benefits bestowed upon us by the Saviour in delivering us from sin and initiating us into the divine life, called on his hearers to respect their dignity and not to lower it by conduct unworthy of that height to which they had the honour of being members: *Agnosce, O Christiane, dignitatem tuam, et, divinae consors factus naturae, noli in veterem vilitatem degeneri conversatione redire. Memor esto cujus capitis et cujus corporis sis membrum.* ( 3 )

(1). *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*. Conclusion.

(2). *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter, Part 1: The qualities of a good Pastor.

Terrae deos extollimus, Patres deorum psallimus; Dei patres et filios, Summo Parenti proximos.-

(Office of the Priesthood: Hymn for Second Vespers). *Breviarium Romanum: In Nativ. Domini*, 8a lect.

236-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

And St. John Eudes in exalting the priesthood reaches a similar conclusion. His object is to persuade priests that, if they are not to fall, they must lead an entirely holy life, for no other kind of life befits their dignity: - You are a holy race," he tells them, -for the Saint of saints set you in the holiest of positions; and it is to you that He primarily addresses these words: *Secundum etiam qui vocavit vos sanctum, et ipsi in omni conversatione sancti sitis, quoniam scriptum est: Sancti eritis quoniam ego sanctus sum.* ( 1 )

### The obligation of sanctity.

"How culpable are we," he adds, "if, instead of honouring the sacerdotal dignity, we degrade it; if, instead of behaving worthily in holy surroundings and becomingly handling holy things, we sully them with sacrileges; and if, instead of seeking only the glory of our Master and the salvation of souls, we run after the glory of the world and our own particular interests. How greatly we should be ashamed if, instead of being clothed with the holiness, the purity, the mercy and the charity of God, we are the slaves of our avarice, our ambition, and our other passions; and if, instead of being animated by the spirit of Jesus Christ, we are filled with the spirit of the world. How disgraceful it is if, instead of following Jesus Christ as our Rule, we follow only our own perverse inclinations; and if, instead of governing our life by the maxims of the Gospel, we conform to the damnable maxims of a corrupt generation!" (2)

He who is raised in dignity above his fellow-men should also be distinguished by virtue above the

(1). *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter. Cf. I Pet. i, 15; ii, 9.

(2). *Idem*; cf. *Coeur admirable*, Bk. IV, ch. iv.

## THE PRIESTHOOD

237-

common level. *Noblesse oblige*, runs the wise popular saying; and that is true of spiritual nobility as well as of nobility of birth. And so the priesthood imposes on the priest an obligation of excelling the faithful laity in virtue and holiness, even as he is above them in the dignity of his calling. Even Religious themselves, when they have not the honour of being clothed with the priesthood, are not bound to so eminent a degree of perfection as is he.

It is true that it is commonly taught that neither the priesthood nor the pastoral office suffices to

place a priest in the state of perfection; this is only granted to the episcopate. "According to St. Thomas, (1) says M. Ribet, "the sacerdotal state is characterised by the powers received in it and the ministry for souls that is connected with it. The exercise of these powers supposes and demands interior perfection; but, since it is possible for a priest not to exercise them or to exercise them but rarely, the mere reception of these sacred powers does not bind by vow to perfection, and does not, strictly speaking, constitute a state of perfection.

"The same is true of the care of souls. Not being bound by vow to fulfil this ministry, and being able to release himself from it either with the consent of his bishop or even without that consent (if he intends to enter the religious life), a simple priest does not appear to fulfil by his circumstances the strict conditions of the state of perfection as laid down by theologians."(2)

These arguments seem to be correct. But, on the one

(1). *Sum. Theol.*, IIa, IIae, q. 184, a. 6.

(2). Ribet: *L'Ascétique chrétienne*, ch. V111, n. 3.

238-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

### **Duties of a priest demand interior perfection.**

hand, real perfection and the state of perfection are two very different things, and the same St. Thomas lays it down that the exercise of the priestly functions, and especially the offering of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, demands an interior perfection which, of itself, the religious state does not seem to claim.'(1) And, on the other hand, we might well ask whether a priest who (save in exceptional circumstances) did not exercise, or only rarely exercised his priestly functions, would fittingly correspond with his vocation. Would he not resemble that useless servant of whom we read in the Gospel, who buried his master's talents instead of trading with them? Such was the opinion of St. John Eudes who, as we shall later show, always strove to inspire the ministers of Jesus Christ with a love of all the priestly functions. (2)

Rightly, then, does M. Ribet add:

### **Compared with the religious state.**

"Without in any way contradicting the traditional teaching on what constitutes, strictly speaking, a state which binds one permanently, we may affirm that, of its nature, the priesthood is a condition of life superior to every other condition, superior even to religious profession. And, as the Angelic Doctor observes, it is only when one opposes the case of a religious who is also a priest to that of a secular priest, that one can

(1). Ex hoc quod aliquis accipit sacrum ordinem, non ponitur simpliciter in statu perfectionis, quamvis interior perfectio ad hoc requiratur quod aliquis digne hujusmodi actus exerceat: *Sum Theol.*, loc. cit. And: "Per sacrum ordinem aliquis deputatur ad dignissima ministeria quibus ipsi Christo servitur in sacramento altaris, ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior quam requirit etiam religionis status" *ibid.*, a.S. Cf. also: *Suppl.*, q. 35, a. L, ad. 3; q. 40, a. 1.

(2). *Memorial*, Part II, n. 9, 21, *et passim*.

place the state of the former above that of the latter. And further he adds that because of the perils and difficulties of the pastoral office, parochial ministry demands of those who exercise it more perfection than that of religious. These last, no doubt, are subjected to the observance of their rule, but they find therein help and security which the others can only obtain by their own efforts seconded by the grace of God."(1)

This was precisely what the reformers of the French clergy in the seventeenth century never ceased to proclaim. Jealous to give all its rightful honour to the priesthood, as the Order of Jesus Christ, they strongly stressed the principle that no one is more strictly bound to perfection than is the priest, and, moreover, that no one is bound to a higher perfection, not even monks and nuns.

The reasons that oblige the priest to surpass in perfection the laity, including even religious, are numerous. In the front rank we must place his special union with God (whose minister he is), the complete consecration of his body and soul to God, the holiness of his duties, especially the adorable Sacrifice which he offers every morning. St. John mentions all these reasons, but there is yet another on which perhaps he insists even more strongly: it is the honour conferred on the priest by being associated by Our Blessed Lord to His position as religious head of the Christian people.

(1). Ribet: *L'Ascétique chrétienne*, ch. viii, n. 4. Cf. S. Thomas: Sum. Theol., IIa, Iae, q. 184, a. 5. In his fine book, *The Eternal Priesthood*, in which the ideas of St. John Eudes can often be found, Cardinal Manning plainly states: "The priestly state is the most exalted by reason of the powers entrusted to it, the obligations it imposes, and the graces it receives, and *it is the state of perfection instituted by Our Divine Master* to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth." (ch. iv.)

240-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

**He must be a  
model of sanctity  
to his flock.**

We have elsewhere explained the part played by the Divine Master in regard to His mystical Body; and we remember that His position makes Him the example that the faithful must imitate, the principle of the divine life that they enjoy, and a supplement that supplies for the imperfection and insufficiency of their worship. There, then, is the *rôle* that falls to the priest by reason of his participation in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Following the Saviour's example he must be a model for his people, by his virtues as well as by the exercise of his sacred ministry he must help to develop the supernatural life in souls, by his fervour he must supply for the negligence of his flock, and if necessary he must by penance make reparation for their sins. It is clear that no ordinary virtue will suffice for this *rôle*; if he is to fulfil it the priest requires to enjoy the fullness of the divine life.

And so St. John never wearied of repeating: "All Christians must be animated by the spirit of Jesus, but the clergy must possess its fullness so as to communicate it to others." (1) And elsewhere he says: "If a priest is adorned with a holiness proportioned to his dignity, he possesses the greatest holiness that can be found anywhere in the Church: a holiness that is a source and principle of grace and holiness, for the priest is the fountain of all Christian holiness."(2)

This metaphor of a fountain scattering its vivifying waters all around it admirably expresses the superabundance of supernatural life needed by the priest for the sanctification of others. P&E Eudes also made use of

(1). *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Part I, v.

(2). *Mémorial*, Part I: Qualities of a good Pastor.

it elsewhere in his *Mémorial*: «The priest," he says, "has to purify, guide, and perfect other Christians; therefore he must be a fountain of benediction whose salutary waters flow abundantly over every part of the Lord's house.» (1)

**Particular virtues  
needed by the  
priest.**

But the Saint is not satisfied with teaching in a general way that the priest must attain to a loftier sanctity than that of other Christians. He often applies this principle to a particular virtue, as, for example, when, speaking of poverty, and reminding the members of his Congregation (who are not bound by vow) of Our Lord's words: *Omnis ex vobis qui non renuntiat omnibus quae possidet, non potest esse meus discipulus*, he added that "no one, whatever his condition may be, is more strictly bound to this universal poverty and to the perfection of all the other Christian virtues, than are clerics."

Similarly, in connection with renunciation of self, he writes in his *Mémorial*: "All Christians are bound to this abnegation, but clerics have a very special obligation to it . . . for in this, as in every other Christian virtue, they are bound to be an example and a living rule for other Christians."

But not only is the priesthood the highest dignity on earth, it confers on the minister of Jesus Christ an authority and a power which raise him, in certain respects, above the Angels. Thence St. John concludes that, "if it were possible," a priest should lead a

(1). *Mémorial*, Part V, 2nd Meditation. Similarly he says in *Le Coeur admirable* (13k. IV, ch. iv): - - - Who should be holier than he who is obliged to be a fountain of graces and of blessings, and to have all the virtues in so high a degree as to be an example of perfection to all the faithful?"

life «purer and holier» than that of the Angels. He would have the minister of Jesus Christ to be --- an angel in purity of spirit and of body, a cherubim in light and in knowledge, and a seraphim in love and in charity." (1)

Above all he would have him become by the splendour of his virtues «a living image of Jesus Christ» (2) Since we have the honour of representing the Supreme Priest here below, of taking His place, of being clothed with His authority, of acting in His name and continuing His functions, is it not indeed fitting that our life should be the image or rather the continuation of His own? The Saint desired that---our bodies and souls should be a Gospel, a living book in which the interior and exterior life of Jesus can be seen perfectly imprinted. (3)

Sometimes Père Eudes also suggested the divine perfections themselves as models for priestly holiness; nor need we be surprised by that. The Fathers of the Church hold up the priest as one who is divine, indued with a power and authority that belong only to God; is it not right, then, that "so far as is possible" he should be 'full of charity, goodness, mercy, and purity': in short, "full of the spirit and holiness of God? (4)

But Père Eudes's mind was too practical to stop short at these general and somewhat idealistic expressions on sacerdotal perfection. No one knew better than he how important it is to come down to details when we are reflecting on our duties or reminding others of theirs. And in his *Memorial* principles are given a relatively small space; the book is devoted almost

(1). *Mémorial*, Part I: The qualities of a good Priest.



- (2) *Idem*, loc. cit.  
 (3). *Idem*, Part III, ch. ii; Part V, 10th Meditation, *et passim*.  
 (4) *Mémorial*, Part 1: The qualities of a good Pastor, *et passim*.

## THE PRIESTHOOD

243 -

entirely to setting out in detail a priest's duties and how best to perform them.

### Practical counsels for the priest.

The second part of that book (1) and the Meditations at the end of it give in great detail the various elements that go to make up priestly perfection. The salient characteristics, as set out by St. John, are a complete separation from sin (so that the priest is, as he puts it, "irreprehensible"), an absolute renunciation of the world which offers only perversity and folly, great fidelity in avoiding all familiarity with worldly people, especially with women, and complete detachment from self. He also mentions a lively faith that inspires our whole moral life, a great love for Jesus Christ, especially in the Holy Eucharist which is the mystery peculiar to the priest, a singular devotion to Mary, the queen and mother of the clergy, together with a special cult for the holy priests who, after the Sovereign Priest, are our patrons and models, as well as for the holy martyrs and virgins so as to obtain by their intercession the spirit of sacrifice and of inviolable purity which we need. To these qualities, the Saint adds unreserved devotion to the Church, zeal for the salvation of souls which does not shrink from any sacrifice, and, underlying all the virtues, a profound humility resting on a vivid realisation of our helplessness and unworthiness.

### The necessity of constant prayer.

The means of attaining to this perfection is application to prayer. Remembering that the Saint declares that prayer is the soul of the Christian life, (2) we can understand that with much more reason it must be the

(1). This second part is called *Abrégé des devoirs des pasteurs*.

(2). *Cf. Introduction au Royaume de Jésus*, p. 26.

244 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

soul of the priestly life. St. John, in fact, desires the priest "to have a great love of prayer, and to have recourse to it at all times and in everything," (1) so that his life becomes "a continual prayer." (2) At this price he will make progress in virtue and his ministry will be fruitful.

Similarly the chief object of his *Memorial* is to teach the priest to become a man of prayer, by teaching him not only to perform properly what St. Francis de Sales calls "complete and formed prayer," (3) but also to accomplish all his actions with that interior spirit which is simply one of the forms of prayer. The Saint liked to sum up all this by saying that a priest should be, like St. John the Baptist, «a burning, shining lamp: burning before God and shining before men; burning with love for God, shining with charity towards his neighbour; burning with the perfection of his interior life, shining with the holiness of his exterior life; burning with the fervour of his continual prayer, shining in his preaching of the divine word.» (4) It would be difficult to find a more gracious and truer imagery with which to portray the holiness of a priest.

(1) *Mémorial*, Part II, n. 30.

(2). *Idem*, Part II Qualities of a good Pastor.

(3) *La Vie dévote*, II, x.

(4) .*Mémorial*, 11: The qualities of a good Pastor. Cf. *Le bon Confesseur*, II, iv. The same idea is to be seen in this strophe from the Mass of the Priesthood:

"Intus flagrant charitatis Divinis ardoribus: Foris lucent sanctitatis Praeclaris operibus."

## THE PRIESTHOOD

245-

### C. THE ZEAL OF A PRIEST

One of the chief obligations of a priest is to labour for the salvation of souls, and St. John Eudes fully realised this. "After the incomparable Xavier," says Père Hérambourg, "perhaps no one, at least in the seventeenth century, carried zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls to greater lengths." (1) And St. John himself said: "I feel so strong a desire to work for the salvation of souls that I would voluntarily renounce all the glory of Paradise, together with that of the angels and even that of the Blessed Virgin, and I would without difficulty leave heaven and return to earth, to help in the salvation of a poor Soul." (2)

#### The Saint's zeal for souls.

During a pilgrimage that he made to the Abbey of Clairvaux in 1665, he was led to envy the fortunate lot of the religious who lived there in absolute separation from the world and in constant union with God. Greatly struck by the security of these happy solitaries and by the tremendous responsibilities entailed by the pastoral life which he had led for so many years, he thought of settling down with them and giving himself to the contemplation that he craved. But soon he thought of the souls who needed his ministry, and he banished this plan as a temptation. 'I am afraid,' he said,---of not making sufficiently holy use of the talents God has given me for labouring at the salvation of souls. If I were to give up everything to withdraw into solitude, would I not be burying my talent? If I were to give up the missions so as to retire

(1). *Vertus du P. Eudes*, ch. xxiii.

(2) Hérambourg, loc. cit.

246-

### THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

into religion, would I be able to plead that I had feared to lose my soul? Was not that the reply made by the idle servant who was so severely punished by his lord, and would I not justly deserve the same treatment?" (1)

After that, we are not surprised to learn that the Saint insisted on the priest's obligation to labour for the salvation of souls. (2) He constantly returned to this point and expressed himself thereon with a loftiness and a force of conviction rarely to be found. It is in this, perhaps, that his books on the ecclesiastical life are most distinguishable from analogous works that appeared in the seventeenth century, many of which preach holiness rather than zeal. This, for example, is true of M. Olier's *Traité des saints Ordres*. Others, it is true, treat of zeal at some length; but, without seeking to depreciate their value, we believe we may say that in them one will look in vain for the impassioned language that love of souls inspired in Père Eudes.

**The salvation of  
souls is the *raison  
d'être* of the  
priesthood,**

Convinced that the salvation of souls is the *raison d'être* of the priesthood, the Saint could not understand how anyone could enter it for the sake of his own salvation, as he heard some declare they had done: «Know this, brother,» he said, "when you enter the sacerdotal state your salvation should be a matter of the past,

(1) Martine Lecointe: *Vie du P. Eudes*, II, p. 113.

(2). Cf. *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*, passim; *Manuel pour une Communauté ecclésiastique*, passim; *Le bon Confesseur*, ch. ii; *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, 1V, lx; *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxxvii; *Constitutions des Religieuses de Notre-Dame de Charité*, 1st constitution; *Regulae Congregationis Jesu et Mariae*, I, 1V, etc.

**THE PRIESTHOOD**

247 -

and you should enter the priesthood to labour for the salvation of others. For the prospects of your own salvation should be so promising, and you should be so holy, that you can, with the grace of God, save and sanctify others."(1)

St. John was also wont to remind priests of their office of saviours of the world communicated to them by Jesus Christ: "You," he tells them in his *Mémorial*, "are the saviours of the world whom the great Saviour has left here below in His place to continue and to fulfil the work of the redemption of the universe. Also He caused you to be given the title of *saviours* in the Scriptures, for it is to priests that He refers in the prophecy of Abdias: *Ascendent salvatores in montem Sion*; (2) and Clement of Alexandria has no scruple in calling them 'redeemers.' "(3)

**and the noblest of  
all possible works.**

In order to inflame zeal in the hearts of priests St. John went to considerable trouble to demonstrate the excellence of their work. This he did especially in a long chapter in *Le Bon Confesseur*, in which he shows that there is no work greater or holier than that of toiling for the salvation of souls. That, he says, is the great work of God, of Jesus Christ, of Mary, of the Church, and of the angels and saints. Indeed, was it not for that that God created the world? Was not that the reason for the Incarnation and the Redemption, for the life and the death of Jesus Christ? Is not that also why the Church was instituted and why she was given the mission to preach the doctrine of salvation, to administer the sacraments, and to perpetuate the

(1). *Le bon Confesseur*, ch. 11.

(2) *Abdias*, 1, 2 1.

(3). *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter.

248-

**THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

Sacrifice of the Cross? And is not that the object of the ministry the angels exercise among mankind?

The Saint adds that we can do nothing that is more agreeable to God and more useful for our fellows. Fasting, alms-giving, prayer, even martyrdom itself, are of less value than efforts made to save a soul; and in support of this assertion he cites, amongst other proofs, the beautiful words of St.

Teresa: "O my Jesus, how admirable is Thy love for the children of men, since the greatest service that we can render Thee is to abandon Thee (i.e. to interrupt our prayer) for love of them and for their salvation! (1) And a little later he reminds us that this great saint envied those who spent themselves for the salvation of souls more than she envied the martyrs.(2)

The striking pages devoted to the development of these thoughts in *Le Bon Confesseur* should be read: they are certainly amongst the most notable that he ever wrote. And they are, moreover, a magnificent commentary on the saying by Denis the Areopagite (so often quoted by St. John): "The divinest of divine works is to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls: *Omnium divinorum divinissimum est cooperari . Deo in salutem animarum.* ( 3 )

### **Efforts of Satan to cause loss of souls.**

To stimulate the zeal of priests the Saint would also point out to them the rage with which the devil strives to bring about the loss of souls: «Shall we,» he asks them, "have less love for the souls of our brethren, than this monster has hatred for them? Shall the

(1). *Exclamations*, 2.

(2). *Le bon Confesseur*, ch. ii, sec. 5.

(3). *Idem*, loc. cit.; *Mémorial*, Part 1: *Qualities of a good Pastor*; *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Part IV, ch. ix; *Constitutions des Religieuses de N.D. de Charity* 1st constitution, etc.

## **THE PRIESTHOOD**

249 -

fervour we show for their salvation be less than the fury with which he seeks their perdition? If his rage against them is such as to make him consider all too brief the thousands of years during which he is allowed to work for their destruction, with what ardour must we employ the fleeting moments of this life to help in saving those souls for the least of which the Son of God sacrificed a life of thirty-three years, each moment of which was worth more than ten thousand eternities of men and angels! (1)

And again he cries out: "Let us have pity on the multitude of souls that perish every day; they were created in the image of God and redeemed by the Precious Blood of His Son, and they are the souls of our brothers and sisters. Reflect on the innumerable labours undertaken by Our Saviour on their behalf, on the wounds He received, and the griefs He endured; consider the tears He shed and the blood that flowed from Him, and the shameful and cruel death that He suffered for their salvation; and think, too, of the tears of His Holy Mother and of the inconceivable anguish that filled her maternal Heart for the same reason. Let no day pass without helping some soul."

"O my Saviour," he added, "when shall be fulfilled those divine words of Thy Holy Mother: *Esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes*? Most holy Mother of God, when shall we see thy great prophecy accomplished? Men shall we see the demons stripped of the immense riches which they possess and which they have stolen from thy beloved Son? When shall be satisfied the extreme hunger of thy children for souls? Would that all God's creatures, both in heaven

(1). *Le bon Confesseur*, ch. ii, sect. 5.

250-

## **THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

and on earth, might prostrate themselves with thee before the throne of the Divine Mercy to obtain this great grace!"(1)

Moved by such feelings, St. John could not understand how a priest could remain insensible to the

loss of souls, when it was his mission to save them: "How guilty are we," he cried, "if instead of seeking only the glory of God and the salvation of souls, we pursue the glory of the world and our own particular interests!" (2)

**Priests must be self-sacrificing in this work.**

He would have the ministers of Jesus Christ bring to the labour of saving souls the generosity that was shown in this respect by the Divine Master: and many times, both in his *Mémorial* and in *Le bon Confesseur*, he urges them to devote themselves to this work without reserve:

"A good pastor," he says, "is another Christ who, imitating the Saviour, makes use of his whole mind, his heart, his affections, his strength, his time, and his belongings in this work, and is always ready to give his blood and to sacrifice his life for the salvation of the souls committed to him by God." (3) And he adds: «Such a one is a living image of Jesus Christ in the world, and of Jesus watching, praying, preaching, catechising, toiling, sweating, weeping, going from town to town and from village to village, suffering, agonising, dying and sacrificing himself for the salvation of souls.» (4)

"As the father of God's people," the priest should, he tells us, "labour unceasingly to feed them with the

(1). *Le bon Confesseur*, ch. II, sec. 3.

(2). *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter.

(3). *Idem*, Part I: *Qualities of a good Pastor*.

(4). *Idem*, loc. cit.

**THE PRIESTHOOD**

251-

holy bread and the divine word," and to "clothe them with Jesus Christ" by administering the sacraments. "As the captain of God's army, he must always have arms in his hands and must perpetually fight his foes" to gain the souls which are as kingdoms to him. As the spouse of the Church of Christ, he must only think, day and night, of discovering every kind of means of embellishing and enriching the Church so as "to make it worthy of the heavenly Spouse." (1)

**Idleness and frivolity to be avoided.**

That is what St. John meant by being zealous. He could not bear that a priest, whose time is so precious, should lead a life of sterile idleness, or should waste his time in frivolous occupations. In the *Constitutions* that he gave his Congregation he took great care to forewarn his sons against those unfortunately too common failings: "Since the Congregation was founded to labour for the salvation of souls," he says, "all its sons will frequently remind themselves that they have not joined it in order to lead an idle life, or to seek in it their own interests and satisfaction, but in order to co-operate with God in that great work which is the work of works and the most divine of divine things." (2)

Elsewhere he urges priests to imitate the laborious lives of Jesus and Mary "by fleeing from idleness and frivolity, and by always occupying themselves with some exercise that is either useful for themselves or for their fellows." (3) And again he says: "They will shun idleness as the source of all evil, and for this reason, outside the times of conversation, no time will be

(1). *Idem*, loc. cit. (2). *Constitutions*, 1V, ix. (3). *Loc. cit.*, I, ii.

wasted in useless chattering or in other amusements and frivolous occupations."(1)

And in his *Mémorial* the Saint gives the same advice to *all* priests: "Beware," he tells them, «lest the judgment pronounced upon the unprofitable servant (2) be also pronounced against you. And so that that may not happen flee from idleness as a pest and as the mother of all vices. And that you may not fall into it, regulate and occupy your time with prayer, study, works of charity or some other honest occupation, and remember that none are so bound to make good use of their time as are priests, for they are charged with the most important affairs of heaven and earth, namely the glory of God and the salvation of souls.» (3)

### **Study is not an end in itself.**

So greatly did St. John love souls that sometimes he regretted to see so many priests devote to the study of the sciences time which might, he considered be more fruitfully employed in evangelising and converting the people. Not that he was an enemy of study

(1). *Constitutions*, 11, i.

(2). *Servant inutilem projicite in tenebras exteriores*: Matt. xxv, 30.

(3). *Mémorial*, If, n. 9. Père de Bérulle and M. Olier similarly put priests on their guard against idleness and frivolity. "It would be desirable," said Père de Bérulle,---to found a Congregation of clerics in which poverty would combat luxury, a vow of never seeking any benefice or dignity would combat ambition, and a vow of employing oneself in ecclesiastical functions would combat frivolity.- (*Esquisse de l'Oratoire*, MS quoted by Père Boulay in his *Vie du P. Eudes*, Vol. I, Appendix, p. 19.) And Père de Bérulle also wrote that "idleness must be most carefully banished (from the Oratory) as unworthy not only of a regular and cloistered cleric, but of a simple Christian. ((*Oeuvres de Piété CXCI*. Migne, col. 1274.) Similarly, M. Olier declared that, «There must be no idle or useless moments in the life of a priest, and he should not be occupied with himself nor should he seek sensible satisfaction in the sweetnesses of divine love." (*Traité des saints Ordres*, III, vi.) Cf. Manning: *The Eternal Priesthood*, ch. x: The Value of a Priest's Time.

### **THE PRIESTHOOD**

253 -

the books he has left show him to have had profound knowledge of the ecclesiastical sciences. In fact, some of them, for instance *Le Coeur admirable*, display considerable erudition and are evidently the results of long research; and the Saint expected priests to prepare themselves for the sacred ministry by serious and assiduous work. But he desired that study should be a means of preparing them for labouring for the salvation of souls, and he wanted them never to apply themselves to it from a pure love of knowledge. This was his meaning when, while preaching a mission at Vasteville(1) in 1659, saddened by the sight of so many penitents pressing around the confessionals and waiting for whole days without being able to confess, he wrote to one of his sons: "What are so many doctors and graduates doing in Paris, while souls perish in thousands for want of guides to lead them from perdition and to preserve them from everlasting fire? Assuredly, if I acted according to my convictions I would go to Paris, and would cry out in the Sorbonne and the other colleges: 'Come, you doctors and graduates; come, you priests and clerics; come and combat the fire of hell that embraces the whole universe; come, and help us to extinguish it!' (2)

It was especially in parish priests and missionaries that St. John wanted to stir up ardent zeal for souls. In his *Mémorial*, and also in *Le bon Confesseur*, he

(1). A parish in the diocese of Coutances, three leagues from Cherbourg.

(2). *Pope Pius X*, in his first encyclical, addressing the bishops of the Catholic world, said to them: «Do

not let new priests leaving your seminaries escape thereby your zealous solicitude. We urge you with our whole soul to press them often to your hearts which must burn with a heavenly fire: enkindle them, inflame them, so that henceforth they aspire only to God and the conquest of souls. . . . It is not that we do not consider worthy of praise those young priests who devote themselves to useful studies in every branch of science, and so prepare themselves the better for defending the truth. . . . But we cannot conceal, and we even openly declare, that our preference is, and always will be, for those who, without neglecting ecclesiastical and profane science, devote themselves most particularly to the welfare of souls in the exercise of the various ministries which become a priest animated with zeal for the divine honour." Those are sentiments which scarcely differ from those of St. John Eudes.

254 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

often reminds them that they will have to give an account at God's tribunal of all the souls entrusted to them and answer for those who will be lost on that day through their negligence and inactivity. St. Gregory the Great told the priests of his day that to leave souls to perish through cowardly silence is to kill them: *Tot occidimus quot ad mortem ire lepidi et tacentes videmus.*'(1) St. John frequently quoted these terrible words to rouse from their torpor pastors without zeal and courage.

### Treatment of sinners.

But he also took care to show priests, and especially parish priests, the means by which they could exercise a fruitful zeal.

In his *Mémorial* and also in *Le bon Confesseur* he particularly insists on the good example they must set the faithful, and on the care they must take to know the souls entrusted to them, to watch over their needs, to instruct them and to exhort them to lead a good life, to repress abuses and vices, to have holy places respected, to visit schools, the poor and the sick, and finally to administer the sacraments.

The Saint had a very special tenderness for the spiritual and corporal miseries of humanity, and he never missed an opportunity of advising priests to show great compassion and limitless charity to sinners and to all the unfortunate: "You will remember," he  
(1). Homily 17.

## THE PRIESTHOOD

255-

says, "that in the Holy Scriptures God so strongly and so often commends to us the orphans, widows, strangers, and all the poor. For that reason we must strive to exercise charity to all these people in every way that is possible, associating more willingly with the poor than with the rich, being more prompt to visit them in their illnesses and afflictions, and to hear their confessions when they ask to be heard. On every occasion we must deal with them with a heart full of love and of respect for Our Lord whom we must see in them."(1)

## D. THE FEAST OF THE PRIESTHOOD

St. John quickly realised that a solemn feast in honour of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and of all holy priests and levites would greatly help to develop the apostolic spirit in the members of his Institute and to instill it into the ordinands of whom he had charge; and at an early date he decided to establish it. In 1649 he submitted to the approval of Doctors Basire and Le Moussu an Office of the Priesthood written by himself, and this he published in 1652 in the first edition of the *Proper* of his

Congregation. On December 29th of the same year Mgr. Auvry, Bishop of Coutances, authorised all the faithful of his diocese, and especially the priests and clerics of his seminary, to make use of the Saint's Offices. At this time the Feast of the Priesthood was allocated to November 15th, and accordingly it is morally certain that it was celebrated in the seminary of Coutances on November 15, 1653.

(1). *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, IV, vi. Cf. Mémorial, loc. cit.; and Le bon Confesseur, loc. cit.*

256-

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Subsequently the Saint continued to perfect his Office, as is shown by the editions of the Proper published by him in 1668 and in 1672. In these the hymns are more rhythmic, an octave is added to the Office, and in order to make it possible to celebrate the Feast and its octave before the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, the solemnity is advanced two days and so is kept on November 13th. St. John wanted the renewal of the promises of the clergy in his Society to take place on the Feast of the Presentation, and thus the Feast of the Priesthood served as a preparation for that great act which, in those circumstances, could not fail to be carried out with the greatest possible fervour.

### **The Office of the Feast of the Priesthood.**

The Saint's Office in honour of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ and of all holy priests and levites is one of great beauty. It is at the same time a magnificent glorification of the heroes of the priesthood whose virtues and success it enthusiastically relates, a striking exposition of the dignity and the duties of a priest, and a fervent prayer that God should grant that His ministers should participate in the spirit and the virtues of their predecessors. In it the Saint was happy in his choice and arrangement of texts from Scripture and the Fathers; and those parts of the Mass and Office that are entirely his own (such as the hymns and the prose) are remarkable for their vigour and their loftiness of thought. He succeeded in introducing the whole of his beautiful teaching on the relations between the priest and the three Divine Persons, his union with Christ, his connection with the Blessed Virgin, his personal duties and his mission with regard to the laity. When chanted in a major

## THE PRIESTHOOD

257-

seminary it could not fail to make a profound impression on the ordinands, and the same may be said of the Office as a whole.

### **Popularity of this FEAST.**

This Feast of the Priesthood was also adopted by the Priests of St. Sulpice and by the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament. At St. Sulpice it was first fixed for October 30th, but later, with the consent of the Ordinary, it was celebrated on July 17th, or on another day towards the end of the scholastic year. We cannot say at what precise date the Feast was introduced at St. Sulpice, but apparently it was not established there by M. Olier, but by his disciples some years after his death, which occurred in 1657. According to M. Faillon the Feast began to be kept there about 1660, and he attributes to M. de Bretonvilliers the composition of the Office and Mass used in its celebration. But we believe, on the contrary, that the Fathers of St. Sulpice, being in touch with St. John Eudes, adopted his Office and Mass, retouching, perhaps, certain parts of it, especially the hymns.

Similarly, the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament also adopted the Feast of the Priesthood,



which admirably suited their devotion towards the Holy Eucharist. For there is a close connection between the priesthood and the Eucharist, and in some respects the Feast of the Priesthood seemed to be a happy complement of the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. That is why when the Benedictines adopted it they fixed its celebration for the Thursday after the Octave of Corpus Christi. (1)

(1). Cf. *Propre des fêtes et offices de la Congregation des Religieuses Bénédictines de l'Adoration perpétuelle du Saint-Sacrament*, approved by Apostolic Authority. Paris, 1671;

258 -

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

On May 30, 1668, Cardinal de Vendôme, the Legate *a latere* of Pope Clement IX, authorised them to celebrate this Feast, using the Office written by St. John and accommodated to the Benedictine rite.

But this Feast did not remain restricted to the three Institutes that we have mentioned: it was adopted in several dioceses, amongst others in that of Rouen in which it is said to have been kept until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Eudists were very attached to the Feast of the Priesthood, and St. John's immediate successor, Père Blouet de Camilly, "had it inserted in the letters of institution of several houses of the Congregation";(1) while the General Assembly of 1742 recommended that it be faithfully celebrated in all the houses of the Institute. (2) Nor did it cease to be celebrated till towards the middle of the nineteenth century, (3) when its abandonment was doubtless due to the return to the Roman Liturgy. The priests of St. Sulpice preserved it until the liturgy was reformed by Pope Pius X, when they had to give it up; but neither the Eudists nor the Sulpicians have relinquished hope of reviving some day a Feast that so happily harmonises with their spirit and their works.

(1). Pierre Costil: *Annales*, II, pp. 5, 118, 186, 600.

(2). *Actes des Assemblées générales*, p. 100.

(3). Pitra: *Vie du P. Liberman*. Bk. III, ch. iii.

## CONCLUSION

### St. John and the Oratory.

In the course of this work we have several times remarked that St. John Eudes belonged to the French School of the seventeenth century. Trained to the spiritual life by Bérulle and Condren, he always remained faithful to the principles he received from them, and not only did he himself live up to them, but he threw all the ardour of his zeal into propagating them by word and by pen. Accordingly, in all essentials his teaching is that of the Oratory; but, even during his sojourn at the Oratory, what he chiefly saw in Jesus and Mary was not their greatness but their love. Moreover his piety was more affective than was that of his masters. The virtue of religion had a prominent place in it, but its dominant element was charity, a charity that was sweet and gentle, confident and generous. And with the passage of time this tendency increased till it resulted in devotion to the Sacred Hearts, of which the Saint was the indefatigable apostle.

### The practical nature of the Saint's writings.

For the rest, St. John was not a philosopher engrossed in theory: he was a practical man and a man full of zeal. And so, we must not seek in his works the lofty reflections of a Cardinal de Bérulle on the mystery of the Incarnation, or the no less exalted speculations of a Père de Condren on the priesthood and the sacrifice of

## THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES

Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that he had carefully nourished his personal piety on these reflections and speculations, but in his daily contact with the people he simplified the teaching of his masters and tried to bring home to them its practical side. If he is not the most profound writer of the French School, we believe that he is the most popular, and that he has contributed more than any other to the diffusion of its common teaching.

The practical bent and talent of the Saint is also shown in his zeal and in his facility for expressing in prayers the spiritual teaching that he was propagating. We have said that his rule of faith will be found in the official prayer of the Church: *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, and, reversing this principle, St. John sought to make his teaching become the rule of his prayer. Hence the numerous aspirations in *Le Royaume de Jésus*; hence the prayers with their varied subjects and attractions to be found in his *Manuel de piété*; and hence, too, the beautiful prayers in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary that he bequeathed to his children.

Furthermore, we have seen that what the Saint expounded in his didactic books, and what he strove to express in prayers intended for current use, he tried to incorporate into the liturgical Offices. In this respect Cardinal de Bérulle had set him the example by instituting the Feast of Jesus and composing a proper Mass and Office for it. And after he had left the Oratory, the Saint could give free rein to his taste for the liturgy and to his poetic talents, so that, as already shown, he composed many Masses and Offices, some of which, still used in his institutes, rouse the admiration of all who read them. On this score he may

be considered the liturgical precentor of the French School.

**The training of  
the clergy.**

If we turn from teaching to institutions we shall find new manifestations in the Saint's work of his practical spirit and his zeal. He shared the views of Cardinal de Bérulle on the greatness of the priesthood and the necessity of its realisation; but he quickly realised that the only way to produce holy priests is to labour at the training of ecclesiastical students. Although this work formed part of the duties of the Oratory, it was not its principal end; and that is why St. John, after much prayer and consultation, believed it his duty to leave that Society for the purpose of founding the Congregation of Jesus and Mary specially vowed to this work of capital importance.

**The Saint's work  
compared with  
that of Cardinal de  
Bérulle and Père  
de Condren.**

In the organisation of his Congregation the Saint gave further proof of an eminently practical mind. In view of its principal end the Congregation of Jesus and Mary must, like the Oratory, be a purely sacerdotal society. Thus the two Societies have the same organisation and the same ideal; but in the Saints' Institute discipline is stricter than it is at the Oratory, and is more like that of the Congregations that take simple vows. The Oratory, it has been said, has never had more than a few rules: but St. John, on the other hand, gave very detailed, and sometimes minutely precise, constitutions to his priests.

Cardinal de Bérulle had succeeded by persistent efforts in introducing the Discalced Carmelites into France, and all his life he remained superior and

262-

**THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN EUDES**

visitor of these religious whose life is devoted to prayer and penance. St. John, for his part, also greatly revered the Carmelites and the other contemplative Orders, and, urged on by his zeal, he founded an apostolic Order vowed to the conversion of penitents and gave them constitutions perfectly suited to its end.

Finally the zeal and practical spirit of the Saint led him at an early date to found other societies for people in the world, and these he dedicated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and strove to inculcate a thoroughly apostolic spirit into them so as to make them helpers of the clergy in works of charity and zeal. It does not seem that Cardinal de Bérulle and Père de Condren attempted anything of this nature.

And so it is plain that if our Saint was influenced throughout his life by the teaching of the French School, he used it in a very personal and variegated way, and he pushed it to its furthest consequences by instituting the Feast of the Priesthood and by founding the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Moreover he enriched it and made it yet more attractive by grafting on to it devotion to the Sacred Hearts, while he completed it by happy originalities of his own. It cannot be denied that the Saint was greatly indebted to Cardinal de Bérulle and to Père de Condren, but, while guided by their principles, he

knew how to undertake original work and, if he had not their metaphysical genius, he deserves a place by their side because of his zeal, his practical bent, his oratorical and poetical gifts, and the variety of his works.

PRINTED BY THE STANHOPE PRESS LTD., ROCHESTER, KENT



**The Life and the Kingdom  
Of JESUS**

**A TREATISE ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION**

**FOR USE BY CLERGY OR LAITY**

**BY**

**SAINT JOHN EUDES**

Translated from the French by  
A Trappist Father in  
The Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsémani

With an Introduction by

THE RIGHT REVEREND  
MONSIGNOR FULTON J. SHEEN

1947  
NEW YORK

P. J. KENEDY & SONS

## GENERAL PREFACE

ST. JOHN EUDES has been called "the wonder of his age." Missionary, founder, reformer of the clergy, he crowded into a life of seventy-nine years so many and such varied accomplishments that one marvels how a single man could achieve so much. In addition to the activities of an incessant and many-sided apostolate, he wrote a number of valuable books, which rank him among the most prolific ascetic writers of the seventeenth century.

For many years the devotional works of St. John Eudes were practically unknown. (1) Occasionally a volume was discovered in the library of some seminary or religious house. Many others preserved in manuscript form were lost in the chaos of the French Revolution. (2) At the beginning of the present century the sons of St. John Eudes united in a tribute of filial piety to bring out a complete edition of the works of their spiritual father, seeking them in public and private libraries throughout the world. (3) About twenty volumes were found and edited in 1905 by the late Fathers Charles Lebrun, C.J.M., and Joseph Dauphin,

(1). Before the French Revolution the works of St. John Eudes were popular in France. In 1792 the houses of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary were confiscated by the Government and its members were massacred or dispersed throughout Europe. With the suppression of the Eudists, their rich literary heritage was widely scattered and partially destroyed. It was not until the re-establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1826 that effort was made to recover the printed and manuscript works of St. John Eudes. The research was carried on until the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the "Preface Générale to the *Oeuvres Complètes* (Vannes, 1905), Father Charles Lebrun points out that one of the purposes of the edition was "to unearth these works buried too long in oblivion," *exhumer ces ouvrages ensevelis depuis trop longtemps dans l'oubli...*

(2) The following manuscripts were not found: The Christian Man, All Jesus, The Divine office, The Admirable Sacrifice of the Mass, Meditations, (2 vol.), Sermons of St. John Eudes (3 vols.), Favors obtained by the Diocese of Coutances through the Blessed Virgin, The Divine Childhood of Jesus, The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, The Admirable *Life of Mary des Vallées*, (incomplete copy found at Laval University Library, Quebec) and Correspondence of St. John Eudes.

(3). cf. *oeuvres Complètes*, P. xiv.

V -

## GENERAL PREFACE

C.J.M. The first edition in French, *Oeuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, ran into twelve octavo volumes with introductions, explanatory notes, analytic and alphabetic indexes of great value. These writings constitute a complete summa of ascetic and pastoral theology. The list is as follows:

*Volume 1 The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls.* In this work the Saint develops his spiritual teaching on the Christian life, namely, that the Christian life is simply the life of Jesus extended and continued in each one of us.

*Volume 11.* This volume contains six short treatises on subjects relating to the Christian life:

1. *A Treatise on the Respect Due to Holy Places*, which is an echo of the fiery denunciations he pronounced during his missions against profaners of the temple of God.

2. *Meditations on Humility*, a series of meditations on the profession of humility as used daily in his order of Priests, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

3. *Interior Colloquies of the Soul with God*, meditations on creation, the end of man and the grace of Baptism.

4. *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, a summary of the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Tradition on the Sacrament of Baptism.

5. *The Practice of Piety*, a brief explanation of what is necessary in order to live a Christian life.

6. *Catechism of the Mission*, an outline of the catechetical instructions given during a mission.

*Volume III.* Contains two important works on sacerdotal perfection:

1. *The Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*, an explanation of the dignity and duties of the priesthood.
2. *A Manual of Piety for Use in an Ecclesiastical Community*, in which the author explains how the means of sanctification he recommended to his priests should be practically applied in their daily lives.

*Volume IV.* Comprises significant works on the priestly ministry.

1. *The Apostolic Preacher* is one of the first treatises written on the ministry of the Word of God and is even yet one of the most practical.

## GENERAL PREFACE

V 11 -

2. *The Good Confessor* explains the qualities, and obligations of the minister of the Sacrament of Penance.

3. *Counsels for Mission Confessors* suggests practical means of assisting penitents to make their examination of conscience and excite themselves to contrition.

4. *The Manner of Serving Mass* explains the dignity and holiness of this act and what one must do to perform it devoutly and worthily.

*Volume V. The Admirable Childhood of the Most Holy Mother of God.* This book treats of the holy childhood of Mary and the practical means of honoring the mysteries and virtues of her early life.

*Volumes VI, VII, VIII* contain the entire writings of the Saint on the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The work is entitled: *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God.* It comprises twelve books covering the complete theology of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. Eleven books discuss the theory, history, and practice of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The last book deals with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is this work, together with the Offices of the Sacred Hearts, that merit for him the title of Father, Doctor and Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts.

*Volume IX. The Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*

*Volume X.* Contains *The Rules and Constitutions of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, the *Directory* of the Order, and a collection of two hundred and forty letters.

*Volumes XI and XII* embrace the Saint's *Liturgical Works*, comprising twenty-five Offices and Masses for feasts to which he urged special devotion, the *Memorial of God's Blessings* and several other minor works.

The second French edition appeared in 1935, *Oeuvres Choisies de Saint Jean Eudes*, prepared under the direction of Father Lebrun, the leading authority on Eudistic research. It comprises nine volumes: *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, *Meditations of Various Subjects*, *Regulae Vitae Christianae Sacerdotalis*, *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, *Letters and Minor Works*, *Writings on the Priesthood*, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, and *The Admirable Childhood of the Mother of God*. The format of

V111-

## GENERAL PREFACE

these volumes is compact and more convenient than the 1905 edition, which is now out of print.

The publication of the works of St. John Eudes revealed the extent and depth of their spiritual



doctrine. Cardinal Pitra, who was associated with the cause of Beatification, discovered in the writings of St. John Eudes a remarkable depth of thought and purity of doctrine. Cardinal Vives has more recently expressed his admiration:

I was acquainted with the Doctors of the Order of Saint Francis; I was acquainted with Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, the mystical writers of my own country, Spain; but I was completely ignorant of the writings of Father Eudes. As a member of the Sacred Congregation of Rites it was my duty to study his life and his works, and I am in admiration. Blessed John Eudes must be ranked with the great lights of the Church. His spiritual doctrine is profound and of wonderful exactitude. He is one of the writers who has best propounded the doctrine of the Gospel.(4).

The late Father Ange Le Doré, for fifty years Superior General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, wrote:

The works of Blessed John Eudes, although they do not bear the scientific touch of the professional theologian, are nevertheless proof of his remarkable theological, ascetic and scriptural knowledge.... He is not a Doctor after the fashion of the scholastics of the thirteenth century or of the great theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As they, he might have built up theses and composed books didactic in form; but he was before all a savior of souls. For him the science of theology found its chief field of usefulness in the practice of virtue and in the acquisition of sanctity of which it is the principle.... He was a Doctor after the manner of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus de Liguori. The science which shines in his works not only emits light; it engenders piety and sanctity.(5)

The spiritual doctrine expounded by St John Eudes follows the teaching of Cardinal *Pierre deBérulle* and Father Charles de Condren, two prominent members of the seventeenth-century French School of Spirituality. St. John Eudes applies this doctrine to the devotion to the

(4). Quoted by P. A. Bray, C.J.M., *Saint John Eudes* (Halifax, 1925), P. 116.

(5). Quoted by Buy, op. cit., p. 117.

## GENERAL PREFACE

1 X -

Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, developing and rendering it more precise and practical. He has the rare gift of expressing the most sublime truths in simple, familiar language. He also excels in condensing into a few pages a complete scheme of Christian life and perfection.

The wish was repeatedly expressed that these inspirational writings could be made available to English-speaking readers. Excellent abridged editions of certain books were published in England and in Canada, but they did not do justice to the literary value of the Saint. Consequently, the Eudist Fathers commemorating their tercentenary in 1943 resolved to publish a complete translation of the principal works of their founder. Competent translators were secured and much time and effort were expended to produce readable volumes in modern English, faithful to the spirit and style of the original.

The first English edition, *Selected Works of Saint John Eudes*, is the result. In presenting it to the public the Eudist Fathers and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, and of the Good Shepherd, wish to thank all those who contributed to the success of this comprehensive undertaking. They are especially grateful to the distinguished churchmen who have so graciously accepted to introduce these volumes to Catholic readers, because they consider that the works of St. John Eudes should be more widely known. The Saint in his apostolic work and in his writings ranks with the eminent figures who belong not to one country and to one religious order but to the universal Church. Three centuries have passed since he wrote the works now being printed in the new world, a striking illustration that he wrote for all time. He still speaks in accents that penetrate the mind and heart of the reader to enlighten, purify and sanctify so that Jesus Christ may live and reign in the Christian soul.

WILFRID E. MYATT, C.J.M.  
PATRICK J. SKINNER, C.J.M.

*Editors*

Holy Heart Seminary

Halifax, N. S.

Feast of St. John Eudes, 1945.

## CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . . xix

Dedication to Jesus and Mary . . . . .

Epistle Dedicatory to Madame Laurence de Budos . . . . . xxix

Preface . . . . . xxxi

### PART ONE

#### NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

I. The Christian Life Must Be a Continuation of the Most Holy Life Which Jesus Led on Earth . . . .3

II. Confirmation of the Foregoing Truth . . . . . 5

#### FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY

III. First Foundation of Christian Life and Sanctity: Faith . . . . 8

IV. Faith Should Be Your Guide in All Your Actions . . . . 10

V. Second Foundation of Christian Life and Sanctity: Hatred of Sin . . . . .

VI. Third Foundation of Christian Life and Sanctity: Detachment from the World and from Worldly Things . . . . 15

VII. Continuation of the Same Subject . . . . .17

VIII. Self-Detachment . . . . .19

IX. Perfection of Christian Detachment . . . . .21

X. Fourth Foundation of Christian Life and Sanctity: Prayer . . . . 24

XL Various Kinds of Prayer: . . . . . 26

1. Mental Prayer. . . . . 26

2. Vocal Prayer . . . . . 27

3. Spirit of Prayer . . . . . 27

4. Spiritual Reading . . . . . 28

5. Conversing about God . . . . . 28

1X

X CONTENTS

XII. Qualities of Prayer: . . . . . 30

1. Humility . . . . . 31

2. Confidence. . . . . 31

3. Purity of Intention . . . . . 31

4. Perseverance. . . . .32

### THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

XIII. Excellence of the Christian Virtues . . . . .33

XIV. Manner of Practising the Christian Virtues . . . .36

XV. An Example: Practice of Meekness and Humility of Heart 37

XVI. Dignity, Necessity and Importance of Christian Humility 39

XVII. Humility of Mind . . . . .40

XVIII. Humility of Heart . . . . .44

XIX. Practice of Christian Humility . . . . .47

XX. Confidence and Self-Abandonment in the Hands of God 52

XXI. Additional Points on Confidence . . . . .55

XXII. Submission and Christian Obedience . . . . .	59
XXIII. Practice of Submission and Christian Obedience . . .	62
XXIV. Perfection of Submission and Christian Obedience . .	64
XXV. Practice of Perfect Christian Submission . . . . .	66
XXVI. Christian Charity . . . . .	68
XXVII. Practice of Christian Charity . . . . .	70
XXVIII. Charity and Zeal for the Salvation of Souls . . . .	73

#### TRUE CHRISTIAN DEVOTION AND THE FORMING OF JESUS WITHIN YOU

X1X. True Christian Devotion . . . . .	74
XXX. Practice of Christian Devotion . . . . .	77
XXX1. Formation of Jesus Within You . . . . .	78
XXX11. Manner of Forming Jesus Within You . . . . .	79

#### PROPER USE OF CONSOLATIONS AND AFFLICTIONS

XXX111. Proper Use of Spiritual Consolations . . . . .	83
XXX1V. Holy Use of Spiritual Dryness and Affliction . . .	84

#### CONTENTS x1

#### SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM

#### XXXV. Martyrdom, the Perfection and Fulfilment of Christian

Life and Sanctity . . . . .	89
XXXVI. Spirit of Martyrdom . . . . .	94
XXXVII. Prayer to Jesus, King of Martyrs . . . . .	97
XXXVIII. Prayer in Honor of All the Martyrs . . . . .	101

#### PART TWO

#### MORNING EXERCISE

I. Everything That You Do Should Begin and End With Jesus . . . . .	105
II. What You Should Do Upon Waking Up in the Morning . . . . .	105
111. What You Should Do While Dressing . . . . .	106
IV. Your Whole Life Belongs to Jesus and Ought to Be Consecrated to His Glory and Employed for It Alone . . . . .	107
V. Three Methods by Which Your Whole Life Can Become a Continual Exercise of Praise and Love . . . . .	109
VI. Morning Prayer to Jesus . . . . .	112
VII. Another Morning Prayer to Sanctify All Your Actions and to Make Them Pleasing to God . . . . .	113
Prayer to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary . . . . .	114
Prayer to St. Joseph . . . . .	115
Prayer to your Guardian Angel . . . . .	115
Prayer to all the Angels and Saints . . . . .	115
Prayer to beg a blessing from Jesus and Mary . . . . .	115

#### EXERCISE DURING THE DAY

VIII. Jesus Is the Center of Your Being and Should Be the Sole Object of Your Life . . . . .	116
IX. Aspirations to Be Said During the Course of the Day . . . . .	118

## EVENING EXERCISE

- X. Act of Thanksgiving . . . . . 120
- XI. Examination of Conscience . . . . .120
- XII. Act of Contrition Before Retiring . . . . .121
- XIII. Act of Oblation . . . . . 122

## X11 CONTENTS

### CONFESSION

- XIV. Preparation for Confession . . . . . 124
- XV. Thanksgiving After Confession . . . . . 126
- XVI. Nature of Contrition . . . . . 127
- XVII. Prayer to Beg God for Contrition . . . . . 130
- XVIII. Acts of Contrition . . . . . 130

### HOLY COMMUNION

- XIX. Preparation for Holy Communion . . . . . 132
- XX. Prayer Before Holy Communion . . . . . 132
- XXI. Thanksgiving After Holy Communion . . . . . 135
- XXII. Prayer After Holy Communion . . . . . 135
- XXIII. Three Other Acts of Adoration, of Oblation and of Love 137
  - 1. Act of Adoration . . . . .138
  - 2. Act of Oblation . . . . . 138
  - 3. Act of Love . . . . . 138
- XXIV. Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God . . . . . 139

### PROFESSIONS OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

- XXV. Profession of Faith . . . . . 141
- XXVI. Profession of Hatred and Detestation of Sin . . . .142
- XXVII. Profession of Humility . . . . . 143
- XXVIII. Profession of Abnegation . . . . . 144
- XXIX. Profession of Submission and Abandonment of Self to the Divine Will . . . . .146
- XXX Profession of Love for Jesus and Mary . . . 146
- XXX1. Profession of Love for the Cross . . . . .147
- XXX11. Profession of Charity Towards Your Neighbor . . 147

## PART THREE

### SANCTIFICATION OF YOUR DAILY ACTIONS

- I. Obligation and Method to Perform Your Actions Devoutly . . . . . 151
- II. Prayers to Sanctify the Performance of All Your Actions . . 153
- III. How to Sanctify a Prolonged Activity, or One Requiring the Full Attention of the Mind . .154

## CONTENTS xiii

- IV. Prayer Before Conversation . . . . . 154
- V. Prayer Before Meals . . . . . 154
- VI. Prayer Before Recreation . . . . . 155
- VII. Prayer for a Journey . . . . . 155
- VIII. Prayer to Be Said While at Work . . . . . 155

IX. Prayer Before Hearing a Sermon . . . . .	156
X. Prayer Before Spiritual Reading . . . . .	156
X1. Prayer Before Writing . . . . .	156
XII. Prayer Before Giving Alms . . . . .	157
XIII. Prayer to Be Said When Visiting the Poor, the Sick or the Afflicted . . . . .	157
XIV. Prayer When Fasting, or Doing Penance or Mortification	157
XV. Prayer When Performing Some Act of Humility	157
XVI. Prayer Before Doing a Charitable Act . . . . .	158
XVII. Prayer Before Doing an Act of Obedience . . . . .	158
XVIII. Prayer for All Other Actions . . . . .	158
XIX. The Practice of Offering All Actions to Jesus Is the Real Way to Remain Constantly in God's Presence .	159
XX. Employing the Actions and Sufferings of Others for the Glory of God . . . . .	160
XXI. In Time of Affliction . . . . .	161
XXII. Prayer to Jesus in Time of Affliction . . . . .	162
XXIII. Prayer Against Temptations . . . . .	162

#### THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

XXIV. Manner of Assisting Worthily at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass . . . . .	164
XXV. Prayer at the Beginning of Holy Mass . . . . .	168
XXVI. Prayer During Holy Mass . . . . .	169
XXVII. Prayer to Jesus Christ, High Priest . . . . .	170
XXVIII. Prayer to Jesus Christ, Sacrificial Victim . . . . .	172
XXIX. Prayer for Spiritual Communion . . . . .	172
XXX. Prayer at the End of Holy Mass . . . . .	173

#### X1V CONTENTS

#### THE DIVINE OFFICE

XXX1. Preparation for the Divine Office . . . . .	175
XXX11. Manner of Reciting the Divine Office Devoutly and of Honoring the Whole Life of Jesus in Each Day's Office	176
XXX111. Another Method of Saying the Divine Office With Devotion . . . . .	178
XXX1V. Devout Recitation of the Office of Our Lady . . . . .	181
XXXV. Another Method of Saying the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin With Devotion . . . . .	183

#### THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

XXXVI. Devotion to the Rosary is Very Holy and Pleasing to God	184	XXXVII. Devout Method of Reciting the Rosary of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary . . . . .	186
XXXVIII. Rosary of Jesus, Maria . . . . .	188		

#### PART FOUR

1. The Three Special Days of the Week . . . . .	193
II. Manner of Honoring the Whole Life of Jesus in the Course of Each Week . . . . .	193

#### MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

III. Sunday: The Divine Life of Jesus in the Bosom of His Father From All Eternity . . .	195
IV. Monday: The First Moment of the Temporal Life of Jesus	196
V. Tuesday: The Holy Childhood of Jesus . . . . .	197
VI. Wednesday: The Hidden Life of Jesus . . . . .	199

VII. Thursday: The Public Life of Christ on Earth and in the Most Blessed Sacrament . . .	201
VIII. Friday: The Sufferings and Death of Jesus . . . .	202
1X. Saturday: The Life of Jesus in Mary and That of Mary in Jesus . . . . .	204
X. Second Meditation for Sunday: Christ's Life of Glory in Heaven, After His Resurrection and Ascension . .	205
X1. Prayer to Jesus on All the Phases and Mysteries of His Life, and a Consecration of Every Phase and Detail of Your Life to Him . . . . .	208

## CONTENTS xv

### PART FIVE

1. Exercise for the First and Last Days of the Month	213
II. The Monthly Retreat . . . . .	213
III. Meditation to Stir You Up to Praise and Glorify Jesus	214
IV. Exercise to Praise and Glorify Jesus . . . . .	215
V. Continuation of the Foregoing Exercise . . . . .	218
VI. Rosary of the Eternal Father . . . . .	221
VII. Exercise of Love for Jesus . . . . .	222
VIII. Thirty-Four Acts of Love of Jesus Christ in Honor of the Thirty-Four Years of His Life on Earth . . . .	223
IX. Acts of Love for Jesus, Prisoner in the Sacred Womb of His Most Blessed Mother . . . . .	237
X. Acts of Love in Honor of the Birth and Holy Childhood of Jesus . . . . .	237
X1. Acts of Love for Jesus Crucified . . . . .	238
XII. Rosary of the Holy Love of Jesus . . . . .	241
XIII. Patron Saint for Each Month . . . . .	243
XIV. The Month of March . . . . .	244

### PART SIX

### SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

I. Beginning the New Year With Jesus . . . . .	247
II. Tribute to Jesus Christ for the New Year . . . . .	247
III. Prayer to the Blessed Virgin for the Beginning of the Year	249

### DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

IV. Each Year You Must Honor With Special Devotion All the States and Mysteries of Our Lord's Life . . 1 .	251
V. Additional Reasons for Honoring the Mysteries of the Life of Christ . . . . .	253
VI. Sequence to Be Observed That You May Each Year Honor All the States and Mysteries of Jesus . . .	255
VII. Each Mystery of the Life of Christ to Be Venerated Under Seven Aspects . . . . .	260

### xvi CONTENTS

VIII. Seven Methods of Venerating the Mysteries of Our Lord	264
IX. Seven Other Methods of Honoring the Mysteries of Jesus	266
X. Prayer to Honor the Holy Childhood of Jesus . . .	269

### DEVOTION TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

xi. Manner of Honoring Jesus in Mary, and Mary in Jesus .	271
XII. Mysteries of the Life of the Blessed Virgin . . . .	273
XIII. Prayer Honoring Jesus Christ in His Blessed Mother . -	274
XIV. Prayer to the Blessed Virgin, Applicable to Any Mystery of Her Life . . . . .	274

## DEVOTION TO THE SAINTS

- XV. Manner of Honoring Jesus in the Saints and the Saints in Jesus . . . . . 276  
XVI. Prayer to Our Lord, Honoring in Him St. John the Evangelist . . . . . 278  
XVII. Prayer to St. John the Evangelist . . . . . 279

## ANNUAL RETREATS AND SOME OTHER SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

- XVIII. Excellence and Practice of Annual Retreats . . . . 280  
XIX. Prayer to Jesus for the Renewal of the Three Vows of Religion . . . . . 282  
XX. Exercise of Reparation . . . . . 283  
XXI. Rosary of the Glory of Jesus . . . . . 285  
XXII. Additional Spiritual Exercises to Be Performed Each Year 286  
XXIII. Preparation to, Gain Indulgences . . . . . 286  
XXIV. Annual Confession . . . . . 288  
XXV. Ending the Year With Jesus . . . . . 289  
XXVI. Prayer of Praise and Gratitude for the Close of the Year 289  
XXVII. Prayer to the Blessed Virgin at the End of the Year . . 291

## PART SEVEN

### DEVOTIONS FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BIRTH

- I. Concerning the Rightful Homage You Ought to Have  
Rendered to God at the Moment of Your Birth, If You Had the Use of Reason . . . . . 295  
CONTENTS XV 11 -  
II. Prayer to Jesus for the Anniversary of Your Birth 296  
III. Prayer to the Most Blessed Virgin . . . . . 300  
IV. Prayer to the Angels and Saints Whom You Were in Duty Bound to Honor at the Time of Your Birth . -  
300

### EXERCISE FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BAPTISM

- V. Concerning the Rightful Tribute That You Should Have Paid to God on the Day of Your Baptism . . . . 302  
VI. Obligations to Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who Instituted and Merited Baptism for You . . . . . 302  
VII. Prayer . . . . . 302  
VIII. The Eternal and Temporal Birth of Jesus, and His Death,  
Burial and Resurrection Are the Exemplar of Baptism 303  
IX. Prayer to Jesus . . . . . 305  
X. Jesus Christ, in the Person of the Priest, Baptizes Each Christian . . . . . 306  
XI. Prayer to Jesus Who Baptized You . . . . . 306  
XII. Solemn Profession Made By All Christians at Baptism - 308  
XIII. Renewal of Baptismal Vows . . . . . 308  
XIV. Baptismal Tribute to the Holy Trinity . . . . . 310  
XV. Prayer to the Blessed Trinity . . . . . 310  
XVI. Rosary of the Blessed Trinity . . . . . 311  
XVII. Conclusion . . . . . 311

### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH



XVIII. Preparation for a Happy Death . . . . .	312
XIX. First Day: Meditation on Submission to the Divine Will . . . . .	312
XX. Second Day: Thanksgiving for All the Benefits of Your Whole Life . . . . .	315
XXI. Third Day: Confession and Satisfaction . . . . .	316
XXII. Fourth Day: Holy Communion . . . . .	319
XXIII. Fifth Day: Extreme Unction . . . . .	320
XXIV. Sixth Day: Christ's Last Will and Testament, and the Will You Should Make in Its Honor . . . . .	322
XXV. Last Spiritual Will and Testament . . . . .	325
XXVI. Seventh Day: The Agony and Moment of Death . . . . .	327
XV111	CONTENTS
XXVII. Eighth Day: The Particular judgment . . . . .	329
XXVIII. Ninth Day: Death and Burial . . . . .	332
XXIX. Tenth Day: Entrance of the Soul Into Heaven and Undying Life . . . . .	336
XXX. Conclusion of the Exercise . . . . .	339
XXXI. Some Other Points of Advice and Necessary Dispositions for a Holy Death . . . . .	339
Index . . . . .	345

## INTRODUCTION

THERE ARE only two philosophies of life: one begins with the fast and ends with the feast; the other begins with the feast and ends with the headache. The first is Christian, the second is pagan. Those who compromise and accept a little of each generally find that they have just enough religion to spoil the feast and still not enough religion to accept the headache.

Saints are made by the unreserved acceptance of the Christian philosophy: to save one's life one must lose it. Among these spiritual giants towers the figure of St. John Eudes who in 1637 wrote a spiritual treatise on "The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls," which is now so ably translated into English.

Although it was written just a little later than the Elizabethan era of history, it has the same timelessness as any classic, for eternal truths are not subject either to moods or calendars. There is a certain relevance of the spiritual doctrines of St. John Eudes for our times. First of all, he stresses the value of human nature for these days of de-humanization. It is human nature today that is under attack. The individualism of the last century distorted it by isolating man from his fellow-men, from history and from God. Totalitarianism in the twentieth century destroyed it by absorbing man into collectivities such as the state, race, nation and class. The result was that in war the least rationed and cheapest commodity was human life.

How shall man recover his dignity and become something other than a "hand" under Capitalism, an "ant" under Collectivism, or an "animal" in Psychology, except by the vision of our Pattern Man revealed to us in the Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? This is the method of St. John Eudes. The poet would hold the «mirror up to nature,» but this saint holds the "mirror up to Jesus." To the modern man who is lost, St. John Eudes gives him Jesus the Way of Life; to the modern man who is confused, the saint  
xix-

## XX- INTRODUCTION

offers Jesus the Exemplar; and to the modern man who is frustrated, the saint offers Jesus the Prototype of the sons of God and the First-born of creatures.

But in this work of rehabilitation we hit upon the second great quality of John Eudes: he does not take man who would be re-born back 1900 years to Galilee, but he brings Jesus up to the modern man. The imitation of Christ is the essence of the spiritual life, but it does not mean slavish copying, nor repetition of the same actions under similar conditions. Otherwise we ought to be carpenters, because our Lord was a carpenter.

Much modern Christianity is of this type. It takes a purely emotional and sentimental outlook on Christ, as a humanitarian and nothing more. It bids us look back nineteen hundred years to Galilee; it repeats His words, interprets His actions, as it might those of Caesar or Aurellus-and because it does *only this*, it has lost its hold on the modern man. No reason so explains the decay of Christianity among sects, as this tendency to regard it only as a memory of a man who taught and lived. Indeed, if Christianity is only a memory of the teaching and example of a man, then it *should die*-and the sooner it dies the sooner we can welcome a religion which will put Divine Life into our veins.

Christianity, fortunately, is something more than a memory, because our Lord is something more than a man. He is true God and true man. Being God, He can perpetuate Himself not only by His teaching and His example, but also in a third way, which belongs to Him alone as God, namely by His continuing Life. Others may leave their titles, their wealth, their stocks and their bonds, their doctrines and their biographies, but only our Lord can make a last will and testament bequeathing to posterity that which no

one else on dying could ever leave: His Life for the Life of the World. He brought Divine Life to earth at the crib, but He willed not that this Life should be only a temporary visitation of a score and ten years and a localized experience confined to a few hundred square miles. He willed to diffuse it in time until time should be no more, and in space until all the thirsty hearts of earth had drunk of its refreshing draughts.

God is too good to circumscribe the gift of Divine Life to a brief

## INTRODUCTION

xxi-

human existence stretching between a crib and a Cross. Did He not explicitly state: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world"? And Saint John, speaking of the Divine Life prolonged and diffused in all men, says: "Of whose fulness we have all received." It is the fulness of that Christ-Life, beating and throbbing at this very hour in millions of souls, which gives flesh and blood to His teaching and His example. Because He lives today, His teaching is not a cold record written only on the pages of history, but a teaching bound up with life in a living mind; His example is not something that *has* happened, but something that *is* happening, not an antiquated historical phenomenon, but a living force active before our very eyes.

If our Lord had remained on earth, He would have been only a model to be copied, but having left the earth and sent His Spirit, He made it possible to become a veritable life to be lived. Seizing upon this sublime truth, St. John Eudes makes the Christian life a fulfilment, in each and every one of us, of the life of Jesus.

The great tragedy of history is not that men should fall, but that they should fail to rise to the full realization of their vocation as children of God, in other words, that they should miss so much.

All about us we see vast multitudes of men and women of refinement and culture, endowed with intelligence and possessed of every natural virtue and every now and then swept by noble emotions and ideals, but who are living second-rate, superficial, unimportant and morally insignificant lives, because they have never had their nature enkindled into flame by the Spirit of Christ. They may do much for the world in the material order, they may build bridges, harness waterfalls, accomplish great pieces of research, but they never sound the depths of their souls which can be filled only by God. The world of the supernatural has no more appeal to them than heroism has appeal for a coward. They have become so used to the dense atmosphere of the material, that they stifle in the more rarefied atmosphere of the supernatural.

And in this lies the danger of our whole civilization, which is gradually turning away from God. Nothing great, nothing really good was ever done in this world by any human life that had not a baptism of God's Holy Spirit. There is no escape from the words of

## XX11- INTRODUCTION

Him who presided at Creation as the Word, and at the re-creation on the Cross as the Word-made flesh: "Without Me you can do nothing."

How differently do they live for whom our Lord is not just a figure in the past, but the very Spirit of their lives. The great facts of His earthly Life are re-lived not only in His Mystical Body which is the Church, but in every soul incorporated into that Body by Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The details of His earthly Life do not belong to distant history separated from us by nineteen hundred years. For the Catholic these centuries do not exist at all; the Gospel facts are perpetuated independently of their setting in time and space; His Life is not something which was lived; it is something which is being lived in us now.

Nor is it just a mere copy in us of something lived before; rather is the Gospel Life the model of the

new Catholic life; it is not a repetition but rather a prolonged Incarnation, for did He not say, speaking of His new way of living in us by His Spirit: "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more. But you see Me: because I live and you shall live. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14, 18-20).

The Incarnation, Passion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, are not mere recorded events of history, they are acts in an enduring drama which is being acted socially in the Church and individually in every soul vivified by the Spirit of Christ. Christ is in us as the Spirit of our lives, and not outside us as an external example. Hence St. Paul recommends: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2, 5). Thanks to His possessing us by His Spirit we are sons of God. Bethlehem is not merely an historical event of a God "emptying Himself, taking the form of a servant"; it is also that great mystery by which we become by grace, what He is by nature, namely, the sons of God. The first filiation of a human nature in Christ is the beginning of a long line of progressive filiation which will endure until the end of time.

What Jesus did in His own human nature in Galilee He is doing today in other human natures in New York, London, Paris and every city and hamlet of the world where there are souls vivified by His

## XX111- INTRODUCTION

Spirit. He is still being born in other Bethlehems of the world outcasts; still coming into His own and His own receive Him not; still instructing the learned doctors of the law and answering their questions; still labouring at a carpenter's bench; still "going about doing good"; still preaching, governing, sanctifying, climbing other Calvaries and entering into the glory of His Father.

There are poor people today in our bread queues, there are innocent men in our prisons, there are half-clothed families in our tenements who are as ragged and destitute on the outside as they are rich with the Spirit of Christ on the inside. Externally they appear to most of us like the ordinary poor who attack the rich, like the common captives who harangue against authority, like the selfishly needy who curse their lot, but the resemblance is only on the outside, and thus many are deceived. Some eyes are so filled with the dust of the world's traffic, that they cannot see the Divine grace in men's souls.

The world classifies them in its social surveys as the poor, the dependent, the captive, but in the eyes of the Father in heaven, they are other Christs in other deserts, thirsty at other wells of Jacob, suffering on other crosses and captive in other praetoriums. The world sees them as so many economic problems; the heavenly Father sees them as beloved sons in whom He is well pleased.

In this spiritual classic the reader will find the answer to the question: What does it mean to be a Christian? Christianity is not a system of ethics, it is a life. It is not good advice, it is Divine adoption. Being a Christian does not consist in being kind to the poor, going to church, reading the Bible, singing hymns, being generous to relief agencies, just to employees, gentle to cripples, serving on Church committees, though it includes all of these. It is first and foremost a *love relationship*, and as you can never become a member of a family by doing generous deeds but only by being born into it out of love, so you can never become a Christian by doing good things, but only by being born to it through Divine Love. *Doing* good things to a man does not make you his son, but *being* a son does make you do good things.

Christianity begins with *being*, not with doing, with life and not with action. If you have the life of a plant, you will bloom like a plant; if you have the life of a monkey, you will act like a monkey.

xxiv-

## INTRODUCTION

If you have the life of a man, you will do the things a man does, but if you have the Life of Christ in you, you

will act like a Christian. You are like your parents because you partake of their nature; you are like God if you partake of His Nature. What a man does is the externalization of what he is.

There is a world of difference between the two. Most people have their actions governed by their background: for instance, they think a certain way in order to defend their class or their wealth or their want of it; they even build a philosophy to suit the way they live; they do certain things because they are profitable or pleasant to them; they hate certain people because they are a reproach to their conscience or because they challenge their egotism. Their psycho-physical disposition is the center of their lives and therefore of their actions. They are, in a word, self-determined.

To be a Christian means to discard self as the supreme determinant of actions; it means to put on the mind of Christ so as to be governed by Christ's truths; to surrender the will to His Will, and to do all things that are pleasing to Him, not to self.

If we were forced to summarize the spiritual teaching of St. John Eudes in one sentence, it would be this: Cease to be self-determined; begin to be Jesus-determined.

FULTON J. SHEEN

The Catholic University of America,  
Washington, D. C.,  
June 20, 1945

XXV-

**DEDICATION**  
**TO**  
**JESUS AND MARY**

O JESUS, my Lord and my God, reduced to the depths of my own nothingness, I fall on my face before Thy supreme Majesty. I cast at Thy feet my own will, my self love, everything that is mine; I surrender myself utterly to the power of Thy Divine Spirit and Thy holy love. In the infinite immensity of Thy Spirit, in the vast extent of Thy boundless love, in all the virtues and powers of Thy Divinity made man and Thy deified Humanity, in all Thy states and mysteries, in all Thy qualities and virtues, in everything that Thou art in the sight of the Eternal Father, Thy Divine Self, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Sacred Humanity, Thy most Blessed Mother, all the angels and all the saints, on earth and in heaven, and in the sight of all creatures in the universe, I adore Thee, I love Thee, and I give Thee glory!

But more especially do I revere and adore Thee as the One Who is Life, our only true Life, as the King of kings, the Saint of saints, as our Sanctifier, and, still more, our very Sanctification.

I adore Thy desire and Thy design, both ardent and great, of reigning in my soul and in all Christian souls. I most humbly implore Thy gracious pardon for all the hindrances I have, so far, put in Thy way, both in myself and in other men. In reparation for my faults, and henceforward to contribute in some small measure to the accomplishment of Thy desire, I give myself and I sacrifice myself to Thee, O most great Jesus, making the solemn avowal before heaven and earth that I no longer seek to live, except to work ceaselessly to form Thee, sanctify and make Thee live and reign in my soul, and in all the souls it shall please Thee to bring to me for

XXV1- **DEDICATION**

that purpose. I beg Thee with my whole heart to cause all my cares, thoughts, words, works and labors to be directed and consecrated to that end.

Most particularly, however, do I beg Thee that all these things may be true of this little book, which I have composed, that it may help the souls who belong to Thee to establish, within themselves, the Life and the Kingdom of Thy Love. The book is written about Thee, O good Jesus, and Thou art its source and its true author, since, with all my might, I renounce everything in it that might be only mine, not Thine. I desire also, if it please Thee, that it may be all Thine, and that Thou mayest be its last and single end, just as Thou art its first and only principle, together with the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit. That is why I give it back to Thee, in honor of and in union with the love by which it first came forth from Thee, and by which Thou hast given it to me. I put it into Thy hands, as an offering, a dedication, a consecration of homage to Thy adorable life, Thy love and all that Thou art. And, in the same way, in honor of and in union with the same love by which Thou didst give Thyself to us, Thou Who art the true Book of Life and of Love. I desire to give and dedicate this book to all the souls who wish to love Thee-especially to those of whom it is Thy holy will that I should have particular care in Thy sight.

And because I can not look upon Thee, O my Lord Jesus, without beholding her who sits at Thy right hand, who formed Thee, and sanctified and made Thee reign within herself in so admirable a manner, and in whom Thou hast always been living and reigning so perfectly, I salute her, and, after Thee, I honor her in every possible way, as Thy most honorable Mother, Mother of Life and Love, as well as my sovereign Lady, and my most dear Mother, to whom I belong by an infinite number of ties. To begin with, I was, born and brought up in a place that belongs especially to Our Lady (1) and it was by her intercession and by her prayers that Thou didst give me being and life. Because my mother, having been childless

(1). Saint John Eudes was born on November 14, 1601, at Ri, in the diocese of Séez, in the French

province of Normandy. The parish was under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## **DEDICATION XXV11-**

for a number of years,(2) made a vow to Thee in honor of Thy holy Mother. In consequence, knowing her prayer to have been heard, and beholding the accomplishment of her desire, in fulfilment of her vow she and my father brought me to the shrine of Thy most holy Mother (3) to thank her, and to consecrate me to her, and through her to Thee. Thou didst also give me being and life on the Feast of the Annunciation, the day on which Thou didst begin to be and to live in that Mother of Life. Thou didst give me the grace of making my vow of perpetual service to Thee and Thy most holy Mother on that blessed Feast and Thou hast given me several other signal favors on the same day. Thy bounty is full well acquainted with these special favors, and for them I will forever bless Thee.(4) It was also on the Feast of the Seven Dolours of Our Lady that, by Thy very great mercy, I put on Thy livery, the holy ecclesiastical habit which I now wear.(5) Yet more, by a signal favor of that same mercy, I celebrated for the first time, or rather for the first three times, the most august Sacrifice of Holy Mass, on the day on which the most Blessed Virgin and Mother brought Thee into the world: and this I offered upon an altar especially dedicated to her honor.(6) By reason of all this, not to mention numberless considerations which entirely consecrate me to Thee and to her, I have other most particular obligations to consecrate myself, and all that is mine, with all my will to Thee and to her.

That is why I implore Thee, O my Saviour, that, after having offered this my work to Thee, I may also consecrate it to Thy blessed Mother, in homage to the life of love Thou didst perfect in her, and she in Thee.

So I offer my book to Thee, O Mother of life and love, and I dedicate it to Thee with all the affections of my heart. O Mother of all blessings, may it please thee to bless both the work and the

- (2). His parents, Isaac Eudes and Martha Corbin, had been married for three years.
- (3). Our Lady of Recovery, a shrine in the parish of Tourailles, about six miles from Ri.
- (4). One of the special favors was his admission into the Oratory of Jesus, a religious Congregation of priests, founded by Cardinal Peter de Bérulle in 1611.
- (5). St. John Eudes received the ecclesiastical habit at the Oratory on Friday of Passion Week, 1623.
- (6). He was ordained to the priesthood in Paris on December 20, 1625, and celebrated his first Mass on Christmas Day, at an altar dedicated to the Mother of God.

## **XXV111- DEDICATION**

workman, and all who shall make use of it. Offer them to thy Son Jesus, the wellspring of all benediction. Implore Him to bless them and perfectly consecrate them to His own glory and pure love.

O good Jesus, this book is filled with various acts and exercises of praise, love, contrition, humility and other Christian virtues; engrave them deeply on my heart and on the hearts of those who are to read them. For my part, I offer Thee all these acts and exercises with the intention of actually making them for Thee without ceasing, in my heart and spirit, just as I do incessantly by this book, in which they shall always remain printed. And I beg this not only for myself, but for all the men in the world, especially for those over whom I have particular charge in Thy sight. Fulfil this my desire, O my dear Jesus, out of Thy great goodness, out of Thy love for Thy most lovable Mother, and hers for Thee. Graciously regard and accept, by virtue of my present intention granted by Thy holy grace, all these acts and exercises as if I were continually making them with an actual application of mind and heart, just as they remain ever printed upon this paper.

Finally, O God of all blessings, take this book under Thy holy protection. Defend it against Thine enemies and its own; bless it, sanctify it, fill it with Thy mighty spirit and Thy divine virtue. Do Thou

Thyself abide within it, so that by it, or rather, by Thy own Self, Thou mayest be blessed, hallowed, loved and glorified in all those who shall read it. Destroy in it all that is mine, and let there remain nothing except what is Thine. Bless each word, so that each may be an act of benediction, love and praise to Thee, and for its readers an arrow and a holy fire, piercing their hearts, setting them ablaze sacredly and for ever, with heavenly wounds and divine ardor of Thy holy love.



XX1X-

## **EPISTLE DEDICATORY**

**To her Most Illustrious and Virtuous Ladyship**

**MADAME LAURENCE DE BUDOS**

**Abbess of the Royal Monastery of the Holy Trinity of Caen**

My Lady:

I have cast myself at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ and His most holy Mother, to consecrate this book to Them before all others, because to Them my whole being, all my life and my works belong by countless claims. I now take the liberty of appearing in your presence, in order to dedicate my book to your charitable zeal, to which it is due for several reasons.

First, because its author is bound to your service by obligations too numerous to be mentioned in this place.

Secondly, because its name conveys and expresses the principal employment and occupation of your life, which has been entirely spent, from childhood, in exercises of Christian and religious piety and devotion, of the kind designed to form and hallow Jesus in a Christian and religious soul.

In the third place, its purpose is to make Jesus live and reign in the souls of its readers and to establish His Spirit and His love in their hearts. Now this is the one end to which you also aspire, and it has been your principal work for several years, in the souls entrusted to your wise direction- and in this your progress has been so remarkable as to be seen at a glance. Besides, the divine Goodness of our Lord has chosen you in a special manner from among thousands, that He might be glorified particularly in you, and through you in many devout souls. His divine Spirit is singularly close to you, for your guidance and for the guidance of many others through you,

XXX-

## **EPISTLE DEDICATORY**

along the paths of His grace and His love. Finally, His blessing rests upon you most abundantly, in the happy success of those religious projects you have undertaken for His glory.

May it therefore please you, My Lady, to receive this little book, as a small token of gratitude for the many obligations by which I am indebted to your bounty, as a testimony of the intense desire I cherish of seeing the Holy Ghost and the Divine Love of Jesus reign ever more and more in your soul, as well as in the souls of your pious daughters, to whom I likewise dedicate this work, at the same time as to their devout and esteemed Mother Abbess. I beg Jesus, with my whole heart, that He may bless both the mother and her daughters with the most holy treasures of His sacred love, and that He may transform them entirely into love and eternal benediction of Himself. Such is the desire and the prayer uttered each day at the altar by one who will always be, my Lady, in Jesus and Mary,

Your humble and obedient servant,

JOHN EUDES, Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary

XXX1-

## PREFACE

(To be read carefully to ensure a holy use of this book  
and a proper understanding of its name and purpose)

Jesus CHRIST, at the same time God and man, is all in all things, according to the inspired words of St. Paul: Omnia in omnibus Christus (Col. 3, 11). He must be in all Christians in a special manner, as the Head is in all the members and the spirit in its body; therefore your particular care and preoccupation must be to work at this formation and establishment of Christ within you, that He may live and reign there, so that He may be your life, your sanctification, your strength, your wealth, your glory and your all: Or rather, that He may live in you, and in you be hallowed and glorified, and establish the Kingdom of His Spirit, of His Love and of His other virtues.

Some years ago I published a small book called Exercises of Piety, devoted to this purpose. It was well received by many, who found it to their taste, and made a holy use of it. For this reason, being about to republish it, I have gone over it more carefully than before, changing the title, and making a few additions, no less useful than necessary to all true Christians who desire to serve God in spirit and in truth.

I repeat: to all Christians, for you must not think that this book is written only for members of Religious Institutes. It is intended for every person who desires to live a holy and Christian life. And this is something to which all Christians are bound, no matter what may be their state of life or their circumstances. After all, according to the words of Heaven, to be a Christian and to be a saint is but one and the same thing, since God has declared that it is His will that all Christians, and not Only those who have retired within cloisters, should labor for their sanctification (1 Thess. 4, 3); that they should pursue sanctity, without which no man shall ever see God (Heb. 12, 14); that

xxx i-

xxxii-

## PREFACE

they should serve in holiness and in justice before Him all the days of their life (Luke 1, 75); that they should be holy in all their conversation (1 Peter 1, 15), which is to say in all their acts and conduct; that they should be holy, unspotted and blameless before Him (Col. 1, 22); that they may be holy and perfect (Matt. 5, 48); that His Name be sanctified in them (Matt. 6, 9); and that they sanctify Jesus Christ in their hearts (1 Peter 3, 15).

The title I have given to this book embodies its two great subjects, namely: The Life and the Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls.

I have called it the Life of Jesus in Christian Souls because its first and principal aim is to show how Jesus Christ must live in all Christians, since Christians are on earth only to perpetuate the most holy life that Christ led here below. Likewise, the most important business and chief occupation of a Christian should be to endeavor to form Jesus within himself, according to the great Apostle's wish: Formetur Christus in vobis (Gal. 4, 19). This means that you are obliged to cause Him to live in your spirit and in your heart, and establish the sanctity of His life and behavior in your soul and body, which is what St. Paul calls carrying and glorifying "God in your body" (1 Cor. 6, 20), and St. Peter, sanctifying "the Lord Christ in your hearts" (1 Peter 3, 15). Jesus Christ is your Head and you are His members. By reason of this fact, everything that is His is yours, and everything that is yours is His. So it follows that, since He sanctified Himself for you-as He Himself says, speaking to His Father: "And for them do I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17, 19), that is, "in Myself, Who am eternal Truth," as St. Augustine explains, and as He Himself is your sanctification (1 Cor. 1, 30), so also, when you sanctify

yourself, you sanctify yourself for Him so that He may be sanctified in you. And your sanctification is the sanctification of Jesus within you, as You accomplish what St. Peter speaks of in these words: «Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts». (1 Peter 3, 15). Now the way to accomplish all this, is to develop the habit of seeing, loving and glorifying Jesus Christ in all things, and performing all your actions in His sanctity. This is what is taught in this book by a method and by means that are very easy, very pleasant and very effective.

In the second place I have called it *The Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*

## **PREFACE**      xxxiii-

because the aim of the book is not only to explain certain very inspiring and efficacious means of forming Christ and making Him live within you, but also to make Him reign there, in full possession of your heart. Therefore, if you apply yourself with diligence and fidelity to the holy use of these exercises, you will learn the truth of the words of the Son of God when He said: "The Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17, 21). YOU will possess what you ask every day when you say *Adveniat regnum tuum*: "Thy Kingdom come." And whereas the wretched Jews called Him king in mockery, and said of Him: *Nolumus hunc regnare super nos*, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19, 14), You will be able to call Him King in all truth and say to Him, in return, *Volumus, Domine Jesu, te regnare super nos*: "Lord Jesus, we do desire Thee to reign over us."

I have divided the book into seven parts, which include everything that should be done by a Christian and even a religious, to live a Christian and saintly life, as well as what is necessary to form and sanctify Jesus and make Him reign in the faithful soul.

Part One outlines what you should do during the whole course of your life to make Jesus live and reign within you.

Part Two contains a few devotional exercises most necessary to achieve this.

Part Three outlines what should be done each day. Here you will find a very satisfactory and easy method of performing all your actions with genuine holiness in the spirit of Jesus, which is the true spirit of Christianity and of all religious Orders which are in the Church Of Christ.

Part Four, what should be done each week.

Part Five, what should be done each month.

Part Six, what should be done each year.

Part Seven of the book contains the first and last duties of all Christians towards God, their Creator, in connection with the beginning and the end of their life, on the occasions of their birth, baptism, and death. In this part are given some exercises of piety to render to Almighty God the lawful veneration and homage you ought to have given Him at birth, if you had been endowed with the use of reason. Others aim at reviving and renewing in yourself the grace of holy

## xxxiv-      **PREFACE**

Baptism. Finally, there are exercises to prepare yourself for a holy and Christian death.

Most of these exercises take the form of prayers, so that all types of persons may use them. For there are many worthy souls who, when they present themselves before God in prayer, have no facility in adapting to their own special needs the plain and unvarnished Christian truths they have learned by simple catechism. Yet this form of exercise will not prevent those who prefer these truths taught in terms of simple propositions, from drawing forth such points and truths as will give them material to occupy their minds concerning God and the various other subjects in this book, according as they are led by the grace of His spirit in themselves.

If at first you come upon certain exercises which impress you as to being too elevated and difficult

to understand and to practise, do not be dismayed. If you will have the patience to read the whole book, if you approach it with a pure and sincere intention and a real desire to profit by it, I am confident that the Lord in His most great goodness will give you light to understand these things and the grace to put them into practice. I am sure that something you may not understand in one place will become clear to you in another, as you read on, and you will come to practise it with great facility and much consolation of soul.

I have said the same things over and over again in many places, but I have done so on purpose, both to give you a clearer understanding and to impress more deeply upon your soul certain fundamentals that are most important. Thus I hope to spare you the trouble of turning back to what has gone before: for this book contains a few important truths and practices that demand many explanations and exercises. For this reason I have seen fit to discuss them in several places, so that if you should happen to read or use one of the exercises or explanations to which they apply, and yet be unable or unwilling to read the others, you may not be deprived of the knowledge of these truths, nor the use of these practices. In any case you will thus be spared the trouble of looking for them in the other places where they are also found.

For the rest, if you desire to make holy use of this book, and glorify God by the exercises it sets forth, I would urge you to read it and use

## **PREFACE**      xxxv -

it, not hastily and cursorily, but with careful attention and intelligent application of your mind and heart to what you are reading, especially to the exercises of prayer. Take time to weigh, to savor and to assimilate the meaning and substance of the words which you will pronounce either vocally or silently in your heart, according to the dispositions our Lord will inspire in your soul, once you have given yourself to Him by opening this book with the intention of using what you are about to read in whatever way He may desire.

As a reward for my slight labors I ask you, in the name of the One who is all love for us, that as often as you open this book you may give yourself to Jesus with a renowned resolution to love Him perfectly. I ask you to make three acts of love to Him, on behalf of the one who has given you this book, who has received from His Heart and His Hand all the good there is in it. For my own part, I renew my supplications to our Lord Jesus Christ that He may impart His most holy blessings to this little book, and to you too, my dear reader, and I pray that through Him, it may accomplish in you all the work He desires it to do there; that He may give you grace to make such use of it, on all occasions, as He would have you do; that He may establish in you, forever, the kingdom of His glory and of His pure love; and that He may form and establish Himself in you, to live in you and reign there perfectly, to love and glorify Himself in you forever.

## **PART ONE**

**What Must Be Done in the Course of Your  
Whole Life to Live a Christian and  
Saintly Life and to Make Jesus  
Reign in Your Soul**

## Part One

### WHAT MUST BE DONE IN THE COURSE OF YOUR WHOLE LIFE TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN AND SAINTLY LIFE AND TO MAKE JESUS REIGN IN YOUR SOUL

#### NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

#### 1. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE MUST BE A CONTINUATION OF THE MOST HOLY

LIFE WHICH JESUS LED ON EARTH.

Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, King of angels and of men, is not only your God, your Saviour and your Sovereign Lord, but is also your head and you are "members of his body," as St. Paul says: "of his flesh and of his bones" (Eph. 5, 30). You are consequently united with Him in the most intimate union possible, that is, the union of members with their head. You are united with Him spiritually by faith and by the grace. He gave you in Holy Baptism. You are united with Him corporally in the union of His Most Sacred Body with yours in the Blessed Eucharist. It necessarily follows that, just as the members are animated by the spirit of the head, and live the same life, so you must also be animated by the spirit of Jesus, live His life, walk in His ways, be clothed with His sentiments and inclinations, and perform all your actions in the dispositions and intentions that actuated His. In a word, you must carry on and perpetuate the life, religion and devotion which He exercised upon earth,

This doctrine rests upon a very solid foundation, for it receives confirmation repeatedly from the sacred words of Him Who is Truth Itself. Do you not hear Him saying in several places in His Gospel: I am the Life" (John 14, 6); "I am come that they may have life" (John 10, 10)? "You will not come to Me that you may have life" (John 5, 40). "I live, and you shall live. In that day you shall know

#### 4- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

that I am in my Father: and you in me, and I in you" (John 14, 19-20). That is to say, just as Jesus is in His Father, living His life, which the Father communicates to Him, so also you are in Jesus, living by His life, and He is in you, giving you this same life. And thus He lives in you and you live in and with Him.

St. John, the beloved disciple, explains that God has given to man the gift of eternal life, which life is in His Son, and he who has in himself the Son of God has life; and, on the contrary, he who has not the Son has not life (1 John 5, 11-12). God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world that you may have life, and you are in this world even as Jesus is, that is, you have taken His place here, and ought to live as He lived (1 John 4, 9; 17).

Again in the Apocalypse he says that the well-beloved Spouse of your souls, Jesus Christ, cries out incessantly: "Come. And he that heareth, let him say: Come and he that thirsteth, let him come; and he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Apoc. 22, 17), meaning, let him draw from Christ, the fountain-head, the waters of true life. Furthermore, it is written in the Holy Gospel that one day the Son of God stood up among a great multitude of people, and cried out with a loud voice: If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink" (John 7, 37).

What does the holy Apostle St. Paul constantly preach to you, if not that "you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God" (COL. 3, 3), and that the Eternal Father has given you life with Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2, 5)? This means that He makes you live not only with His Divine Son, but also in

His Son and by the life of His Son. Does he not also tell you that you must manifest and show forth the life of Jesus in your bodies (11 Cor. 4, 10-11), and that Jesus Christ is your life (COL. 3, 4), and that He is in you, and abides in you? I live," he says, "now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2, 20). For if you study well the rest of the chapter containing these words, you will find that St. Paul is speaking not only of himself, in his own name, but also in the person and in the name of every Christian. Finally, in another passage, addressing the followers of Christ, he says that he prays God to make them worthy of their calling, and to accomplish powerfully in them all the desires of His goodness and

## **NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

5 -

the work of faith, so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in them and they in Him (11 Thess. 1, 11-12).

All these sacred texts show quite clearly that Jesus Christ must live in you; that you must not live except in Him; that His life must be your life, and your life must be a continuation and expression of His. Also you have no right to live on earth except in order to bear, show forth, sanctify, glorify and cause to live and reign in you the name, the life, the qualities and perfections, the dispositions and inclinations, the virtues and actions of Jesus.

## **11. CONFIRMATION OF THE FOREGOING TRUTH.**

To understand more clearly this fundamental truth of Christian life, and to establish it more solidly in your soul, bear in mind that our Lord Jesus Christ has not simply one body and one life, but two. First, there is His own personal body, which He received from the Blessed Virgin, and the personal life which He lived in human form in this world. There is also His mystical body, namely, the Church, which St. Paul calls Corpus Christi, "the body of Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 12, 27). And His second life is the life by which He dwells in this mystical body, and in all true Christians who are the members of the Church. The passable and temporal life of His natural body was ended at the moment of His death. But the life of His mystical body He wills to continue until the end of time, in order to glorify His Father by the acts and sufferings of a mortal, suffering and laborious life, not only for the space of thirty-three years, but until the end of the world. Thus the passable and temporal life of Jesus in His mystical body, that is, in all Christians, has not yet reached its accomplishment, but develops itself from day to day in each true Christian and will not be perfectly complete until the end of time.

This is why St. Paul writes: «I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body, which is the church» (Col. 1, 24). And what the Apostle says of himself may be said of every true Christian, when he suffers anything in a spirit of love and submission to God. It may also be said of all the other actions performed by a Christian on earth. As St. Paul assures us that he fills up the sufferings of Jesus Christ, so also every true Christian, who

6 -

## **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

is a member of Jesus Christ, and united to Him by grace, continues and accomplishes, by every act he does in the spirit of Jesus Christ, the actions which Christ Himself performed during His earthly life. Thus, when a Christian prays, he continues and accomplishes the prayers of Jesus Christ. When he works, he continues and accomplishes Christ's laborious life. When his relations with his neighbor are inspired by charity, he continues and accomplishes Christ's public life. When he takes his meals or his rest in a Christian fashion, he continues and accomplishes the subjection to these necessities that Christ willed to have in Himself. It is the same for all the other acts he performs in a Christian manner. For this reason St. Paul declares that the Church is the fulness of Christ (Eph. 1, 22-23), and that you are all tending to the perfection and the fulness of His maturity (Eph. 4, 11-13), that is, to His mystical age in His Church, which Will not be completed until the Day of judgment.

You can understand from this the nature of the Christian life. You see that it is a continuation and fulfilment of the life of Jesus, and that all your actions must be a continuation of the actions of Christ. You have to be so many other Christs upon the earth, in order to perpetuate here His life and works, and to do and suffer everything in a saintly and divine manner, in the Spirit of Christ, that is, with the holy and divine dispositions and intentions which Jesus Himself showed in all His acts and sufferings. As this divine Jesus is your head and you are His members, and as you are bound to Him by this union, incomparably closer, nobler and more elevated union than the union between the head and the members of the natural body, it necessarily follows that you must be animated by His spirit and live by His life more perfectly than the members of a natural body.

These truths are very great, very important, and call for intent consideration. They oblige you to do great things, and should be well thought out by those who desire to live a Christian life. Therefore, study them frequently and attentively, and so learn that Christian life, religion, devotion and piety truly and properly consist in continuing the life, religion and devotion Of Jesus on the earth. Consequently, not only religious but also all Christians are bound to live a completely holy and divine life and to perform all their actions in a

## **NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

7 -

holy and divine spirit. This is not impossible, nor is it even so difficult as many imagine. On the contrary, it is very pleasant and easy for those who remember to lift up their mind and heart frequently to Jesus, and to unite themselves to Him in all that they do, following the practices of the exercises which will be presented further on.

8 -

## **FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY**

Your only right to live on earth is to continue the holy and perfect life of your Head, Christ. Now there are four things which you must frequently consider and adore in Christ's earthly life, four things which you must try, as far as possible, with the help of His grace, to express and carry on in your life, because they are the four foundations of Christian piety and sanctity. Without them it is not possible to be a true Christian. Hence it becomes necessary to discuss, at this point, each one in particular.

### **III. FIRST FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY: FAITH.**

The first foundation of the Christian life is faith. St. Paul declares that if you would go to God and have access to His divine majesty, the first step you must take is to believe; for "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11, 6). Faith is the substance and foundation of the things hoped for (Heb. 11, 1). It is the cornerstone of the Kingdom of Christ. It is a divine and celestial light, a participation in the eternal, inaccessible light, a beam radiating from the face of God. To speak in accordance with Scripture, faith is, as it were, a divine character by which the light of the countenance of God is imprinted upon the soul (Ps. 4, 7). It is a communication and a kind of projection of the divine light and knowledge which were infused into the holy soul of Jesus at the moment of His Incarnation. It is the science of salvation, the science of the saints, the science of God, which Jesus Christ drew forth from the bosom of His Father and brought down to you on earth, to dispel your shadows, to enlighten your heart, to give you the knowledge necessary for the perfect love and service of God, to submit and subject your mind to His truths which He still teaches you both through Himself and by Holy Mother Church. By faith you can express, continue and fulfil in yourself the submission, docility, the voluntary and undarkened subjection, with which His human mind regarded the lights imparted and the truths taught to Him by His Heavenly Father. Faith, then, being 8



given to you by God, is a continuation and fulfilment of the loving and most perfect submission of the human mind of Jesus Christ to the truths revealed to Him by His Eternal Father.

It is by this light and this divine science that you possess perfect knowledge, so far as it is possible in this life, of all things whether in God or not in God. Reason and human science often lead you into error because they are too weak and limited to penetrate to the knowledge of the things of God, which are infinite and incomprehensible. Human intelligence and knowledge also deceive you, because they are too full of the darkness and obscurity of sin to attain to a genuine knowledge even of things outside of God. But the light of faith, being a participation in the truth and light of God, can not possibly deceive you; indeed, it shows you things as God sees them, that is, in their truth, and just as they exist in the eyes of God.

Consequently, if you contemplate God with the eyes of faith, you will see Him just as He is and, in a certain manner, face to face. Although it is true that faith is accompanied by obscurity and permits you to behold God, not clearly as He is seen in heaven but as through a cloud, darkly, nevertheless, faith does not debase His supreme greatness to fit the capacity of your minds, as does science. Faith penetrates His shadows and His darkness, and goes straight to the infinity of His perfections, making you know Him as He is, infinite in His Being and in all His divine perfections. Faith lets you know that everything that is in God and in Jesus Christ, God and Man, is infinitely great and admirable, infinitely adorable and lovable, infinitely worthy of adoration, glory and love for His own sake. Faith shows you that God is true in His words and unfailing in His promises; that He is all goodness and gentleness and love towards those who seek Him and put their trust in Him, but that He is nothing but terror and severity towards those who abandon Him, and that it is frightful to fall into the hands of His justice. Faith gives a most certain knowledge that Divine Providence directs and guides all things that happen in the universe, with great holiness and wisdom, in fact, in the best way possible. His disposal of all things deserves to be infinitely adored and loved by all creatures that are subject to His order, whether in justice or in mercy, in heaven, on earth or in hell.

#### **10- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

If you look at God's Church in the light of faith, you will see that as Jesus Christ is her Head and the Holy Ghost her Guide, it is not possible for her to wander from the truth in anything, nor to stray away into falsehoods. So too, all the ceremonies, customs and functions of the Church are instituted in a most holy manner, and everything she forbids or commands is legitimately forbidden or commanded. Also everything she teaches is infallibly true, and you must be ready to die a thousand times rather than to diverge, even in the slightest degree, from her inspired truth. Finally, you are obliged to pay singular homage and reverence to all the things that exist in the Church, as holy and sacred objects.

If you look at yourselves and all the things in the world by the light of faith, you will see most clearly that you are, of yourself, only nothingness, sin and abomination, and that everything in the world is nothing but smoke, vanity and illusion.

This is the way to look at everything: not in the vanity of the senses, nor with the eyes of flesh and blood, nor with the short-sighted and deceptive view of reason and human science, but in the truth of God add with the eyes of Jesus Christ, that is, with that divine light which He drew forth from His Father's bosom, by which He beholds and knows all things, the light He has communicated to you that you might see and know all things as He sees and knows them.

#### **IV. FAITH SHOULD BE YOUR GUIDE IN ALL YOUR ACTIONS.**

Just as you must consider all things in the light of faith if you would truly know them, so also you

must perform all your acts under the guidance of that same light, if you would do them in a holy manner. As God is led by His divine wisdom, and the angels by their angelic intelligence, and men deprived of the light of faith by reason, and men of the world by worldly maxims, and voluptuaries by their senses, so Christians must direct themselves by the same light that directs their head, Jesus Christ, that is, by faith, which is a participation in the knowledge and the light of Christ.

So you must try, by every means, to study the divine science of faith and never to undertake anything except under its guidance. To that end, at the inception of your every act, especially your more im

## **FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY**

11 -

portant actions, place yourself at the feet of the Son of God and adore Him as the author of faith and its fulfilment, as the One who is the true light, enlightening every man that comes into this world.

Admit that of yourself you are but darkness, and that all the light of reason, science and even of human experience is often but obscurity and illusion, in which you can place no confidence. Renounce the prudence of the flesh and the wisdom of the world. Ask Jesus to destroy them in you, as His enemies, and not to let you obey their laws, their views or their maxims, but that He may enlighten you with His heavenly light and guide you by His divine wisdom. Beg Him to make known what is most pleasing to Him, and to give you grace and strength to cling firmly to His words and promises, and to close Your ears resolutely to all opinions and persuasions of human prudence; that you may courageously prefer the maxims of faith which He taught you by His Gospel and His Church, rather than the reasoning and arguments of men who base their conduct on the standards of the world.

To this end, it would be a very good thing to read each day on your knees, either in Latin or in English, a chapter of the life of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, so as to learn the life your Father led, and, through the consideration of His acts, His virtues, and His words, to become familiar with the rules and maxims upon which He based His conduct, and upon which He wishes you to base yours. Christian prudence consists in renouncing the maxims of the world, in calling upon the spirit of Christ to enlighten you, to guide you by His maxims, and to lead you in accordance with His truths, His actions and His virtues. This is what is meant by basing one's conduct upon the spirit of faith.

## **V. SECOND FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY: HATRED OF SIN.**

Since you are under obligation to continue on earth the holy and divine life of Jesus, you must be animated by the sentiments and inclinations of Christ Himself, according to St. Paul the Apostle, who says: *Hoc sentite in vobis, quod et in Christo Jesu*: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2, 5). Now Jesus

12 -

## **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

Christ entertained in Himself two widely opposed sentiments: one of infinite love for His Father and for you, the other of extreme hatred for everything opposed to His Father's glory and our salvation, namely, for sin. Since He loves His Father and you with an infinite love, He hates sin with an infinite hatred. He so loved His Father, and so loves you, that He performed great miracles, suffered sorrowful torments, and gave up a precious life for His Father's glory and your love. On the other hand, He holds sin in so great horror that He came down from heaven, taking the form of a servant, and for thirty-three years He lived on earth a life of labor, of humiliation and of suffering; He shed His Blood even to the last drop; He died the most shameful and most cruel of all deaths, all for His hatred of sin, because of His intense desire to destroy all sin in you.

Now you must see to it that these same sentiments of Christ with regard to His Father and to sin

continue in yourself. You have to carry on the war He waged against sin while He was on earth. You are obliged to love God perfectly and with all your might, and you are also bound to hate sin infinitely with all your strength.

In order to dispose yourself to do this, you should henceforth look at sin, not as it is seen by men, with their carnal and blinded vision, but as God sees it, with eyes enlightened by His divine light; in other words, you should see it with the eyes of faith.

By this light you will see that sin, in so far as it is in a certain sense infinitely contrary and opposed to God, and is a privation of an infinite good, which is God, contains in itself a malice, madness, ugliness and horror that are just as great, in their own way, as God's infinite goodness, wisdom, beauty and holiness (St. Thomas, Summa, 3 a. Q. i, a. 2, ad 2um). Consequently sin deserves to be hated and fought to the same degree in which God deserves to be sought and loved. You will see that sin is so horrible a thing that it can be obliterated only by the blood of a God, so detestable that it can be destroyed only by the death of a God-Man, so abominable that it can be worthily repaired only by the labors, agonies and death, and infinite merits of a God.

You will see that sin is a cruel murder, a frightful act of deicide, a ghastly annihilation of all things. It is murder because it is the only

## **FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY**

13 -

cause of death, both of the body and of the soul of man. It is deicide, because sin and the sinner caused Christ to die on the Cross and the sinner continues this crucifixion of Jesus, day by day, within himself. Then it is an annihilation of nature, of grace, of glory and of all things. Since, as far as it can, it destroys their divine Author, it consequently destroys nature, grace and glory.'

Again you will see that sin is so detestable before God that when the first, most noble and dearest of His creatures, namely, the angels, fell into one single sin, a sin of thought only, a sin of no more than a moment, He cast them down from the height of heaven into the depths of hell, without allowing them even a moment to do penance, since they were unworthy and even incapable of this (St. Thomas, Ibid., a. Q. 64, a. 2). When God finds one mortal sin upon a soul, at the hour of death, even though He is all goodness and love for His creature, and has an extreme desire to save all mankind, and even though He has shed His blood and given His life in order to save humanity, He is nevertheless forced by His justice to pass a sentence of eternal damnation upon that wretched soul. Another thing, even more surprising than this, is that when the Eternal Father saw His own Son, His only well-beloved Son, most holy and most innocent, laden with the sins of others, He did not spare Him, as St. Paul says, but delivered Him up for us to the Cross and to death (Rom. 8, 32), so abominable and execrable is sin in His sight.

You will also see that sin is so full of malignity that it transforms the servants of God into slaves of the devil, the members of Jesus Christ into the members of Satan, and even changes men who are by grace and participation gods, into devils by likeness and imitation, according to the words of Christ Himself who, speaking of Judas, called him a devil: *Unus ex vobis diabolus est* (John 6, 71).

And you will finally come to know that sin is the evil of evils, and the greatest of all misfortunes. It is the source of all the evils and all the misfortunes that cover the earth and fill hell to overflowing. Indeed, this evil is the only one in the world that really deserves to be called an evil. Of all the frightful and appalling things that exist, sin is the most frightful and the most appalling. It is more to be dreaded than death, more fearsome than the devil, and more terrifying

than hell, because all that is horrible, appalling and terrifying about death, the devil and hell proceeds from sin. O Sin, how detestable thou art! Oh, if men only knew thee! Yes, sin, there is something in thee infinitely more horrible than anything that may be spoken or conceived, since the soul that is befouled with thy rottenness can not be cleaned nor purged except by the blood of God Himself, and thou canst not be destroyed and annihilated save only by the death and annihilation of a God-Man!

O God, no wonder Thou dost hate this hellish monster so, and that Thou dost pursue it with so hard a punishment! Let those be astonished by this who know Thee not, and who know not what an insult is offered to Thee by sin. Indeed, O my God, Thou wouldst not be God, if Thou didst not hate iniquity with an infinite hatred. As it is Thy joy to be bound by necessity to love Thyself infinitely, since Thou art infinite goodness, so also art Thou bound by a holy obligation, to hold in infinite abhorrence that which is, in some sense, infinitely contrary to Thee. O you, Christians who read these words, all of which are based upon the utterance of eternal Truth, if there remain in you some little spark of love and zeal for the God whom you adore, learn to have horror for what He so abhors, and for what is so contrary to Him. Fear sin, and fly from it more than from pestilence, or from death, or from all the other evils that can be imagined. Keep always alive within you the unshakable resolution to suffer a thousand deaths, together with every kind of torture, rather than ever to become separated from God by a mortal sin.

And that God may preserve you from this misfortune, be careful also to avoid venial sin, as far as possible. For you must keep in mind that the shedding of Our Lord's blood and the sacrifice of His life were just as necessary to wipe out venial sin as to deliver you from mortal sin. Remember that anyone who attaches little importance to venial sin will soon fall into mortal sin. If you do not find these resolutions in your own soul, pray to Our Lord to put them there, and do not rest until you possess these dispositions. For you ought to know that as long as you do not have the will to die or suffer every kind of disgrace and torture rather than commit any sin, you are not a true Christian. But if by some misfortune you should

## FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY

15 -

happen to fall into sin, be sure to rise up again at once by means of contrition and confession, and return to your previous dispositions.

## VI. THIRD FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY: DETACHMENT FROM THE WORLD AND FROM WORLDLY THINGS.

It is not enough for a Christian to be free from vice and to abhor every kind of sin. Beyond that, it is necessary to work with diligence and resolution at the task of becoming perfectly detached from the world and from the things of the world. When I say "the world," I mean the corrupt and disordered life led in the world, the damnable spirit that reigns over the world, the perverse sentiments and inclinations which men of the world follow, and the pernicious laws and maxims by which they govern their behavior. By the things of the world I mean everything that the world so highly values and loves and strives after, namely, the honors and praises of men, vain pleasures and satisfactions, wealth and temporal comforts, friendships and affections based on flesh and blood, on self-love and selfish interests.

Consider the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and you will see that He lived on earth in most perfect detachment, stripped of all things. Read His holy Gospel, listen to His words, and you will learn that "everyone of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14, 33). So, if you really desire to be a Christian and a disciple of Jesus Christ, and if you wish to continue and express in yourself His holy life of detachment from everything, you must strive to achieve an absolute and universal detachment from the world and from worldly things.

To do this, you should frequently reflect how the world always has been and always will be opposed

to Christ, whom it has persecuted and crucified, and will persecute and crucify, even to the end of time. Consider that the sentiments and inclinations, the rules and maxims, the life and spirit of the world are so opposed to the sentiments and inclinations, the rules and maxims, the life and spirit of Jesus that it is impossible for them to subsist together. Christ's sentiments and inclinations lead entirely to the glory of His Father and our sanctification, while those of the world lead only to sin and perdition.

## 16- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

The laws and maxims of Jesus are very mild and holy and reasonable. The standards of the world are laws and maxims of hell, and are diabolical, tyrannical and finally unbearable.

The life of Jesus is a holy life made beautiful by all kinds of virtues; the life of the world is a depraved life, full of disorder and of all sorts of vice.

The spirit of Jesus is a spirit of light, of truth, of piety, of love, confidence, zeal and reverence for God and for all that belongs to God; the spirit of the world is a spirit of error, of unbelief, of darkness, of suspicion, of dissatisfaction, of impiety, of irreverence and hardness of heart towards God and all the things of God.

The spirit of Jesus is a spirit of humility, of modesty, of self-distrust, of mortification and abnegation, of constancy and of firmness. But the spirit of the world is, by contrast, a spirit of pride, presumption, disordered self-love, fickleness and inconstancy.

The spirit of Jesus is a spirit of mercy, charity, patience, gentleness and of unity with others. But the spirit of the world is a spirit of vengeance, envy, impatience, anger, slander and disunion.

Finally, the spirit of Jesus is the spirit of God, a holy and divine spirit, filled with every grace, virtue, and blessing. It is a spirit of peace and tranquillity, which seeks nothing but the interests of God and of His greater glory. The spirit of the world, on the contrary, is the spirit of Satan, for it necessarily follows that, since Satan is the prince of this world, the world is animated and governed by his spirit—an earthly, carnal and animal Spirit; a spirit motivating all kinds of sin and accursedness; a spirit of unrest and anxiety, of storms and tempests—*spiritus procellarum* (Ps. 10, 7), a spirit seeking only its own convenience, satisfaction and interests. Judge then, if it be possible for the life and spirit of the world to be reconciled with the life and spirit of Christianity, which is none other than the life and spirit of Christ.

If, therefore, you desire to be a true Christian, that is, if you desire to belong perfectly to Jesus Christ, to live His life, to be animated by His spirit and conduct yourself according to His maxims, it is absolutely necessary for you to make up your mind to renounce the world entirely and bid it farewell forever. I do not mean that it is

## FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY

17 -

necessary for you to leave the world and shut yourself up between four walls, unless God calls you to do so. But I do say that you must try to live in the world as though you were not of the world, that is, you must make a public, generous and unwavering profession of living otherwise than as the world lives, and of rejecting its laws and maxims. And I tell you not to be ashamed but to enjoy holy pride in being a Christian, in belonging to Jesus Christ, in preferring the saintly maxims and truths that He left you in His holy Gospel, to the pernicious maxims and falsehoods by which the world deceives its disciples.

I urge you at least to have enough courage and resolution to make a clean break with the standards, sentiments and inclinations of the world, and to despise all its empty speeches and deceptive opinions, just as the world makes a show of impious temerity in despising the laws and maxims of Christianity. It is in this alone that true courage and perfect generosity consist: for what the world calls courage and power of

character are nothing but cowardice and pusillanimity. This, then, is what I mean by detachment from the world: renouncing the world, and living in the world as though not of it.

## **VII. CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.**

If you would more firmly establish this detachment from the world in your soul, it is not only necessary for you to strive to break away from the world, but you should even develop a horror for it, like the repugnance in which Christ held it. Now Christ had such a horror of the world that He not only exhorted you through His beloved Disciple: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world" (1 John 2, 15), but He also tells us, through His Apostle St. James, "that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God" (James 4, 4), that is, He considers as His enemies all those who love the world. He assures you that His Kingdom is not of this world (John 18, 36) any more than He is of this world, and that those whom His Father has given Him are not of this world, just as He is not of it (John 17, 12-16). And another thing~more terrifying still~is that He solemnly protested, on the very day when He wrought the greatest miracle of His goodness, namely, the eve of

### **18 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

His death, when He was about to pour forth His Precious Blood and give up His life for the salvation of men, I pray not for the world" (John 17, 9). And in these words He thundered a most frightful anathema, a curse and an excommunication upon the world, declaring it to be unworthy of any share in His prayers or in His mercy.

Finally, He assures us that "now is the judgment of the world" and "now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12, 31). And, in fact, the very moment the world fell into the corruption of sin, it was judged by divine justice and condemned to be burnt and consumed by fire. And although the effect of the sentence was deferred, it will none the less be carried out at the end of time. Consequently, Christ looks upon the world as the object of His hatred and His curse, and as something He plans and desires to burn in the day of His wrath.

Enter, then, into the feelings of Christ towards the world, and towards all things that are in the world. From now on, view the world as Jesus Christ does, that is, as the object of His hatred and malediction. Look upon it as something He forbids you to love, under pain of incurring His enmity. See it as a thing He has excommunicated and cursed with His own lips, with which you may not, consequently, communicate without participating in the same malediction. See the world as something He desires to burn and reduce to ashes. Look at all those things which the world most values and loves, like pleasures, honors, riches, worldly friendship and affections, and all other things of this kind, as things which simply pass away, according to this divine utterance: *Mundus transit, et concupiscentia ejus* (1 John 2, 17). See all these things as nothing but smoke, deceit and illusion, as vanity and affliction of spirit. Read these truths and reflect upon them often, and each day pray Our Lord to impress them upon your mind.

To arrive at these dispositions, take a little time each day to adore Jesus in His perfect detachment from the world, begging Him to detach you from it entirely and to impress upon your heart hatred, horror and abomination for the things of the world. For your own part, see that you do not indulge in the useless visits and conversation that are customary in the world. If you are taken up with these idle

## **FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY**

19 -

occupations, in the name of God leave them at all costs and fly as you would from a plague, from all the places and persons and from any company where the talk is only of the world and worldly things. Since such things are discussed with esteem and affection, it is very difficult to avoid carrying away some harmful impression from these conversations. Besides, you will gain nothing from them but a dangerous loss of

time; you will find in them nothing but unhappy dissipation of mind and affliction of spirit, and all you will bring away will be bitterness of heart, coldness in piety, separation from God, and a thousand faults that you may have committed.

As long as you seek out and love the company of men of the world, Jesus Christ whose delight it is to be with the children of men will not take His delight in you and will not give you any taste of the consolations with which He refreshes those who find all their joy in conversing with Him. Fly then, from the world, I say to you again, fly from it, abhor its life, its spirit and its maxims. Do not make friends with any persons except those whom you can help, or those who can help you and animate you, by word and example, to love Jesus and live in His spirit.

### **VIII. SELF-DETACHMENT.**

It is no small accomplishment to renounce the world in the manner just described. Yet even this is not enough to give you that perfect detachment which is one of the primary foundations of Christian life. Our Lord cries out to us in a loud voice: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16, 24). So, then, if you want to be among the followers of Christ and belong to Him, you have to renounce yourself, that is, your own mind, your own ideas, your own will, desires, inclinations and your self-love, because it is your self-love that leads you to hate and avoid anything that might cause pain or mortification to your spirit or your flesh and makes you love and seek out everything that may give them pleasure and contentment.

Two reasons oblige you to practise self-abnegation.

First, everything in you is so disordered and depraved, as a result of the corruption of sin, that there is nothing in you that is not

### **20- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

contrary to God, and that does not put some obstacle in the way of His plans, or oppose itself to the love and glory you owe Him. Therefore, if you desire to belong to God, you must necessarily renounce yourself and forget and hate and persecute and destroy and annihilate your own self.

Secondly, Jesus Christ, your head and your model, in whom there is nothing that is not all holy and divine, nevertheless lived in so great detachment from Himself and kept His human spirit, His own will and love of Himself so subordinated that He never did anything according to His own human light or spirit, but all according to His Father's spirit. He behaved like a person having no love for Himself of infinite glory and felicity in this world, and of all human pleasures and satisfactions, and sought out and welcomed everything that might cause Him to suffer in His body or in His soul. Now if you are truly His members, you ought, therefore, to share His sentiments and dispositions, and make a firm resolution to live in future in complete detachment, forgetfulness, and hatred of your own selves.

To do this, make sure that you often adore Jesus in this detachment from Himself and give yourself to Him, begging Him to detach you entirely from yourself, from your Own spirit, your own will and your self-love so that He may unite you perfectly to Himself, and govern you in all things according to His spirit, His love and His pure will.

Lift up your heart to Him, at the beginning of every action, somewhat like this: "O Jesus, with all my power I renounce myself, my own mind, my own will and my self-love and I give myself all to Thee and to Thy holy spirit and Thy divine love. Draw me out of myself and direct me in this action according to Thy holy will."

Whenever an occasion of disagreement arises because of natural differences of opinion, no matter

how sure you may be that you are right, be glad to give up your own opinion and yield to that of someone else, provided the glory of God be not concerned in the matter.

When you feel some desire or inclination for one thing or another, lay it at once at the feet of Jesus, assuring Him that you do not wish to have any other will or inclination but His.

## **FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY**

21 -

The moment you perceive yourself to have some sensible weakness or affection for any earthly object, immediately turn your heart and affections to Christ, in this way: "O dear Jesus, I give Thee all my heart and my affections. O Thou only object of my love, make me never love anything except in Thee and for Thee."

When someone gives you a word of praise, refer it to Him who is alone worthy of all honor saying: "O my glory, I desire no other glory but Thine forever. To Thee alone is due all praise, honor and glory, and to me all abjection, shame and humiliation."

When something occurs that mortifies your body or spirit, or when you see an occasion to deprive yourself of some satisfaction (such occasions present themselves hourly), accept it with a ready welcome, for the love of Our Lord, and bless Him for giving you an opportunity to mortify your self-love, in honor of His mortifications and privations on earth.

Whenever you feel any joy or consolation, refer it to the sublime Source of all consolation, and say to Him: "O Jesus, I desire never to have any contentment but Thine. Ah, my Lord, it is joy enough for me to know that Thou art God, and that Thou art my God! O Jesus, be always Jesus, that is, always full of glory, greatness and joy, and I shall always be satisfied. O my Jesus, never permit me to find my contentment in anything in the world, but in Thee alone. But rather grant that I may say like Queen Esther of old: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that thy handmaid hath never rejoiced, but in thee" (Esth. 14, 18).

## **IX. PERFECTION OF CHRISTIAN DETACHMENT.**

The perfection of Christian detachment does not consist only in being detached from the world and from oneself. It obliges the soul to be, in a certain sense, detached even from God. Do you not know that when Our Lord was still on earth, He assured His apostles that it was expedient for Him to depart from them to go to the Father and send them His Holy Spirit? Why was this, if not because they were attached to the sensible consolation of the visible presence of His sacred humanity? Now this was an obstacle to the coming of the Holy Spirit, so necessary is it to be detached from all

## **22 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

things, no matter how holy and divine they may be, if you would be animated by the spirit of Jesus, which is the spirit of Christianity.

That is why I say you must be detached, in a certain sense, even from God, that is, from the delights and consolation that ordinarily accompany God's grace and His love. You must be detached from the pious plans you have made for God's glory, from the desires you have for greater perfection and love for God, and even from the desire to be delivered from the prison of this body, to see God and to be united with Him perfectly, and to love Him purely, without interruption. When God allows you to feel the sweetness of His kindness in your devotions, you must be careful not to become attached to this consolation. You must humble yourself at once, considering yourself most unworthy of any consolation, and ready to be stripped of it, to assure Him that you desire to serve and love Him, not for the consolation that He gives, either in this world or in the next, but for love of Himself and merely to please Him.



When you have undertaken a holy task or are doing some good work for the glory of God, you must exert every effort to ensure its accomplishment. Nevertheless, you must take care not to become attached to it, so that if, by accident, you are obliged to interrupt this good work, or even leave it altogether, you will not lose your peace and repose of spirit, but remain content in view of the will and permission Of God, who directs all things and is to be equally loved in all.

Similarly, although you must exert all your energy in trying to conquer your passions, vices and imperfections, and to become master of every kind of virtue, you must, nevertheless, work at this without being carried away by your zeal. So that when you do not perceive in yourself as many virtues, or as much love of God as you would like to see, you may remain at peace and undisturbed, humiliating 'yourself because of the obstacles you yourself have placed in the path Of virtue. You must try to love your own abjection, remaining satisfied with what it pleases God to give you, ever persevering in your desire to make progress, having confidence that Our Lord, in His goodness, will give you the graces you need to serve Him with the perfection He requires of you.

## **FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY**

23 -

So, also, however much you ought to be always eager for the happy hour which will entirely take you away from the earth, from sin and from imperfection, and unite you perfectly with God and His pure love, and however much you ought to exert all your power to accomplish God's work in you so that, His work being finished, He may quickly call you back to Him. you must, nevertheless, desire this without attachment and without anxiety. If it be Our Lord's good pleasure for you to remain several more years separated from the most sweet vision of His divine face, you must remain satisfied with His most adorable will, even if He were to make you bear this bitter privation until the Day of Judgment.

This is what is called detachment from God. In this consists the perfect detachment from the world, from themselves, and from all things which all Christians should possess. Oh, how sweet it is to be thus free and detached from all things!

Some may think that it is very difficult to arrive at such perfection. But it would be easy for you if you gave yourself entirely and unreservedly to the Son of God, and if you placed your reliance and confidence, not in your own powers and resolutions, but in the greatness of His goodness and in the power of His grace and of His love. For wherever this divine love is to be found, all is done with extreme sweetness. True, you must do violence to yourself in certain things, and go through many trials and sufferings, much darkness and mortification; nevertheless, in the ways of holy love, there is more honey than gall, and more sweetness than rigor.

Ah, my Saviour, what glory Thou hast, what joy Thou takest and what great things dost Thou accomplish in one who walks bravely in these ways, abandoning everything, becoming detached from everything, even in a way from Thee, to give himself more perfectly to Thee! How strongly dost Thou then unite the soul with Thee! With what power dost Thou gain possession of it! How divinely dost Thou plunge it into the abyss of Thy love! How admirably dost Thou transform it into Thyself, clothing it with Thy qualities, Thy spirit, and Thy love!

What eminent satisfaction, what delightful sweetness it is for a soul to be able to say with truth: "My God, here I am free and

## **24- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

detached from everything! Who will stop me now from loving Thee perfectly? Now I no longer cling to anything. Draw me after Thee, O Jesus. Trahe me post te, curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum (Cant. 1, 3). What a consolation it is for a soul to be able to say with the holy Spouse: "My beloved to me, and I to him" (Cant. 2, 16), and with Jesus, Omnia mea tua sunt, et tua mea sunt, "All my things are thine, and

thine are mine" (John 17, 10).

Cultivate an earnest desire for this holy detachment. Give yourself entirely and unreservedly to Jesus. Beg Him to break your bonds with the strength of His all-powerful arm, to detach you completely from the world, from yourself, and from all things, so that He may work in you, without any obstacle, all that He desires to accomplish for His glory.

## **X. FOURTH FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY: PRAYER.**

The holy exercise of prayer must be considered one of the chief foundations of Christian life and sanctity, since the whole life of Jesus Christ was nothing but a perpetual prayer, which you must continue and express in your life. This is so necessary that the earth on which you live, the air you breathe, the bread that sustains you, the heart that beats in your breast, are none of them so necessary to man for his bodily life as prayer is to a Christian if he is to live as a Christian. This is because:

(1) The Christian life, called by the Son of God eternal life, consists in knowing and loving God. This divine knowledge is acquired by praying.

(2) Of yourself you are nothing, can do nothing and possess nothing but poverty and nothingness. Hence, you have a very great need of going to God for help, at all hours, by means of prayer, so that you may obtain and receive from Him all that you lack.

Prayer is a respectful and loving elevation of your mind and heart to God. It is a joyous meeting, a holy communication, a divine conversation between God and the Christian. In it the soul considers and contemplates its Creator in His divine perfections, in His mysteries and in His works; it adores and blesses Him, loves and glorifies Him, gives itself to Him, is abased before Him at the sight of its sins

## **FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY**

25 -

and ingratitude. It implores Him to be merciful, and learns to become like Him by imitating His divine virtues and perfections, and finally asks for all the things necessary to serve and love Him.

Prayer is a participation in the life of the angels and saints, in the life of Jesus Christ and of His most holy Mother, even of the life of God and of the Three Divine Persons. For the life of the angels and saints, of Christ, and of His most holy Mother is nothing else but a continual practice of prayer and contemplation, in which their uninterrupted occupation is to look upon God, to praise and love Him, to ask Him, on your behalf, for the things you need. And the existence of the Three Divine Persons is a perpetual contemplation, praise and love of one another, which is accomplished first and foremost by prayer.

Prayer is perfect delight, supreme happiness, a true earthly paradise. It is by this divine exercise of prayer that the Christian soul is united to God, who is the centre of its being, its goal and its supreme good. It is in prayer that God belongs to the soul and the soul to God. It is by praying that the soul pays Him rightful service, homage, adoration and love, and receives from Him His lights, His blessings and a thousand tokens of His exceeding great love. It is during your prayers that God takes His delight in you, according to this word of His: "My delights are to be with the children of men" (Prov. 8, 31), and gives us an experimental knowledge of the fact that our true joy and perfect satisfaction are to be found in God, and that a hundred, or even a thousand years of the false pleasures of this world are not worth one moment of the true delights which God allows those souls to taste, who seek all their contentment only in conversing with Him in holy prayer.

Finally, prayer is the most worthy, the noblest, the loftiest, greatest and most important act in which you can engage your efforts, for it is the ceaseless occupation of the angels and saints, of the Blessed Virgin, of Jesus and of the Most Holy Trinity throughout all the vastness of eternity. It is also destined to be our own unending activity in heaven. Indeed, this is the one true and proper function of a man and of a

Christian, since man is created for God and to be with

## 26- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

God, and the Christian is on earth only for the purpose of continuing what Jesus Christ did during His life.

Therefore, with all my power, I urge every one of you who read these words, and in God's name I adjure you, since our Dear Jesus condescends to take His delight in being with you and speaking to you through prayer, do not deprive Him of His satisfaction, but learn by your own experience that like holy wisdom His conversation has no bitterness, nor His company any tediousness, but joy and gladness (Wis. 8, 16). Look upon prayer as the first, the principal, most necessary, most urgent and most important business of your life, and as far as possible, free yourself from all less necessary duties, to give as much time as you can to prayer, especially in the morning and evening, and a little before dinner, and in one or another of the ways I shall set forth.

### XI. VARIOUS KINDS OF PRAYER.

There are several ways of praying and I shall here set down the five most important methods of prayer.

1. *Mental Prayer*: The first is called mental or interior prayer, in which the soul communes with God, taking as the subject of conversation one of His divine perfections, or some mystery, virtue or word of His Divine Son, whether something He accomplished in the past, or is doing now, in the order of glory, grace or nature, in His Mother, His saints, His Church or in the world.

You begin the conversation of prayer by applying your understanding to consider with a determined, yet unstrained, attention and effort the truths to be found in the subjects chosen, truths which can arouse the soul to love God and hate sin. Then make your heart and will produce a few fervent acts of adoration, praise, love, humility, contrition and oblation, with the resolution to avoid evil and do good, according to the prompting of the Spirit of God.

This kind of prayer is more holy, more useful and more filled with blessings than words can convey. For this reason, if God draws you to mental prayer and gives you the grace to practise it, you should indeed thank Him for this very great gift. If He has not yet given you this grace, pray that He may do so, and for your own part exert all

### FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY

27 -

your efforts to correspond with His grace and cultivate this holy practice. God Himself will instruct you in the ways of this prayer better than all the books and all the teachers in the world, if you cast yourself down at His feet with humility, confidence and purity of heart, in the way I am about to explain.

2. *Vocal Prayer*: The second method of prayer is called vocal prayer. It consists in speaking to God, either by the recitation of the Divine Office, or the rosary or any other vocal prayer. This is almost as valuable as mental prayer, provided that when you speak to God with your lips you also speak to Him with your heart and with an attentive mind. In this way your prayer will be both vocal and mental. If, however, you get into the habit of reciting many vocal prayers mechanically and inattentively, you will leave God's presence more distracted, colder and less generous in His love than you were when you entered. For this reason I advise you to confine yourself to relatively few vocal prayers, apart from those you are obliged to say, and to develop the habit of saying them devoutly, with great attention and application of the mind to God. During vocal prayers you should occupy your mind and heart with holy thoughts while your tongue is uttering the words, remembering constantly that you are supposed to continue the prayers which Christ

said on earth. Give yourself to, Him for this purpose. Unite yourself with the love, humility, purity, holiness and most perfect attention characteristic of His prayers, and beg Him to impress upon your soul the holy and divine dispositions and intentions with which He used to pray.

You may also offer your prayers in union with all the holy prayers and divine supplications that have ever been, in heaven and on earth, by the most Holy Virgin, the angels and the saints, uniting yourself with the love and devotion and attention with which they perform this holy function.

3. *Spirit of Prayer*: The third method of prayer is to perform all your acts, even the smallest, in a Christian and holy spirit, offering them to Our Lord as you begin, and then, from time to time, lifting up your heart to Him while you perform them, in the way that will be once more set forth in more detail in "Part Three" of this book. To do your actions thus is to perform them with a spirit of prayer and to

## 28 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

practise prayer continually, in accordance with the commandment of Our Lord, who desires that you should always pray without ceasing. This prayer by action is a most excellent, as well as a very easy way to remain always in the presence of God.

4. *Spiritual Reading*: The fourth method of prayer is to read good books, reading them, however, not in haste, but taking your time, and applying your mind to what you are reading, stopping to consider and turning over in your thoughts the truths that strike you most forcefully, in order to impress them on your mind so as to derive specific acts of virtue and profitable resolutions. Therefore, one thing I recommend to you with singular insistence is that you never let a day go by without reading some spiritual book for half an hour.

The books best suited for spiritual reading are the New Testament, the Imitation of Christ, the Lives of the Saints, the works of Luis de Granada, especially his great Guide for Sinners and the Memorial of the Christian Life, the writings of St. Francis de Sales and of Cardinal de Bérulle, founder of the Oratory of France, and Father Quarre's Spiritual Treasure.<sup>(1)</sup> But remember, at the beginning of your reading, to give your mind and heart to Our Lord and to beg Him to give you the grace to derive the fruit He chooses for you, and that by this He may work His holy will in your soul for His glory.

5. *Conversing About God*: It is also a most useful and devout practice, which usually enflames hearts with divine love, to speak and converse with one another about God and holy things. Christians should indeed spend part of their time this way. God should be the principal subject of their conversation, and it is in this that they ought to seek their recreation and their delight.

You are encouraged to do this by the Apostle St. Peter saying, If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God (I Pet. 4, 11) .

After all, you are God's children, so you ought to enjoy speaking the language of your Father, a language that is all holy, celestial and divine. And since you are made for Heaven, you ought to begin, even on earth, to speak a heavenly language. Oh, how sweet it is, to a soul who loves God above all things, to speak of what is most

(1). Father John Hugh Quarré entered the Oratory of France in 1618 and later became provincial of the Belgium Oratory.

## FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY

29 -

lovable in the world and to hear sweet words about Him! How pleasing are these holy conversations to the One who has said: "Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18, 20)! Oh, how different are such precious words from the ordinary chatter of this world!

What a holy and profitable way to spend your time, provided you do it in the proper dispositions!

For this end you should follow the rule laid down by St. Paul on this subject: *Sicut ex Deo, coram Deo, in Christo loquimur*. "From God, before God, in Christ we speak" (11 Cor. 2, 17). These words indicate the three things you must observe, if you are to speak of God devoutly and inspiringly.

First, you must speak from God, that is, you must draw upon God for your topics and your words, offering yourself to the Son of God at the beginning of your spiritual conversation, in order that He may inspire your mind and place on your lips the words and things you are to say, and that you may thus say what He said to His Father: "The words which Thou gavest me, I have given to them" (John 17, 8).

Secondly, you must speak in the presence of God, in a spirit of prayer and recollection, remembering attentively that God is everywhere present, and giving yourself to God, so, that He may cause to fructify in you the things that you may say or hear said, and that you may make use of them according to His holy will.

Thirdly, you must speak in Jesus Christ, that is, with the intentions and dispositions of Christ, even as He spoke so nobly and beautifully on earth, or else as He would speak if He were in your place. To do this, you should give yourself to Him, uniting yourself with His intentions as He discoursed in the world, having no other aim but the glory of His Father alone. You should also share His dispositions of humility, of gentleness and charity towards those to whom He spoke, and of love and attention towards His Father. If you do this, your conversations will be most pleasing to Him. He will be in the midst of you, to take His delight among you and the time spent in these spiritual conversations will be time spent in prayer.

## 30- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

### XII. QUALITIES OF PRAYER.

The holy Apostle St. Paul teaches that if you would perform all your actions devoutly, you must act in the name of Jesus Christ. And Christ Himself assures you that whatever you ask His Father, in His name, He will grant you. Therefore, to pray worthily and to obtain from God all that you ask, you must pray in the name of Jesus Christ. But what does it mean, to pray in the name of Christ? I have already mentioned what it means, but it is a point that can not be stressed too often, a truth which must become well impressed upon your minds as of great importance and most useful in everything you do. To pray in the name of Christ means to continue the prayers which Christ said while on earth.

Since all Christians are members of Jesus Christ and constitute His Mystical Body, as St. Paul says, they represent His Person, and must consequently do everything in His name, that is, in His spirit, with His dispositions and intentions, just as He Himself did on earth, and just as He would do now, in their place. In the same way, an ambassador, who represents the ruler of a country, is obliged to act and speak in his name, that is, in his spirit, just as the ruler himself would act and speak if he were present. Therefore, I repeat that to pray in the name of Christ is to continue Christ's own prayers and supplications, to pray in His spirit, with the feelings, thoughts and sacred intentions that animated His Heart as He prayed. All Christians ought to pray as He did, in His name.

To this end, when you begin your prayers, remember that you are going to continue the prayers of Jesus Christ, and that you must also continue to pray as He would, namely, with the dispositions of His earthly petitions as well as His eternal prayer now in heaven and upon our altars, where He is present in a ceaseless act of supplication to His Heavenly Father. Unite yourself with the love, humility, purity, holiness, attention, and with all the holy dispositions and intentions of His infinite prayer.

Now, among these dispositions there are four in particular, with which you should pray if you

desire to give God glory by your prayers, and to obtain from Him what you ask.

## **FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY**

3 1 -

1. *Humility*: The first disposition for prayer is that you should present yourself before God with deep humility, recognizing that you are most unworthy to appear in His august presence to contemplate Him, or to be heard by Him. Of yourself, you cannot entertain a single holy thought, nor perform a single act that is pleasing to Him. Therefore, you must annihilate yourself at His feet, offering yourself to our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may establish Himself in you, that it may be He Himself who prays within you, since He alone is worthy to appear before God's face to glorify and love Him, and to obtain from Him the answer to all petitions. Then, you may approach in full confidence to ask of the Eternal Father all that you ask of Him in the name of His Son, by the merits of His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, who dwells within you.

2. *Confidence*: The second disposition is a loving and respectful confidence, believing most firmly that everything you ask, if it is for God's glory and your salvation, will infallibly be granted, and often with a generosity surpassing your request, provided that you do not ask it relying upon your merits, or upon the virtue of your prayer, but in the name of Jesus Christ, by His merits and prayers, and for Christ Himself, trusting purely in His goodness and His sacred promise: "Ask and it shall be given you" (Luke 11, 9). If you ask the Father any thing in my name, He will give it you" (John 16, 23); and, "whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you" (Mark 11, 24). If God treated you according to your merits, He would drive you out of His sight, and destroy you when you presented yourself before Him. Therefore, when He gives you grace, you must not think that He gives it to you in answer to your prayers, but rather that He gives it to His Son Jesus Christ by virtue of His Prayers and merits.

3. *Purity of Intention*: The third disposition of prayer is purity of intention, assuring Our Lord that you renounce all curiosity of mind, all self-love, and that you wish to pray not for your own satisfaction and consolation, but purely for His glory and to please Him alone. He deigns to take delight in your company and converse with you in prayer. So ask Him to grant that you may pray solely for His glory and contentment.

3 2 -

## **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

4. *Perseverance*: The fourth disposition to accompany prayer should be perseverance. If you desire to glorify God in prayer, and to obtain from His goodness the favors you ask, you must faithfully persevere in this divine exercise. There are some favors that Almighty God does not grant either the first, or the second, or the third time you ask Him, because He wishes you to pray for a long time and often He wills this delay to keep you in a state of humility and self-contempt and to make you realize the value of His graces. He sometimes takes pleasure in putting you off for some time, in matters which oblige you to come frequently to Him, so that, by this means, you may often be with Him, and He with you; so great is His love for you, and so true it is that He delights in being with you.

Finally, to make all the other holy dispositions complete, at the beginning of your prayer, fervently give your mind and heart to Jesus and to His divine spirit, praying Him to inspire in your heart such thoughts and affections as He may desire. Abandon yourself entirely to His holy guidance, that He may guide you as He pleases in this divine activity. Trust in His great goodness to lead you in the most fitting manner, and to give you all that you shall ask, not perhaps in the way that you wish, but in some other way much better for you.

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

ONCE you have laid down in your soul the chief foundations of Christian life and sanctity, which are faith, hatred of sin, detachment from all things, and, finally, prayer, if you would live a Christian life and make Jesus Christ live and reign in your heart, it is necessary also to work diligently at the practice of the Christian virtues which Our Lord exercised on earth. Since you must continue to fulfil Christ's holy life on earth, you must also continue to cultivate His virtues. Therefore, I urge you to fervent imitation of His virtues by first setting down, at this point, some general remarks on the excellence of the Christian virtues most important and necessary to the perfection and sanctity of Christian life.

### XIII. EXCELLENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.

There are many people who appreciate virtue, who desire it, seek it and spend much diligence and time to acquire it, yet you see very few who can claim your respect by their true and solid Christian virtues. One of the main reasons is that they follow the paths of virtue not so much in the spirit of Christianity as in the spirit of the pagan philosophers, of heretics, or of those who cultivate virtue for human and social ends. In other words, they act not so much in the spirit of Jesus Christ and His divine grace, purchased for us by His blood, as in the spirit of nature and of human reason.

Would you like to know the difference between these two spirits in this matter of practising virtue? You may detect it in the following way:

1. Those who seek virtue in the fashion of the pagans, the agnostic philosophers, or the politically-minded, look at it through the eyes of human reason alone, and value it as a thing most excellent in itself, most reasonable and necessary for the perfection of man, to distinguish him from animals guided by sense alone. Their desire and

### 34 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

quest for virtue is based on humanitarian considerations, not on Christian ideas.

2. They are also persuaded that they can acquire virtue by their own efforts, by dint of care, vigilance and self-analysis with resolutions and exercises. In this they are very much mistaken, because without divine grace it is impossible for us to perform even the smallest act of Christian virtue.

3. They love virtue, and strive after it, not for the glory of God, but for themselves, for their own interest and satisfaction, to render themselves more excellent and accomplished and also to avoid unpleasantness and embarrassment. This is the way pagan philosophers, heretics or sociologists desire virtue and seek it. Indeed, the very devils themselves desire virtue this way because, being full of pride, they want anything that may make them more excellent, and advance their status. They are interested in the cultivation of virtue, because it is a most noble and excellent thing for themselves; they strive after it not to become more pleasing to God, but out of a spirit of pride and self-perfection.

On the other hand, there are those who follow the spirit and grace of Jesus Christ in the exercise of virtue.

1. They look upon virtue not only in itself, but in its principle and source, namely, in Christ, the source of all grace, who eminently and sovereignly embodies every virtue, and in whom virtue attains infinite excellence. Since all that is in Jesus is holy, divine and adorable, virtue is sanctified and divinely exalted in Him, and is consequently made worthy of infinite honor and adoration. Therefore, if you consider

virtue as in Christ, your view of it will be infinitely more efficacious in leading you to esteem and love and seek it, much more so than if you regarded it merely because of its own excellence, or because of the esteem accorded to it by reason and the human mind.

2. Those who are led by the spirit of Christianity in the practice of virtue know full well that they can not perform the smallest act of virtue by themselves. They realize that if God were to withdraw Himself from them, they would, at that very moment, fall into the abyss of vice; they know, too, that virtue is purely and simply a gift

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

35 -

of God's infinite mercy; therefore, it is necessary to ask Him for it, with confidence and perseverance. Earnest Christians persistently and continually ask God for the virtues they need, without ever growing weary of asking Him for them, and at the same time they are careful not to rely in any way on their own efforts and vigilance, or on their own exercises and practices, desires and resolutions, but instead they look to God's goodness alone for everything, and do not grow anxious when they do not find in themselves the virtues they desire. Instead of becoming disturbed and discouraged they remain at peace in humility before God, recognizing that this is due to their own infidelity; and that, if He were to treat them as they deserve, He would not only give them nothing that they ask for, but would strip them of all the graces He ever granted. And He would still be showing them too great a favor if He did not then cast them out and abandon them entirely. This enkindles in Christian souls a fresh flame of love and new confidence, in the presence of this infinite goodness, and inspires a most ardent desire to pursue, by every possible means, the virtues they need to serve and glorify Him.

3. They desire virtue, and make a point of frequently performing exterior and interior acts of love of God, of charity, of patience, obedience, humility, mortification and the other Christian virtues, not for themselves, or for their own satisfaction or reward, but for the good pleasure and interests of God, in order to model their lives after the pattern of their Divine Head, Jesus Christ, to glorify Him and to continue the exercise of the virtues He practised on earth.

It is in this that Christian virtue properly consists. As Christian life is nothing but a continuation of the life of Christ, so also the Christian virtues are a continuation and fulfilment of the virtues of Christ. To practise the virtues like Christians, you must practise them in the very spirit of Christ as He practised them, that is, with the same motives and intentions that inspired His admirable and majestic virtues. In this way then, Christian humility is a continuation of Christ's humility, Christian charity a continuation of Christ's charity, and so on with all the other virtues.

Thus you may easily see how far the Christian and supernatural virtues exceed, in holiness and excellence, those we call natural virtues,

## 36- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

the virtues proper to pagans, heretics and false Catholics. For such persons natural virtues are nothing more than human virtues, feigned virtues, with only the appearance, having no depth and no solidity, since they rest upon the frailty of the human mind and reason, and upon the shifting sands of self-love and vanity. But the Christian virtues are true and solid virtues, being divine and supernatural. In a word, they are Christ's own virtues, with which you yourself have to be clothed, which He imparts to those who adhere to Him, and who ask Him for them with humility and confidence, and strive to practise them as He did.



#### **XIV. MANNER OF PRACTISING THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.**

From what has just been said, you may see how devoutly you must practise Christian virtues, since you are to practise them as Christ did. When you desire to advance in the perfection of some virtue, make use of the following acts:

1. Adore in Christ the virtue you have chosen and reflect how eminent He was in it, and how perfectly He practised it during His whole life.

2. Humble yourself before Him, when you see yourself so very far from this perfection. Beg His forgiveness for all the faults you have ever committed against this virtue, recognizing that, of yourself, you are powerless to perform the least act of it, and that you are most unworthy of the grace to do so. Yet implore Him, nonetheless, that in His great mercy He may give you this grace, that you may practise this virtue, whenever the opportunity offers itself.

3. Frequently give yourself to Jesus, with a great desire to practise this virtue with all the perfection He asks of you. Beg Him to destroy in you all that is opposed to this virtue, that He may imprint and establish it within you, purely for His glory.

4. Be faithful in putting the virtue into practice by inward acts and outward results, uniting yourself with the dispositions and intentions of Christ, the perfect example of this virtue.

5. When you happen to commit some fault against the virtue, do not be upset or discouraged, but humble yourself before God, asking his forgiveness and offering Him all the honor rendered Him by His

#### **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

37 -

Beloved Son and His most holy Mother, in their exercise of this Virtue, as satisfaction for your fault.

Then give yourself again to Jesus, with a renewed desire to be faithful to him in future, in the practice of this virtue. Beg Him by His great mercy to repair the damage caused by your faults, and to give you fresh grace to be more faithful and effective when similar occasions next present themselves.

#### **XV. AN EXAMPLE: PRACTICE OF MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY OF HEART.**

In order that my readers may acquire some facility in the use of the preceding exercise, and to make it accessible to persons of every type, I should like to show you its complete practical application to a particular virtue. Take, for example, meekness and humility, which were so strongly emphasized by Jesus. If you wish to become well established in these two virtues, take a little time every day, to place yourself at the feet of our Blessed Lord and put yourself in the dispositions Outlined in the following prayer:

O Most Meek and Humble Jesus, I adore in Thee Thy most divine and adorable meekness and humility. I glorify Thee in all Thy many acts and exercises of meekness and humility, both inward and outward. How admirable art Thou in these two virtues, as well as in all the others! When I consider the whole span of Thy life upon earth, O Good Jesus, I see that it was one continuous exercise of meekness and humility in Thy thoughts, words, actions and sufferings. Oh, > what glory Thou didst give Thy Father! But also, how He exalted Thee, after Thou hadst so humbled Thyself for His glory and our love! May this Heavenly Father be forever blessed, and Thou also, O, Good Jesus! May He be blessed because He so glorified Thee after Thy humiliations; mayest Thou be blessed because Thou didst so honor Him by Thy meekness and humility!

O Jesus, Thou art my Head and I am one of Thy members; Thou art my Father and I am one of Thy children; Thou art my Master and Teacher and I am one of Thy disciples. I must, therefore, strive to imitate and resemble Thee. And yet, how far I am from doing so! On the contrary, how full I am of pride and vanity, bad temper and impatience! How often have I offended, in my whole life, against

### 38- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

meekness and humility, by thoughts and sentiments, words and actions! Forgive me, O my Saviour, forgive me; I long to imitate Thee in Thy meekness and humility. But alas, I admit that I have no strength of myself to perform the least act of humility, and that I am most unworthy that Thou shouldst give me the grace to do so. Nevertheless, I beg Thee, by Thy great mercy, to grant this precious grace.

O Jesus, I adore Thee as Thou sayest these divine words: "Learn of me because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls" (Matt. 11, 29). I adore the thoughts, the plans and the love Thou didst have for me because when Thou didst utter these sacred words, O Good Jesus, Thou wast thinking of me, in particular; Thou didst utter them with exceeding great love for me, with special designs in mind concerning me. O my Most Amiable Jesus, I give myself all to Thee for the accomplishment of Thy will and the fulfilment of Thy words. Never permit me again to place obstacles in their way. Destroy in me all that is opposed to meekness and humility. Establish and glorify in me Thy meekness and humility for love of Thyself!

When some opportunity of being meek or humble offers itself, lift up your heart to Jesus as follows:

O Jesus, I give myself to Thee to practise meekness, patience and humility in honor of Thy meekness, patience and humility, and in union with Thy blessed dispositions and intentions.

When you lapse into some fault against these virtues, strive to make up for it at once, casting yourself at the feet of the Son of God, and addressing Him thus:

O Most Merciful Jesus, with my whole heart I beg Thy forgiveness for the offense I have committed against Thy divine majesty. O Father of Jesus, I offer Thee all the honor which Thy well-beloved Son and His most holy Mother ever gave Thee by their meekness and humility, to atone for the dishonor I have afforded Thee by the fault I have committed against these virtues. O Jesus, O Mother of Jesus, may it please you to repair my defect, offering your sweet meekness and infinite humility to the Eternal Father, in reparation for my pride and impatience. O Good Jesus, I give myself to Thee with a renewed

### THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

39 -

desire to be more meek and humble in future; destroy arrogance and impatience, and give me the grace to practise patience and humility faithfully at all opportunities, for Thy glory and good pleasure.

You can apply these same practices to charity, to obedience, and to the other virtues.

### XVI. DIGNITY, NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN HUMILITY.

If you truly and fully intend to live in a Christian and holy manner, one of your foremost endeavors ought to be to gain a thorough and conscious mastery of Christian humility, which is the most necessary and important virtue. Our Lord most emphatically and insistently recommended it to us in these divine and lovable words of His, which you should, keep always in your minds and on your lips with love and respect for Him: "Learn of Me because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls" (Matt. 11, 29). This is the virtue which St. Paul says is the most characteristic of Christ. It is the proper and

specific virtue of Christians, without which it is impossible to be a true Christian. It is the foundation of all Christian life and sanctity, the guardian of every other grace and virtue. It is one which draws down upon our souls all blessings, for it is in humble souls that the most great and most humble Jesus takes His repose and His delight, according to His words: "To whom shall I have respect but to him that is poor and little... ?" (Isa. 66, 2).

This virtue, together with burning love, makes saints and great saints. For the true measure of sanctity is humility. Give me a truly humble person and I shall say that he is truly saintly; if that person is humble in great things, I shall pronounce him saintly in great things; and if he is very humble indeed, I shall avow that he is very saintly and adorned with all kinds of virtues. I shall say that God is greatly glorified in such a soul, wherein Jesus Christ dwells and finds in it His treasure and His paradise of delights. That soul will be very great and occupy a most exalted position in the Kingdom of God, since Eternal Truth has said: "He that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23, 12). On the other hand, a soul without humility is a soul without virtue; it is a hell of pride, the abode of arrogant demons, an abyss of conceit and vice.

#### 40 - **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

One may finally say that humility, in a sense, is the Mother of Jesus, because it was by humility that the Blessed Virgin Mary was made worthy to bear Him within herself. It is by this virtue, also, that you will be made worthy to form Him in your souls, and to make Him live and reign in Your hearts. So you ought, then, to love and seek this virtue with all your might. For this reason I shall devote somewhat more space to this subject than to the others.

#### **XVII. Humility OF Mind.**

There are two kinds of humility, namely, humility of mind and humility of heart. When the two are united, they make up the perfection of Christian humility.

Humility of mind is a profound knowledge of what we really are in the sight of God. If we are to know ourselves well, we must see ourselves, not as we appear in the esteem and deceptive judgments of men, not in the vanity and presumption of our own opinion, but as we are in the eyes and in the judgment of God. To do this, we should view ourselves in the light and truth of God, through the medium of faith.

Now, if we consider ourselves in this heavenly light, with divine insight, we shall see that:

1. As men we are nothing but dust, corruption and nothingness. We are nothing and can do nothing of ourselves. Every creature has come forth from nothingness, therefore it is nothing, has nothing, and can do nothing of itself, without the sustaining power of its Creator.

2. As children of Adam we were born in original sin, enemies of God, subjects of the devil, powerless to do any good or avoid any evil by our Own virtue. We have no other way of being saved except to renounce Adam and our fallen heritage, to surrender our own mind and our own powers to Christ and enter into His spirit and His power. We shall also see how true it is that we cannot be free from the servitude of sin if He does not deliver us, that without Him we can do nothing and that, even when we have done many things, we can and must say with truth that we are but useless servants. Add to that what St. Paul says: "We are not sufficient to think anything of Ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God (11 Cor.

#### **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

41 -

3, 5), and that we would be unable to pronounce the Holy Name of Jesus without the help of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12, 3).

All this results not only from the nothingness of creatures, which are nothing, and can do nothing of themselves, but also from the subjection to sin, because we are born of Adam, who truly begot us in his own condemnation. He transmitted to us our nature and our life, but only under the domination and captivity of sin. He was not even able to beget us as free men, being, himself a slave, nor to give us the grace and friendship of God which he had lost. So that, by a most equitable judgment of God, we all bear this yoke of iniquity which Holy Scripture calls the kingdom of death; this yoke does not allow us to perform the works of true freedom and true life, which belong to the children of God, but only the works of death and captivity, works too degraded for God's grace, justice and sanctity. Oh, how great is our wretchedness and indignity, since it was necessary that the Son of God should purchase for us, by His blood, our very slightest thought of serving God, indeed, the very permission to, present ourselves before Him! Yet this is not all.

If we look at ourselves in the light of God, we shall see that as children of Adam and as sinners we do not deserve to exist, nor to walk on the earth, nor that God should think of us, nor even that He should take the trouble to exercise His justice upon us. Job had, therefore, good reason to be surprised that God should deign to open His eyes to look at him, or be concerned enough to judge him: *Et dignum ducis huiusmodi aperire oculos tuos, et adducere eum tecum in iudicium* (Job 14, 3). He does us too great a favor, tolerating us in His presence, and allowing the earth to bear our weight, and but for a miracle on His part, all things would contribute to our ruin and perdition. We see, too, that sin deprives us of all our rights by withdrawing us from obedience to God. Consequently our being, our life, our bodies, our souls and all their faculties, no longer belong to us under the yoke of sin. The sun no longer owes us its light, nor the stars their shining guidance, nor the earth its support, nor fire its warmth, nor water its refreshment, nor the plants their fruits, nor the animals their services. But all creatures ought rather to wage war against us, and turn all their powers against us, when we turn

#### 42 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

ours against God, so that they might thus avenge our insult against their Creator. The vengeance which the whole world will visit upon sinners at the end of time ought to be visited upon us every day, when we continue to commit fresh sins; and it would be most just, if God were to punish a single sin by stripping us of life and of all the temporal and spiritual graces which He has given us, letting fall upon us every kind of punishment.

We also see that of ourselves, in so far as we are sinners, we are all so many incarnate demons, Lucifers, antichrists, since everything in us is contrary to Christ. We carry about, within ourselves, a devil, a Lucifer, and an antichrist, which is our own will, pride and self love; and they, indeed, are worse than all the demons, than Lucifer and antichrist, for all the malice of the demons, Lucifer and antichrist is derived from self-will, pride, and self-love. Of ourselves we are a hell full of horror, accursedness, sin and abomination. We have, within us, the principle, and seeds of all the sins of earth and hell, for the corruption left in us by original sin is the root and spring of every kind of sin, according to the words of David, the prophet king: "Behold I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 50, 7). As a result of this, if God did not continually hold us up in the arms of His mercy, and if He did not work, as it were, a perpetual miracle to keep us from falling into, sin, we should plunge at every moment into a chasm of every kind of sin.

Finally, we see that we are so horrible and repulsive that, if we were able to see ourselves as God sees us, we would find the sight impossible to bear. And in this connection, it is said that a saint once asked God to give her full knowledge of herself. When God answered her prayer, she saw such a horrible sight that she cried out: "Lord, not so much! Otherwise I shall lose courage!" And that master of the spiritual life, Father Avila, says that he knew a person who made this same request of God and beheld himself to be so loathsome, that he began to cry out in a loud voice: "Lord, I adjure Thee by Thy mercy, take away this mirror out of my sight; I am no longer curious to see my image."

After this, how can one have a high opinion of himself, or think that he is important or possesses any merit? How can anyone love

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

4 3 -

fame or seek to satisfy vanity, or enjoy the esteem or praise of men? Oh, how strange it is to see trivial and insignificant creatures like ourselves trying to be important and proud of themselves! Oh, how right is the Holy Spirit in avowing to us in the Ecclesiasticus, that he detests and abhors a poor man who is proud (ECCli. 25, 3-4). If pride is unbearable no matter in what subject it may be found, what must it be in one upon whom poverty imposes an extreme humility? This is a vice common to all men who, no matter how great their worth may appear to be in the eyes of the world, bear upon themselves the marks of their infamy, namely, the quality of sinners, which ought to keep them in a state of great abjection before God and all creatures. Yet, what a terrible disaster is ours! Sin has made us so vile and infamous that we refuse to recognize our misery. This refusal renders us comparable to Satan who, by reason of the sin that holds sway over him, is the lowest of all creatures, but is so proud that he will not acknowledge his ignominy. That is what gives God such a horror of pride and vanity. As He knows our lowliness and worthlessness, it is unbearable to Him to see so low and unworthy a thing trying to exalt itself, especially when He remembers that He, who is greatness itself, abased Himself even to nothingness. But even after His infinite example of humility, nothingness still wants to be exalted, and then, indeed, He finds this more than unendurable.

So, then, if you want to please God and serve Him perfectly, make a deep and thorough study of this divine science of self-knowledge. Firmly implant in your mind the truths I have just outlined and frequently consider them in God's presence; and each day ask Our Lord to root them deeply in your soul.

Take note, however, that although as a man, a child of Adam, and a sinner you are what I have just described, nevertheless as a child of God and a member of Christ, if you are in the state of grace, you bear within you a most noble and sublime life and you possess an infinitely rich and precious treasure. Notice also that, while humility of spirit ought to show you what you are of yourself and in Adam, yet it should not hide from you what you are in Christ and by His merits. Nor does it oblige you to ignore the graces God has given you through His Divine Son; otherwise it would be false humility.

## **4 4 - KINGDOM OF JESUS**

Rather, it obliges you to admit that all the good in you comes purely from God's mercy, without merit on your part. This, then, is what constitutes humility of spirit.

## **XVIII. Humilty OF HEART.**

It is not enough to have humility of mind, which shows you your wretchedness and unworthiness. Humility of mind without humility of heart is diabolical. After all, the devils, who have no humility of heart, possess humility of spirit because they are well aware of their disgrace and accursedness. Hence you must learn from Jesus, the divine teacher, to be humble not only in mind but also in heart.

Humility of heart consists in loving your lowliness and abject state, in being content that you are little and abject and insignificant. When you are alone with yourself, you must love to treat yourself as insignificant and rejoice in being judged and belittled by others. Nor must you excuse or justify yourself, except when there is a grave necessity. You should not complain of anybody, remembering that since you have in yourself the source of all evil, you deserve all kinds of condemnation and harsh treatment. You must love to be despised and humiliated and you should even seek opportunity of being reviled and belittled in every way. There are two reasons for this:

1. Every kind of scorn and contempt is merely your due, and all creatures would be justified in

persecuting and trampling you under foot. In fact, you are not even important enough for them to take the trouble of doing so.

2. You ought to love what was loved by the Son of God, seeking to base your, whole life and find all your joy in the things He chose to give glory to His Father-namely, the contempt and humiliation with which His whole life was filled.

Furthermore, humility of heart is a matter not only of loving humiliations, but of hating and detesting all greatness and vanity, according to the maxim uttered by the sacred lips of the Son of God, which I beg you to consider well and deeply engrave upon your mind: "that which is high to men, is an abomination before God" (Luke 16, 15). I say all greatness, because it is not enough to despise temporal eminence and to abhor the vanity of human respect and

## **CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

45 -

praise. You must also have an even greater horror of the vanity that may spring from spiritual things. You should fear and avoid everything that attracts attention and appears extraordinary in your exercises of Piety, such as visions, ecstasies, revelations, the gift of miracles and other such manifestations. You should not desire them nor ask God to give you these extraordinary graces. Even if a soul were to realize that God was offering one or another of these singular favors, it should draw back into the depths of its nothingness, considering itself far too unworthy, and implore Him to grant some other grace 'instead, something less striking, less conspicuous, something which would be more conformable with the hidden and despised life of Christ on earth. Since Our Lord takes pleasure in heaping upon you His graces, both ordinary and extraordinary, out of the excess of His goodness, He also derives extreme joy from seeing that you fly from all greatness in the eyes of men, out of a true sense of your unworthiness and the desire to resemble Him in His humility. And whoever is not thus disposed will lay himself open to many deceptions and illusions of the spirit of vanity.

Notice, however, that I am here referring to extraordinary things, and not to acts that are common and usual to all true servants of God, such as frequent communion, or kneeling down at least once each night and morning to perform your duties to God, no matter where one may be; or accompanying the Blessed Sacrament when it is being taken to the sick; or mortifying our flesh with fasting, discipline and penance; or reciting the Rosary, or praying in a church, or at home, or serving and visiting the poor, or doing some other good work. Be on your guard lest, wishing to omit the practice of such acts under pretext of false humility, you actually give them up Out of real cowardice! If human respect and shame before the world stand in the way of your duty to God, they must be overcome. Remember that you are not to be ashamed, but to take great pride in being a Christian and acting as a Christian, and serving and glorifying God before men, in the face of the whole world.

But if fears, arising from vanity and the vain show of humility that 'is donned for the benefit of an audience, would seem to prevent you from doing what has been outlined, you must thrust those fears aside,

## **46- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

protesting before Our Lord that you want to do nothing except for His glory alone. Realize then, that all these works are so common to God's true servants, and should be so frequently practised by all Christians, that they offer no cause for vanity, being things done by many good persons.

I fully realize that our Lord Jesus Christ teaches you to fast, give alms and pray in secret. But the great St. Gregory asserts that this refers to the intention and not to the act itself. That is, Our Lord does not mean that you should not perform these or similar actions, in public, or before men, for He says, in another place: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your

Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5, 16). But He wants your intention to be secret and hidden: that is, in the public acts that you perform, He desires you to have, in your heart, the intention of doing them not to please men or to win their empty applause, but to please God and gain His glory.

Finally, the true humility of heart that our Lord Jesus Christ wants you to learn from Him, which is perfect Christian humility, consists in being humble as Christ was on earth. That means, to be horrified by any spirit of notoriety or vanity, to love contempt and obscurity, to choose always, in all things, whatever is more cheapening and humiliating, and to be ready to be humbled even to the point to which Jesus Christ was humbled in His Incarnation, His life, His passion and His death.

In His Incarnation, as St. Paul says, "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. 2, 7). He willed to be born in a stable. He subjected Himself to the weakness and dependence of childhood, and in a thousand other ways He made Himself lowly. In His passion, He Himself says that He is a worm and no man, the opprobrium of men and the outcast of the people. He bore the anger and judgment of His Father, and so severe were they that they made Him sweat blood so plentifully, in the garden of Olives, that the ground was soaked with it. He gave Himself in subjection to the powers of darkness, that is, to the devils, who through the Jews, Pilate, Herod and their instruments, took possession of Him and made Him suffer every indignity in the world. Uncreated Wisdom was treated like a

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

47 -

vagabond by Herod and the soldiers. He was whipped and nailed to a Cross like a slave and a thief. God, who should be His infinite refuge, abandoned Him and regarded Him as if He alone had committed all the crimes in the world. And finally, to use the words of His Apostle, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3, 13). Indeed, He even became the embodiment of sin through the power and justice of God. For St. Paul says: Deus eum pro nobis peccatum fecit--~'Him he bath made sin for us" (II Cor. 5, 21). In other words, He bore not only the confusion and abasement deserved by sinners, but also all the ignominy and infamies due to sin itself, and that is the vilest and most ignominious state to which God could ever reduce the greatest of His enemies. O God, what humiliation for a God, the Only Son of God, Sovereign Lord of the universe, to be brought down to such a level! O Lord Jesus, is it possible that Thou dost love man so much as to annihilate Thyself so completely for his love? O man, how is it possible for you still to retain any vanity, seeing how your God is brought so low for love of you? O my Saviour, let me be humiliated and destroyed with Thee, let me enter into the sentiments of Thy most profound humility, and let me be ready to bear all the shame and humiliation which are deserved by the sinner and even by sin itself!

1 It is in this, then, that perfect Christian humility consists; in being ready, not only to desire the treatment deserved by a sinner, but to bear all the ignominies and degradations which are the just due of sin itself, since our Head, Jesus, the Saint of saints, and Sanctity Itself, bore them, while you, at the same time, fully deserve them since of yourself you are nothing but sin and accursedness. If these truths were only deeply engraved upon your minds, you would find that you had very good reason to cry out and often say, with St. Gertrude: "Lord, one of the greatest miracles Thou dost accomplish in the world is-to allow the earth to bear me."

## XIX PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN HUMILITY.

Since, as has been said, Christian humility is so important and so necessary, you must seek out every means to give yourself a solid foundation in this virtue.

48 -

## THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

For this purpose, I repeat my advice that you frequently read and reread, consider and intently

ponder the truths I have set forth relating to humility of mind and of heart, as well as those which I am about to set down here. I urge you to pray to Our Lord to impress them upon your mind, and make you ever carry with you, in heart and soul, the sentiments and effects proceeding from them. It is not enough for you to know superficially and vaguely that you are nothing, that you are powerless to do good or avoid evil, that all good is from on high, from the Father of lights, and that every good work comes to you from God through His Son. You must also become firmly rooted in a profound realization of your imprisonment under the law of sin, of your uselessness, incapacity and unworthiness in God's service, of your deficiency in all good things, of your nothingness, your extreme poverty and urgent need of Jesus Christ and of His grace.

This ought to make you cry out unceasingly to your liberator, and at all times fly to His grace, never relying upon anything except His omnipotent and infinite goodness.

God sometimes permits you to work for a long time to conquer a passion and become established in a virtue, and to advance very slowly towards your goal, so that the experience may teach you what you are, and how little you can do of yourself, thus obliging you to seek outside yourself, in Jesus Christ our Lord, the power to serve God. God did not will to give His Son to mankind until the world had longed for Him for four thousand years, and had learned by the experience of two thousand years that it was incapable of keeping the Law, and freeing itself from sin, and that it needed a new spirit and a new power to resist evil and do good. By this He showed you that He wants you to recognize your wretchedness very clearly before He gives you His grace.

This truth should lead you to recognize once every day, before God, your wretchedness as it is in His eyes, and to renounce Adam and yourself, since Adam and you yourself have sinned and surrendered your nature to the devil. Renounce yourself, then, altogether. Renounce your own judgment and every power and ability you may be conscious of in yourself. For all the power left by Adam, in human

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

49 -

nature is powerless, and any sense of power you may have is mere illusion, presumption and a mistaken estimate. Nor will you ever have any real power or perfect freedom to do good, except by renouncing yourself, and emerging from- yourself and all that belongs to you, in order to live in the spirit and virtue of Jesus Christ.

Following this renunciation, adore Christ Jesus; give yourself entirely to Him, and ask Him to take over Adam's rights as well as your own, since by His Precious Blood and death He acquired the rights of all sinners. Beg Him to dwell in you to dispossess your nature, to appropriate and make free use of all that you are in His hands, and protest to Him that you desire to depart from your own way of looking at things, which is a spirit of pride and vanity, and from all your intentions, tendencies and dispositions, so that you may no longer live save in His spirit, His divine and adorable dispositions.

Implore Him by His great mercy to draw you out of yourself as from a hell and to establish you in Himself, in His spirit of humility. Ask this favor not for your benefit or satisfaction, but for His pleasure, and His glory, pure and simple. And again, pray that He may make use of His divine power to destroy your pride, and that He may no longer wait upon your weakness to establish His glory in you by means of perfect humility. Remember that, of yourself as a sinner you are, as has been said, a potential demon, a Lucifer and an antichrist, because of the sin, the pride and self-love which always remain in each one of us. Frequently, and especially at the beginning of the day, place yourself at the feet of Jesus and of His holy Mother, and say to them.

"O Jesus, O Mother of Jesus, keep this wretched demon well under foot, crush this snake, exterminate this antichrist with Your precious breath; bind this Lucifer, that he may do nothing today against Your holy glory.



Now I do not intend that you should, every day, repeat before God all these prayers in the exact form in which I have set them down, but in whatever way it shall please Our Lord to make them appeal to you.

When you make resolutions to be humble, do so by giving yourself to the Son of God, that He may fulfil your desires, and say to Him:

## 50 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

I give myself to Thee, my Lord Jesus, that I may enter into Thy spirit of humility. I wish to spend all the days of my life with Thee, in this holy virtue. I call down upon myself the power of Thy spirit of humility in order to annihilate my pride and bind me close to Thee in humility. I offer up to Thee all the opportunities for humility that shall present themselves in my life. Deign, I beseech Thee, to bless them. I renounce myself and all things which may prevent me from sharing in the grace of Thy humility!

But after this do not place your confidence in your own resolutions, nor in this practice, but rely solely upon the bounty of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You can follow a similar course with each of the other virtues or pious intentions you wish to present to God. In this way, they will be based not on you yourself, but on our Lord Jesus Christ and on the grace and mercy of God which are upon you.

When you present to God your desires and intentions to serve Him, it should be with a profound belief that you can neither fulfil these, nor deserve to do so yourself. If God treated you as you deserved, He would not even suffer you to think of such resolves, and it is because of His very goodness and because of the merits of the Precious Blood of His Son that He tolerates you in His presence, and allows you to hope for the grace to serve Him.

You must not be surprised when you fail in your good resolutions. We are all sinners, and God is not obliged to give us His grace. "I know," says St. Paul, "that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good. For to will, is present to me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not" (Rom. 7, 18).

So great is our weakness that it is not sufficient for God to inspire us with a good thought; it is also necessary for Him to grant us the will and resolve to put it into effect. Nothing will come of a good resolution if God does not grant the grace to accomplish and perfect the act. Finally each one of us needs also the special grace to persevere until the end of his life.

You ought, therefore, to submit yourself to God in your search for virtue. You should desire His grace and ask Him for it, but you should be surprised when He grants it. When you fall, you should

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

51 -

adore His judgment of you, yet not become discouraged, but rather humble yourself and constantly persevere in giving yourself to Him, that you may enter with more virtue into His grace. You should live constantly in great gratitude and thanksgiving towards Him, because He tolerates you in His presence and inspires you with the desire to serve Him. And even though, after much effort on your part, God should give you no more than one good thought, you should recognize that you do not deserve even this one, and prize it so highly that you should consider it well worth all your trouble. If, after a thousand years of hell, the damned could form even one good thought of God, they would consider it much honor and great gain, and the devil is ever in a rage because he knows that he will never have a holy thought, for he looks upon goodness as a perfection which his pride desires, yet beholds himself deprived of it by the curse that is upon him. We, like the demons, are sinners and the only thing that sets us apart from them is the mercy of God, a

mercy which should lead us to value His gifts and be satisfied with them. For, however little they may be, they are always more than we deserve. Enter, then, reflectively and deeply into this spirit of humble admission of your unworthiness, and by so doing you will draw down upon your soul a thousand blessings from God and He will be greatly glorified in you.

When God has granted you some favor, either for yourself or for someone dear to you, do not ascribe this to the power of your prayers but to His mercy alone.

If in the good works God gives you the grace to accomplish, you feel any complacency or spirit of gratification, humble yourself, remember that all good comes to you from God alone, and that, from yourself nothing can come but evil. Bear in mind that you have much stronger reasons for being afraid and humbling yourself in view of the many faults and imperfections with which you perform your actions, than for puffing yourself up and feeling pleased when you see the slight good you are doing, a good, moreover, that does not proceed from you.

If men censure and sneer at you, accept it as being fully deserved, in honor of the contempt and calumnies suffered by the Son of God. If you are accorded any honor or receive thanks, refer all such praises

## 52 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

to God, and see that you do not appropriate them to yourself, nor rest on your laurels, because these may prove to be the only reward of your good actions. You may thus come to feel the effect of these words of the Son of God: "Woe to you when men shall bless you: for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6, 26). These words teach you to consider and fear the praise and applause of the world not only as mere wind and smoke and illusion, but also as a danger and a curse.

Perform with a ready will lowly and menial acts that involve abjection, so as to mortify your pride. But see that you act in a spirit of humility, with inward sentiments and dispositions corresponding to the things done.

At the beginning of everything you do, always humble yourself before God, remembering that you are not worthy to exist or to do anything, and that you have no power to please Him, unless He gives you grace for that purpose.

In a word, engrave deep in your heart these words of the Holy Ghost, and systematically put them into practice: Humiliate in omnibus, et coram Deo invenies gratiam, quoniam magna potentia Dei solius, et ab humilibus honoratur. "Humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God: for great is the power of God alone. and he is honored by the humble" (Eccli. 3, 20-21).

## XX. CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ABANDONMENT IN THE HANDS OF GOD.

Humility is the mother of confidence. When you realize that you are destitute of all good and of every virtue, and of all power and capacity to serve God, and that you are a true hell full of all kinds of evil, you can no longer rely in any way upon yourself, or upon what is yours. You are obliged to emerge from yourself, as you would go out of hell, to enter into Jesus as into Paradise, where you find in great abundance all that is lacking in yourself. You must place your reliance and trust in Him, as in the One given to you by your Eternal Father to be your redemption, your justice, your virtue, your sanctification, your treasure, your strength, your life and your all. It is to this that He would draw you when He lovingly and compellingly urges you to come to Him with confidence, saying: "Come to me, all you

who labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. 11, 28), and will relieve you of the weight of your sorrows. Our Lord assures us that He will reject no one who will come to Him: *Eum qui Venit ad me non eiiciam foras* (John 6, 37).

In order to compel us to become confident, He tells us in various texts of Holy Scripture (1) that accursed and wretched are they who place their trust in any other thing but Him; but happy and blessed are they who entrust themselves to Him (Jer. 17, 5-7); they shall abound in all kinds of graces and blessings, and shall lack nothing (PS. 22, 1-2). His eyes are fixed upon those who hope in His mercy (Ps. 32, 18). He is good to those who, hope in Him (Lam. 3, 25). His mercy shall compass them about (Ps. 31, 10) and He Himself will always be by their side (Prov. 3, 26). He is the shield of all that trust in Him (II Kings, 22, 31); He is their protector and helper (Ps. 113, 11). He will protect them in His tabernacle and He will hide them in the secret of His face, or, as another version has it, "in the apple of his eye" (PS. 30, 21). He will be their defense in the day of trial, and will help them and deliver them from the hands of sinners because they have put their trust in Him (Ps. 90, 14-15); He will let them taste in its perfection the great multitude of His sweetness (PS. 30, 20); they will always be full of joy, and He will abide in them (Ps. 5, 12). He lavishes upon them His graces and the effects of His mercy, in proportion to the hope and confidence they have in Him (Ps. 32, 22); those who trust in Him will know truth (Wis. 3, 9), that is, He the Sovereign Truth will manifest Himself to those who trust in Him; they will not sin, or, according to the Hebrew version, they will not be condemned and will not perish, that is, He will not allow them to fall into sins that would separate them from Him and reduce them to perdition (PS. 33, 23); those who place their hope in Him will sanctify themselves as He is sanctified (I John 3, 3). Never has anyone who entrusted himself to Him been disappointed or defrauded of his expectations (Eccli. 2, 11). God grants to them everything that they confidently ask of Him (Matt. 21, 22). Finally, nothing is im-

(1). St. John Eudes weaves into this passage several scriptural texts on confidence. We have not attempted to quote the exact words from the Douay version but have merely inserted the biblical references. (Editors' note-English translation.)

#### 54- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

possible to those who have faith and confidence in Him, but they can accomplish all things, relying on His goodness and power (Mark 9, 22).

I could go on for ever, if I began to quote here all the texts from Holy Scripture in which God commends to you the virtue of trust. It seems as if He were not satisfied even with the thousand instances in Holy Scripture by which He proves how dear and delightful this holy virtue is to Him, and how much He loves and favors those who place their trust in His goodness and abandon themselves entirely to the fatherly care of His Divine Providence.

You may read in the third book of *Intimations of Divine Piety*, by St. Gertrude, that Jesus once told her that the filial confidence of a Christian soul is the eye of the holy spouse, of which the Divine Bridegroom says in the *Canticle of Canticles*: *Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa: vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum*. "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast wounded my heart by one of thine eyes" (Cant. 4, 9). In other words, the soul that has firm confidence in Christ, and trusts that He can and desires to help it faithfully in all things, pierces His heart right through with an arrow of love; and such confidence does such violence to the piety of Jesus that He can in no way absent Himself from it.

St. Mechtilde's *Book of Special Grace* tells us that Jesus said to her also: "It is a special delight to Me when men trust in My goodness and rely upon Me. And so, whoever shall have great trust in Me, yet always

with humility, shall be favored by Me in this life, and in the next receive more than he deserves. The more anyone trusts in Me and avails himself of My goodness, the greater will be his gain, since it is impossible for a man not to obtain what he believes with holy conviction, and hopes to gain because it has been promised him. And so it is most advantageous to a man to have firm trust in Me, when he hopes for great things from Me! And again, when St. Mechtilde asked God what was the main thing she should believe of His ineffable goodness, He replied: "Firmly believe that after death I will receive you as a father receives a dear son, and that no father ever so faithfully and lovingly gave all his possessions to an only son, as I will make you a sharer in all that is Mine. Whoever shall believe this

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

55 -

of My goodness, firmly and with humble charity, will be happy indeed."

## **XXI. ADDITIONAL POINTS ON CONFIDENCE.**

To strengthen you further in holy confidence, our most gentle and amiable Saviour gives Himself all the most sweet and loving names and qualities imaginable, to describe His relationship with you. He calls Himself your friend, your advocate, your physician, your shepherd, your brother, your father, your soul, your spirit and the bridegroom of your soul. He calls you His sheep, His brethren, His ch'ldren, His portion, His heritage, His soul, His heart. Your souls He regards as His cherished spouses.

At various places in Sacred Scripture He assures you that He exercises continual care and watchfulness over you (1 Peter 5, 7); He carries you, and will always carry you in His heart and in His bosom (Isa. 46, 3-4). Nor is He satisfied with saying once or twice that He bears you so tenderly; He repeats this beautiful thought as many as five times in a single passage. And elsewhere He says that even if a mother were to forget the child she bore in her womb, He would never forget you, and that He has written you in His hands, that He might always have you before His eyes (Isa. 49, 15-17); whoever touches you touches the apple of His eye (Zach. 2, 8); you should have no care for the things that are necessary to you to sustain life and clothe yourself; He well knows that you need such things, and He takes care of them on your behalf (Matt. 6, 31-33); He has numbered every hair of your head (Matt. 10, 30), and of these, not one shall perish (Luke 21, 18); His Father loves you as He loves the Son Himself and the Son loves you as He is loved by His Father (John 15, 9); He wants you to be where He is, that is, to be at rest with Him in the bosom and heart of His Father (John 17, 24), to sit with Him upon His throne (Apoc. 3, 21), and in a word, He wants you to be one with Him, and, indeed, to be consummated in unity with Him and with the Father of Heaven (John 17, 21-23). If you have offended Him, He promises, provided you come back to Him with humility, repentance, confidence in His goodness, and the resolution to make a clean break with sin, that He will receive you, He will embrace you,

## **56 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

He will forget all your sins, and clothe you with the garment of His grace and His love, of which you had been stripped by your sins (Ezech. 18, 21; Luke 15, 22).

Who, after all this, will not have confidence? Who will not become entirely abandoned to the care and guidance of a brother, a father, a bridegroom, endowed with infinite wisdom to know what is most advantageous for you and to foresee everything that could possibly happen to you, and to select the most appropriate means to bring you to the goal of your supreme happiness? Not only this, but He is also filled with extreme goodness with which He wills all kinds of good for you, together with immense power to turn aside any evil which might befall you, and to pour forth upon you the complete wealth of benefits He wills to grant you.

Lest you think His words and promises ineffectual, look for a moment at all He did and suffered for

you in His Incarnation, His life, His Passion and His death, as well as the wonderful graces He still brings to us daily in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. Consider how He came down from heaven to earth, out of love for you, how He humbled Himself to the extent of willing to become a little child, to be born in a stable and embrace all the woes and needs of a human and mortal life. See how He devoted all His hours, all His thoughts, words and actions to you; how He delivered up His holy body to Pilate, to the executioners and to the Cross; how He laid down His life and shed His blood even to the last drop; how He gives you every day, in the Holy Eucharist, His body, His blood, His soul, His divinity, all His riches, all that He is, all that is most dear and most precious to Him.

O Thou who art goodness! O Love! O Most Great and Amiable Jesus! Let them trust in thee, who know Thy Name (Ps. 9, 11), which is none other than love and goodness, for Thou art all love, all goodness and all mercy. Yet I am not surprised that there should be so few who trust in Thee perfectly, since there are so few who study themselves to find out and observe the effects of Thy infinite goodness. O my Saviour, surely I am most worthless if I do not have confidence in Thy goodness, after Thou hast displayed so very many proofs of Thy love for me! If Thou hast done and suffered so much,

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

57 -

and if Thou hast given us such great things, what wouldst Thou not do yet again, what wouldst Thou not add now to, these gifts, if only I came to Thee with humility and confidence?

Cultivate a great desire to be firmly rooted in the sublime virtue of confidence. Do not fear, but be courageous in serving and loving Our Most Adorable and Amiable Jesus, with great perfection and holiness. Undertake courageously great tasks for His glory, in proportion to the power and grace He will give you for this end. Even though you can do nothing of yourself, you can do all things in Him and His help will never fail you, if you have confidence in His goodness.

Place your entire physical and spiritual welfare in His hands. Abandon to the paternal solicitude of His Divine Providence every care for your health, reputation, property and business, for those near to you, for your past sins, for your soul's progress in virtue and love of Him, for your life, death and especially for your salvation and eternity, in a word, all your cares. Rest in the assurance that, in His pure goodness, He will watch with particular tenderness over all your responsibilities and cares and dispose all things for the greatest good.

Do not rely on the power or influence of friends, on your own money, on your intellect, knowledge or strength, on your good desires and resolutions, or on human means, or on any created thing, but on God's mercy alone. You may, of course, use all these things and take advantage of every aid that you can marshal on your side to conquer vice, to practise virtue, to direct and conclude all the business that God has placed in your hands, and acquit yourself of the obligations of your state in life. But you must renounce all dependence or confidence you may have in these things, to rely upon Our Lord's goodness alone. You ought to take as much pains and work as hard for your own part, as if you expected nothing from God: nevertheless, you should no more rely upon your own resources and labor than if you had done nothing at all, but had looked to God's mercy alone for all things.

To this we are exhorted by the Holy Ghost, saying, by the mouth of David, the royal prophet: *Revela Domini viam tuam, et spera in eo, et ipse jacet.* "Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in him, and he will do it" (Ps. 36,5). And in another place *jacta super Dominum*

## 58- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

*curam tuam et ipse te enutriet.* "Cast thy care upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee" (Ps. 54, 23). And, speaking through St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, He advises us to cast all our cares and worries upon

God, since He watches over us: *Omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis* (I Peter 5, 7). This is what Our Lord said to St. Catherine of Sienna: "Daughter, forget thyself and think of me, and I will ever think of thee."

Accept this teaching as if addressed to you personally and to no one else. Let your chief care be to avoid everything that displeases Our Lord, trying to serve and love Him perfectly, and He will turn everything, even your faults, to your advantage.

Acquire the habit of making frequent acts of trust in God, but especially when you happen to be assailed by thoughts or feelings of fear and mistrust, either with regard to your past sins, or for any other reason. At such times lift up your heart at once to Jesus, and say to Him, with the Royal Prophet: *Ad te, Domine, levavi animam meam: Deus meus in te confido, non erubescam*. "To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul. In thee, O my God, I put my trust; let me not be ashamed" (PS. 24, 1-2).

In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum. "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be Confounded" (Ps. 30, 1). *Deus meus sperabo in eum*. "My God, in him will I trust" (Ps. 90, 2). *Dominus tui adiutor, non timebo quid faciat tui homo*. "The Lord is my helper: I will not fear what man can do unto me" (Ps. 117, 6). *Dominus mihi adiutor, et ego despiciam inimicos meos*: "The Lord is my helper and I will look over my enemies" (PS. 117, 7). *Bonum est confidere in Domino, quam confidere in homine*. "It is good to confide in the Lord, rather than to have confidence in man" (Ps. 117, 8). *Et si ambulavero in medio umbrae mortis, non timebo mala quoniam tu mecum es*: "For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me" (PS. 22, 4).

Or else join the prophet Isaias, saying: *Ecce Deus salvator meus fiducialiter agam et non timebo*. "Behold, God is my saviour, I will deal confidently and will not fear" (Isa. 12, 2). Or say with holy Job: *Etiamsi occiderit me, in ipso sperabo*. "Although he should kill me,

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

59 -

I will trust in him" (Job 13, 15). Or, repeat the words of the poor man in the Gospel: *Credo, Domine, adjuva incredulitatem meam*. I do believe, Lord: help my unbelief" (Mark 9, 23).

At other times, say with the holy apostles: *Domine, adauge nobis fidem*: "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17, 5).

Or else speak to Him thus: "O Good Jesus, it is in Thee alone that I have placed all my trust. O Thou my strength and only refuge, I give and abandon myself entirely to Thee; do with me whatever Thou dost please."

"Oh my sweet love, O my dear hope, I place my whole being in Thy hands and sacrifice it to Thee, with my life, my soul and all that belongs to me, that Thou mayest dispose of them in time and in eternity howsoever it pleases Thee, for Thy glory!"

In conclusion, confidence is a gift of God that follows in the wake of humility and love. Therefore, ask it of God, and He will give it to you. Strive to perform your every action in a spirit of humility for the pure love of God, and you will soon taste the sweetness and peace that accompany the virtue of confidence.

## XXII. SUBMISSION AND CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

Continual submission to the holy will of God is the most universal of all virtues and its practice should be most familiar to you, since at every moment there arise opportunities of renouncing your own will and submitting to the will of God. His will is always easy to recognize. God has willed that all things that are

extremely necessary should also be very easy to obtain. The sun, for instance, and air and water, and the other elements are most necessary for man's natural life; so, also, these things are common and freely available to everyone.

In the same way, since God has placed you in this world only to do His holy will, and your salvation depends upon this, it is, therefore, extremely necessary that you should easily know God's will in all that must be done. So, He has made it easily recognizable, manifesting His holy will in five chief ways which are very certain and evident: 1. by His commandments; 2. by His counsels; 3. by the laws, rules and obligations of our state in life; 4. by the authority of those placed over you or directing You; 5. by events, since every hap

## 60 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

pening in an infallible sign that God so wills, either by absolute or by permissive will. So, if you would but open the eyes of faith even a little, you could easily, at all times and in every situation, recognize God's most holy will, and this knowledge would lead you to love Him and to submit yourself to Him.

But if you are to become really and truly submissive, you must store away in the deepest recesses of your souls these four truths taught us by faith:

1. Faith, which tells us there is but one God who created all things, also obliges us to believe that this great God orders and governs all things without exception, either by absolute or by permissive will; and that there is nothing accomplished in the world that does not come under the ordering of His divine guidance, or pass through the hands of His absolute will, or His permission, which are like the two arms of His Providence, by which He controls all things: *Tua, Pater, Providentia gubernat* (WIS. 14, 3).

2. God neither wills nor permits anything except for His greater glory, and, in fact, He does draw forth greater glory from all things. Since God is the Creator and Governor of the world, He has made all things for Himself and is imbued with infinite zeal for His glory and is infinitely wise and powerful in knowingly and effectively directing all things to that end. It is, therefore, very certain that He neither wills nor permits anything whatever to happen, in the world, that does not contribute to His greater glory and to the good of those who love God. If, then, we would only desire to love God and adore His holy will in everything that happens, all things would work out for our greater profit. And this result depends upon us alone.

3. God's will, whether absolute or permissive, is infinitely holy, just, adorable and worthy of love, and deserves to be infinitely and equally adored, loved and glorified in all things just as they are.

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ, from the very first moment of His life, made it His whole purpose in existing to execute, not His own, but His Father's will, according to the authentic testimony of St. Paul writing to the Hebrews: "When he (Jesus) cometh into the world, he saith (speaking to His Eternal Father): Behold I come; in the head of the book it is written of me: that I should do thy will, O God

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

61 -

(Heb. 10, 5-7); and according to what Christ afterwards said Himself: I came down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him that sent me" (John 6, 38). In fact, He never followed His own will, although it was holy, divine and adorable. He renounced and, as it were, annihilated it, in order to follow His Father's will, saying incessantly to Him in all things, the words He uttered on the eve of His death, in the Garden of Olives: "Father, not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22, 42).

If you ponder these truths, you will acquire considerable facility in submitting yourself in all things to God's most adorable will. If you reflect that God orders and disposes everything for His glory and

your greater good, and that His disposition is most just and deserving of love, you will not ascribe things that happen to you to luck or chance, nor to the malice of devils or of men, but to God's ordaining, which you shall then love and tenderly embrace, knowing for certain that it is most holy and worthy to be loved, and that it neither orders nor permits anything except for your greater good and for the greater glory of God. You should love this glory above all things, since you are only in the world to live and procure the glory of God.

If you give attentive consideration to the fact that Jesus Christ, our Head, abandoned so holy and divine a will as His, to follow the most rigorous and strict will of His Father in His regard—a will that demanded that He suffer so many extraordinary things and die so cruel and shameful a death for the salvation of His enemies, will you, after this, have any trouble in renouncing a will that is so depraved and corrupted by sin as yours, in order to set up in its place the reign of most holy and sweet and amiable will of God?

Submission and Christian obedience consist then in continuing Christ's most perfect obedience not only to the desires expressed directly by His Father, but also to those communicated to Him through His most holy Mother, through St. Joseph, through the angel who led Him into Egypt, through the Jews, Herod and Pilate. For He not only submitted to His Father, but became subject to all creatures. for His Father's glory and for love of you.

## 62- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

### XXIII. PRACTICE OF SUBMISSION AND CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

To put into practice the truths that have just been explained, it is necessary to adore in Jesus the divine submission which He exercised so perfectly. Frequently shatter at His feet all your own will, assuring Him that you desire none other but His desires and inclinations, praying Him to make His will reign perfectly in you.

Live in the continual resolution to suffer all kinds of tortures, even to die, rather than transgress the least of God's commandments, and be ever disposed to follow His counsels, according to the light and grace He gives you, in harmony with your state in life and under the guidance of your spiritual director.

Respect those who have authority over you and honor them as representatives of Christ on earth. Obey their will as if it were the will of Jesus Christ, provided their orders are not manifestly contrary to what is commanded or forbidden by God.

St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, goes much farther than this. He exhorts us to submit to every human being for the love of God: *Subjecti estote omni humanae creaturae, propter Deum* (I Peter 2, 13). And St. Paul would have us regard one another as superiors: *Superiores sibi invicem arbitantes* (Phil. 2, 3). Following the divine teachings of these two great apostles, you ought to consider and honor persons of every kind as your superiors, and be ready to give up your own judgment and will in deference to others. In your capacity as a Christian bound to live with the same sentiments and dispositions as Jesus Christ, you ought to make it —your professed aim in life, with Jesus Christ, never to follow your own will, and thus to obey the will of God in all its manifestations. In doubtful cases, that is, in cases where you cannot tell with certainty what is the will of God, you should obey the will of another person, no matter who he may be, looking upon all men as your superiors, and submitting to their will as far as possible in all that is not contrary to God and to the duties of your state in life. You should, however, always give preference to those who have fuller authority and more right over you.

Consider and observe all the laws, rules and obligations of your state, position or condition as unmistakable indications of what God



asks of you. In honor of the most exact obedience and perfect subjection rendered by Jesus, not only to the rulings of His Father, and to the hours and minutes prescribed and determined for the performance of all His actions, but even to human laws, place yourself in subjection to the rules and obligations of your condition, to the hours and minutes prescribed for the fulfilment of the duties and functions of your occupation, and also to human and civil laws. Do all this for the love of Him who, for love of you, showed you the way by first entering into such subjection Himself.

In every event that happens, whether by God's absolute or His permissive will, adore and bless and love both these wills, and declare to Him, in union with His Beloved Son and as far as possible, with the same spirit, and with the same love, submission and humility of His Most Obedient Son: *Pater, non quod ego volo, sed quod tu; non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat*; "Father, not what I will, but what thou wilt. Not my will, but thine be done" (Mark 14, 36; Luke 22, 42). *Yea Pater, quia sic fuit placitum ante te*, "Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11, 26).

When you become aware of some inclination or desire for any object, instantly cast it down at the feet of Jesus. If the attraction is powerful, continue to renounce it, and to dash it down and implore Jesus Himself to eliminate it, until you feel yourself disposed to want the very contrary to that desire, if He were to have you make the choice.

When some thought or fear enters your mind, concerning the loss of your health, your reputation, your property, your parents or your children or your friends, surrender your will to Jesus, adore and bless and love His will, just as if you had already sustained the loss or else anticipate, at this time, the moment when it will occur, and say: «O Jesus, I annihilate all my will and inclinations at Thy feet. With my whole heart, I adore and praise Thy most holy and lovable will. In spite of all my repugnances and contrary feelings, I desire to love, bless and glorify Thee in everything it may please Thee to ordain for me and all that concerns me in time and in eternity. Live Jesus! Live the most holy will of my Jesus! May my own will be annihilated and

#### 64- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

destroyed forever, and may His reign be accomplished eternally on earth as it is in heaven!"

### XXIV. PERFECTION OF SUBMISSION AND CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

Not only did our Lord Jesus Christ do everything His Father willed, and submit to Him and to all things for love of Him, but He also found all His contentment, His happiness, His paradise in doing so: *Meus cibus est, ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me*: "My meat," He said, "is to do the will of him that sent me" (John 4, 34). In other words, I find nothing more desirable, nor more delightful than to do the will of my Father." In the performance of everything that He did, He took infinite satisfaction, because it was His Father's will. He found His joy and happiness according to the spirit in the sufferings He bore, because they were His Father's good pleasure. And so, speaking of the day of His passion and death, the Holy Ghost calls it the "day of the joy of his heart" (Cant. 3, 11). He likewise found peace and satisfaction of soul in all the things He saw happen and destined to happen in the world, since in all things He considered nothing but His Father's most adorable will.

So also, in so far as you are Christians, who ought to be invested with the sentiments and dispositions of your Head, you should not only submit to God and to all things for love of God, but you should also find all your satisfaction and your paradise in so doing. It is in this that the highest perfection of Christian submission consists. This is our prayer each day to God as we say: *Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo, et in terra*: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6, 10). For the saints in heaven, the

accomplishment of the will of God is so completely adequate to give them felicity and heavenly bliss, that many of them, even beholding their dearest loved ones punished in hell, must rejoice in the manifestation of God's eternal justice. This is possible because the saints are completely one with God and have no choice or understanding of things other than His Holy will. God, however, wills that His justice be carried out upon these wretches who have fully deserved it, and He finds infinite satisfaction in the effects of His justice, just as He does in the works of His mercy. Therefore, the saints also find satisfaction in them:

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

65 -

*Laetabitur justus cum viderit vindictam; manus suas lavabit in sanguine peccatoris:* "The just shall rejoice when he shall see the revenge; he shall wash his hands in the blood of the sinner" (Ps. 57, 11). Thus you must seek all your joy in the effects of the divine will, since you ought to strive to do that will on earth as it is done in heaven.

There are two reasons why you are bound to do this:

1. Since you are created only to glorify God, and God's glory is your last end, it follows that all your joy should spring from God's glory, and, therefore, from all the effects of His divine will, because they all operate for His greater glory.

2. Since Our Lord has told you that it is His divine wish for you to be one with Him and with His Father, it follows that you should be of but one mind and sentiment with Him, just as are the blessed in heaven. You must, consequently, find all your joy, your blessedness and your heaven in that very same thing which is the heaven and blessedness of the saints, the most Blessed Virgin, the Son of God and the Eternal Father.

Now the saints, the most Blessed Virgin, the Son of God and the Eternal Father take pleasure and find heaven in all things, because they see God's will in all things. God takes infinite satisfaction and joy in all that He wills or permits, and in all His works: *Laetabitur Dominus in operibus suis* (Ps. 103, 31). He would not be God if He were not infinitely satisfied with everything that He does. So true is this, that He is just as much pleased with the enforcement of divine justice He inflicted upon the damned, as with the effects of providential goodness lavished upon the blessed. Holy Scripture says: "As the Lord rejoiced upon you before doing good to you, so he shall rejoice destroying and bringing you to nought" (Deut. 28, 63). Hence also, you must find all your joy and your heaven in all that is willed, or permitted or worked by God, and in all things in general, excepting in sin, which you must detest and abhor; yet you must adore and bless God's permission and the ordering of His justice, which by a just judgment permits that, as punishment for one sin, the sinner may fall into another.

Thus, by Our Lord's grace, you have a means of being always satisfied in life and of possessing heaven on earth. You would indeed be

## 66- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

very hard to please, if you were not satisfied with what satisfies God, the angels and the saints, who rejoice, not so much in their own great glory as in the accomplishment of God's will in them—that is, in the fact that God derives pleasure and contentment from glorifying His faithful servants. Nor do you have any cause for complaint if you are in the paradise of the Mother of God, the Son of God and the Eternal Father.

## XXV. PRACTICE OF PERFECT CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION.

If, then, you desire to possess a real heaven on earth, pray that Jesus may fill you with these holy dispositions of perfect submission to all that He divinely wills. In order to do your own share and cooperate

with Him, try not only to submit to God in all things, but also to submit to Him with joy and satisfaction.

When performing any action, try to perform it not only for love of Our Lord, but out of so much love for Him that all your satisfaction, your joy and your heaven consist in performing it, simply because it is an act of love of Him, and because it is His will and His good pleasure that you should do it.

When anything happens to you against your will and contrary to your hopes, take satisfaction in it, because it is God's will. If anything is favorable to your will or your plans, be glad, not because your wish has come true, but God's will has been accomplished.

In all that happens in the world, see only God's will and permission. In view of the fact that He takes pleasure in all that He wills, whether absolutely or permissively, and that all things ever accrue to His gain, and that He ever draws forth greater glory from everything, you must detest the sins committed against Him, in the events of daily life and be pleased with the things in which He takes His good pleasure.

I do not say that you should derive sensible pleasure and joy from all that you do or suffer, or from all that happens in the world, for that is possible only to the blessed. But I am here speaking of joy and satisfaction of the spirit and of the will, which you may easily obtain, with the help of Our Lord's grace, since all you have to do is to say: "My God, if it be pleasing to Thee, I desire for Thy love to take all

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

67 -

my pleasure in willing, doing or suffering this or that, because it is Thy will and pleases Thee." Thus you will obtain satisfaction of your mind and will in all things. Furthermore, a frequent repetition of this practice will diminish and destroy whatever pain and natural distaste you may happen to feel, in various situations, and will help you to enjoy sweetness and satisfaction, even of the senses, in cases where you found bitterness and pain before.

To familiarize yourself with this practice, acquire the habit of lifting up your heart to Jesus, on the occasion of everything you see happen in the world and say to Him:

"O Jesus, it is Thee Who dost ordain, or permit these things, and Thou dost will all things with an infinite satisfaction. O my God, I give myself to Thee; may it please Thee to make me one with Thee in spirit, will and disposition. Make me will all that Thou dost will and make me will it as Thou dost, contentedly. May I find all my joy and heavenly bliss in all that Thou dost will or do."

With regard to things that arouse repugnance and distaste in you, say:

"O Jesus, in spite of all my repugnance and the contrariness of my self-will and self-love, I desire to suffer this pain or affliction for love of Thee. I desire to suffer it with so much love for Thee, as to find in it all my joy and heavenly bliss, because it is Thy holy will."

Concerning things which give you consolation and satisfaction, say:

"O Jesus, I am glad this has turned out as it has (or else, I desire to do this act) not merely because it has turned out in a way that is pleasing to me (or because it gives me satisfaction to perform this act), but because it is Thy will and Thy pleasure that it should happen thus (or that I should do what I am about to do)."

In so doing, you will begin to enjoy heaven even in this world. You will taste perpetual peace and contentment. You will perform your actions as God performs His own, even as Jesus Christ our Lord performed His, when He was on earth, in a spirit of joy and contentment. This is the true joy He asked of His Father for you on the eve of His death, in these words: Ut habeant gaudium meum impletum

in semetipsis. "That they may have my joy filled in themselves" (John 17, 13).

Here, then, is the supreme perfection of Christian submissiveness and of pure love of God, for the highest degree of divine love consists in doing, suffering and accepting all things for the love of God, with joy and contentedness. Anyone who makes a holy use of all the things that occur in the world, who will suffer with these dispositions all the trials that come upon him and perform his actions in this spirit of submission, will give God more glory and satisfaction, will make more progress, in one day, in the paths of His love, than he would do in his whole life by following any other course.

## XXVI. CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

When the Son of God tells you, in His Gospel, that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with your whole heart and your whole soul and with all your strength, it is with good reason that He went on to declare that the second commandment, by which you are obliged to love your neighbor as yourself, is like unto the first. For the love of God and of your neighbor cannot be separated. These are not two different loves, but a single, uniform love. And you are bound to love your neighbor with the same affection and with the same love with which you love God, because you should love your fellow men not in and for themselves, but in and for God. Briefly, it is God Himself that you should love in your neighbor.

Jesus loves you in this way. He loves you in and for His Heavenly Father, or rather He loves His Father in you, and He wants you to love one another as He loves you. "This," He says, "is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (John 15, 12).

This, then, is what constitutes Christian charity: to love one another as Jesus loves you. So great is His love for you that He gives you all that He has, His riches, His own self; and He devotes all the powers of His wisdom and goodness to doing good to you. So exceedingly great is His charity toward you that, for a great length of time and with very much gentleness and patience, He tolerates your defects. He is the first to seek you out when you have offended Him. He seems almost to prefer your comforts, pleasures and interests to His

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

69 -

own, since, during His earthly life, He subjected Himself to every form of trouble, sorrow and suffering to deliver you from affliction and make you happy. He has, in a word, so much love for you that He devotes to you His whole life, His soul, His time, His eternity, His divinity and His humanity—all that He is, all that He has and all that He can do. In His thoughts, His words, and His actions He is all charity and love for you.

This is the standard and model of Christian charity. This is what He asks of you, when He commands you to love One another as He loves you. This is how you ought to love one another, acting towards your neighbor as Jesus did to you, according to the power He gives you.

To excite and urge yourself to love your fellow men with true charity consider your neighbor as existing in God and God in him. I mean, look upon him as a being who has come forth from God's Heart and His goodness; as a being participating in God, created to return to God, to be one day ensconced in the bosom of God to glorify God eternally, and as a creature in which God will, indeed, be eternally glorified, either through mercy or through justice. Consider your neighbor as the object of the love of God, no matter what his condition may be: for God loves everything He has created, even the devils, in so far as they are His creatures and He does not hate anything that He has made. Sin alone He holds in abhorrence and sin was not made by Him. Your neighbor is an individual who has sprung from the same principle as yourself, a child of the same Father, created for the same end, belonging to the same Lord, redeemed at the same price, the

infinitely Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. See in him a member of the same Head, Christ, and of the same body, the Church of Christ, nourished by the same food, the precious body and blood of Jesus Christ. Consequently you should be of one mind, one soul, and one heart with him.

You must also regard your neighbor as the temple of the living God, bearing in himself the image of the Blessed Trinity and the character of Jesus Christ. He is part of Jesus Christ, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh. See him as one for whom Jesus labored and suffered so much, spent so much precious effort and time, and gave His

## 70- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

blood and His life. Finally, consider him as one recommended to you, by Jesus, as His own equal: for He said that whatsoever you should do to the least of His little ones, that is, of those who believe in Him, He would consider it as done to Himself (Matt. 25, 40). Oh, if you only pondered and thoroughly thought out the importance of these truths, what charity, what respect, what honor you would entertain for one another! How you would fear to offend against unity and Christian charity, whether in thoughts, words or deeds! What would you not do, what would you not suffer for one another! How charitably and patiently would you bear with the faults of others, and excuse them! With what gentleness, modesty and restraint would you converse one with another! How careful would you be to "please your neighbor unto good, to edification" as St. Paul says (Rom. 15, 2). O Jesus, God of love and charity, impress these truths and these dispositions upon our minds and our hearts.

## XXVII. PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

If you desire to live in the spirit of Christian charity, which is nothing else but a continuation and fulfilment of the charity of Jesus, you must frequently exercise yourself in the following practices.

Adore Jesus, who is all charity. Bless Him for all the glory He gave to His Father by His continual acts of charity. Ask Him to forgive all the failings of which you have ever been guilty, with respect to this virtue, praying Him to offer His charity to His Father for you, as reparation for these failings. Give yourself to Him, begging Him to destroy all that is contrary to charity, in your thoughts, words and actions, and to cause His own most perfect charity to live and reign in you.

Often ponder these beautiful words of St. Paul: "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away" (1 Cor. 13, 4-8).

Adore Jesus who pronounces these words by the lips of St. Paul. Offer yourself to Him, with the firm purpose of making this living

## THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

71 -

charity a real part of your life. Beg the All-loving Christ to give you grace for that purpose.

Whenever you render a service to another person, and in all the actions you perform for others, whether as a duty or out of charity, lift up your heart to Jesus and say to Him:

"O Jesus, I desire to perform this action, if it please Thee, in honor of and together with Thy charity towards this person, and for love of Thyself, Whom I desire to see and serve in him."

When necessity demands that you give your body some rest, nourishment or refreshments, do so

with this same intention, looking upon your health, your life and your body not as belonging to yourself but as one of Christ's members, according to St. Paul, as something pertaining to Jesus, Corpus autem Domino, "The body for the Lord" (I Cor. 6, 13), which you must, consequently, protect and nourish not for yourself but for Jesus, in so far as your body is necessary for His service. And imitate St. Gertrude in remembering, in this connection, the fact that Our Lord said whatever was done to the least of His little ones, would be done to Him (Matt. 25, 40).

When you greet someone, or show him respect, greet and respect him. as the temple and image of God and as a member of Jesus Christ.

Where an occasion presents itself for polite conversation, or an exchange of compliments, do not allow your lips to utter friendly words that do not come from your heart. There exists the following difference between Christian souls and worldly souls, namely, that, while they both make use of the same compliments and polite phrases that are customary when one meets a friend or goes visiting, the Christian utters them from his heart, while the worldling has them only on his lips, and speaks them in a spirit of falsehood and simulated friendliness.

I do not say that it is necessary for your mind to be always alert and busy at the task of forming these thoughts and intentions every time you meet somebody, or say a word or two in courteous greeting, or lend a helping hand even though that would be a good thing. But at least have the general intention of doing all things, always, in

## 72- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

this spirit of Christ's charity; and try to renew the intention before God, when He brings the thought to your mind.

Whenever another person arouses in you any distaste or aversion, or feelings of envy, be sure to renounce them vigorously, at once, and dash them down at the feet of Our Lord, asking Him to eliminate these sensations and fill you with His divine charity. Be sure to make interior acts of charity towards that person, in the following terms:

"O Jesus, I desire to love this person for love of Thee. Yes, my Saviour, I want to love him with my whole heart, together with and in honor of Thy charity towards Him. And I offer myself to Thee to do and suffer whatever Thou dost please, for that person."

Moreover, make the effort to speak to him and to perform some external acts of charity towards him, and do not stop until you have utterly wiped out, within yourself, this feeling of aversion and antipathy.

If you have been offended, or have offended another, do not wait for him to seek you out, but remember that our Lord said: If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother" (Matt. 5, 23- 24). So, to do honor to the fact that He was the first to seek you out, He Who is so bountiful and generous in favors to you, Who receives from you nothing but hurts and offenses, and to obey these words of His, go and find the one you have offended or who has offended you, and be reconciled with him, disposing yourself to talk to him in a spirit of forgiveness, gentleness, peace and humility.

If unfavorable remarks about someone else are made in your presence, disregard them; change the subject if possible, in a prudent and tactful way trying to manage it so that nothing further will be said; if the conversation goes on, it would be better to keep quiet and evince no awareness of or interest in the subject.

Pray to Our Lord, especially, to implant in your heart charity and warm affection for the poor, strangers, widows and orphans. Consider such as these to be persons recommended to you by your greatest friend, Jesus Christ, who in Holy Scripture very Often and very emphatically recommends them to you as deserving all the atten-

## **THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

73 -

tion you would give to Him in person. With this in mind, then, be kind in speaking to them, treat them charitably and give them all the help you can.

## **XXVIII. CHARITY AND ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.**

Above all, have a particular charity for the souls of all men, especially of those who are related to you or depend upon you, and do everything you possibly can to effect their salvation. For St. Paul tells us that "if any man have not care of his own, and especially, those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5, 8). Remember that these souls were bought at the price of the labors of God made Man, of His thirty-three years of suffering, of His blood and His life, and that the greatest and most Godlike work, the task most pleasing to Jesus that you could do on earth, is to labor with Him for the salvation of souls, so dear and precious in His sight.

And so, offer yourself to Him to share the work for souls in every way He asks. Consider yourself most unworthy to be employed in so great a work. Yet, whenever you see a chance to help in the salvation of some poor soul (and if you are alert, such chances will occur most frequently), do not let it slip by, but first ask grace of Our Lord and then apply yourself, according to your condition and to the means He puts at your disposal, with all the care, diligence and love you can muster, just as you would in the case of some business of the highest importance, or if all temporal goods and the lives of all the men in the world were at stake. Do this purely for the love of Jesus, so that God may be eternally loved and glorified in souls. knowing that you should consider it a great favor and blessing to employ all your time, your health, your life and all the money in the world, if they were in your possession, to help in the salvation of a single soul for whom Jesus Christ shed all His Precious Blood, spent all His time, His strength and His life.

O Jesus, zealous lover of souls, and lover of the salvation of men, may it please Thee to implant in the hearts of all Christians the sentiments and dispositions of Thy zeal, and of Thy most ardent charity for souls.

## TRUE CHRISTIAN DEVOTION AND THE FORMING OF JESUS WITHIN YOU

### XXIX. TRUE CHRISTIAN DEVOTION.

After what has been said so far about Christian virtues, it is easy to see what true Christian devotion is, and in what it consists. Since all the Christian virtues are nothing else but the virtues which our Lord Jesus Christ practised on earth, which must be continued by us while we are in this world, it necessarily follows that true Christian devotion is simply Jesus Christ's holy and divine devotion, that we are bound to perpetuate and fulfil in ourselves.

Now, for our Lord Jesus Christ devotion was a matter of accomplishing, with the greatest perfection, everything that His Father willed, and of taking all His pleasure in this alone. His devotion consisted in serving His Heavenly Father, and in serving even men for the love of His Father, since He willed to take the form and lowly condition of a servant, in order to pay more honor and homage to the supreme greatness of His Father by His own abasement. His devotion consisted in loving and glorifying His Father and in causing His Father to be loved and glorified in the world; of doing all that He did purely for the glory and love of His Father, with most holy, most pure and most divine dispositions—namely, with the most profound humility, the most burning charity for men, the most perfect detachment from self and from all created things, the closest union with His Heavenly Father, the most rigorous submission to His Father's will and with all joy and satisfaction. Finally, His devotion consisted in being altogether immolated and sacrificed purely for the glory of His Father, since He willed to take upon Himself the role of victim, and in this capacity to undergo every sort of contempt, humiliation, privation, interior and exterior mortification and, finally, a cruel and shameful death. for the everlasting glory of His Divine Father.

These were three solemn professions, three vows, as it were, pronounced

### TRUE CHRISTIAN DEVOTION

75 -

by Jesus from the moment of the Incarnation. And these He carried out most perfectly in His life and in His death.

1. At the moment of His Incarnation, He vowed obedience to His Father, that is, He made profession never to do His own will, but to obey most perfectly everything willed by His Father, and to find in so doing all His bliss and joy.

2. He professed servitude to His Father. This is the character given to Him by His Father, speaking through a prophet: *Servus meus es tu, Israel, quia in te gloriabor* (Isa. 49, 3). And this is the character which He Himself adopts: *Formam servi accipiens*. (Phil. 2, 7), lowering Himself to the state and condition of a humble and servile life with respect to His creatures, even to the cruel shame and servile death of the Cross, for love of us and for His Father's glory.

3. He professed to become a host and victim entirely consecrated and immolated to His Father's glory from the first moment of His life to the very last.

Such was the devotion of Jesus. Since Christian devotion is simply Jesus Christ's devotion, our own devotion must, therefore, consist of similar vows of submission. In order to make it so, we should enter into the closest and most intimate contact and union with Jesus, and adhere to Him most closely, concentrating upon Him all our attention, throughout our whole life, in all our functions and acts.

This is the solemn vow, the first and most important public profession, which is made at baptism in



the presence of the entire >Church. At that time, to use the terms of St. Augustine, St. Thomas' Summa, and the Catechism of the Council of Trent, we made a solemn vow and profession to renounce Satan with all his works and to be united with Jesus Christ as members are one with their head, to deliver and consecrate ourselves entirely to Him and to dwell in Him. A Christian who professes to adhere to Christ and dwell in Him, professes to adhere to His devotion, His dispositions, His intentions, His laws and rules of conduct, His spirit and His behavior, His life, His qualities, and His virtues, and all that He did and suffered.

Thus, when we vow to adhere to Jesus Christ and dwell in Him-and this is "the greatest of all our vows," says St. Augustine, votum

## 76- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

maximum nostrum-we make three great professions, which are very sacred and sublime, deserving frequent consideration.

1. We profess, with Jesus Christ, never to do our Own will but to submit to everything willed by God, to obey persons of all kinds, in whatever is not contrary to God, and to seek all our satisfaction and heavenly bliss in acting so.

2. We profess servitude to God and His Son Jesus Christ, and to all the members of Jesus Christ, according to the words of St. Paul: Nos servos vestros per Jesum (II Cor. 4, 5). In consequence of this avowal, no Christian can call anything his own, any more than a slave can. Nor has a Christian the right to make any use of the faculties of his soul, or of his life, or his daily time, or his temporal goods, except for Jesus Christ and the members of Jesus Christ-that is, all who believe in Him.

3. We profess to become victims continually sacrificed to God's glory-Spirituales hostias (1 Pet. 2, 5), as St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, expresses it. Obsecro, vos, fratres, per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem says St. Paul: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God (Rom. 12, 1). What is here said of our bodies must also be said of our souls. So we are obliged to glorify and love God, in proportion to all the powers of our body and soul, to do everything possible that He may be glorified and loved, and in all our acts and in all things to seek nothing but His glory alone, His love alone,, and to live in such a way that each Christian life may be a ceaseless sacrifice of praise and love. And we should be ready to be completely immolated and consumed for His glory.

In a word: Christianismus est professio vitae Christi: "Christianity is the profession of the life of Christ," says St. Gregory of Nyssa. St. Bernard assures us that Our Lord does not admit to the ranks of those professed in his religion, anyone who does not live His life: Non inter suos deputat professores, quos vitae suae cernit desertores. That is why we profess Jesus Christ at Holy Baptism. We profess the life of Christ, Christ's devotion, His dispositions and intentions, His virtues and His perfect detachment from all things. We profess to

## TRUE CHRISTIAN DEVOTION

77 -

believe firmly everything that He teaches, either by His own words and example or through His Church, and to choose death before swerving, however little, from this belief. We profess to join Him in a fight to the finish with sin; to live, as He lived, in a spirit of uninterrupted prayer; to carry His Cross with Him, as well as to bear His mortification in our bodies and souls; to continue the practice of His humility, His trust in God, His submissiveness and obedience, His charity and zeal for the glory of His Father and the salvation of souls. We profess to live, on earth and in heaven, only in order to belong to Jesus and to love and honor Him in all the states and mysteries of His life, in all that He is, in Himself and in the universe. Finally, we profess to be ever ready to undergo every form of torture and to die a thousand deaths, if i t

were possible, purely for His love and for His glory.

Such are the vow and profession made by all Christians at their baptism. This is what constitutes true Christian devotion. Any other devotion, if it be possible for any other to exist, is mere deception and perdition.

### **XXX. PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN DEVOTION.**

If you would enter upon the path of this holy devotion, adore Jesus in His most perfect devotedness, and in the profession He made to His Father at the instant of His Incarnation, which He observed most perfectly throughout His whole life. Bless Him for the glory rendered to His Father by consecration. Beg Him to pardon your faults against the vow you made at baptism, and to atone for them in His most great mercy. Consider in the presence Of God what great obligations go with this vow and profession. Frequently renew your desire to live up to these obligations, pray that Jesus Christ will give you the grace to do so and implant His ~devotion within you. Make all your devotions consist in the practices described above, the essentials that comprised the devotion of Jesus Christ. In all that you do Or suffer, make a point of uniting yourself with Christ's devotion as follows:

"O Jesus, I give myself to Thee, to do this action, or bear this affliction, in union with the most perfect devotion with which Thou didst perform all actions and suffer all afflictions."

### **78- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

In so doing, you will live in true and perfect devotion, by means of which Christ will be shaped within your own souls, according to the Apostle's wish: Donec formetur Christus in vobis (Gal. 4, 19). You will be transformed into Jesus; in eandem imaginem transformamur (II Cor. 3, 18). This means that you will cause Jesus to live and reign in you; you will become one with Him, and He will be all in you, according to Holy Writ: Consummati in unum, et omnia in omnibus (John 17, 23). This is the goal toward which all Christian life, piety and devotion must tend. Hence it is necessary to show you how important is this work of forming Jesus in your souls, and what needs to be done in order to form Him there.

### **XXX1. FORMATION OF JESUS WITHIN YOU.**

The mystery of mysteries, and work of works, is the formation of Jesus, indicated in these words of St. Paul: Filioli, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis, "My little children, of whom I am again in labor until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4, 19). It is the greatest mystery and the greatest work that is ever accomplished, either in heaven or on earth by the most excellent Beings in existence, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Blessed Virgin, and Holy Mother Church.

This is the greatest act performed by the Eternal Father, in all that eternity during which He is continually occupied in producing His Son within Himself. Nor did He accomplish anything more astounding outside of Himself, in forming the human nature of His Divine Son, at the moment of the Incarnation. It excels all works effected by the Son of God on earth, forming Himself within His holy Mother, and in His Eucharist. It is the noblest of all the works of the Holy Ghost, Who formed Him in the sacred womb of the Virgin Mary. Neither did she ever, nor will she ever do anything more perfect, than when she cooperated in this divine and wonderful formation of Jesus in herself. It is the greatest and holiest of all the works of Holy Church, who exercises no function more exalted, even when she brings Him forth, in a sure and wondrous way, by the lips of her priests, in the Holy Eucharist, than when she brings Him to life in the hearts of her children. For, in all that she does, she

has no other aim than that of forming Jesus in the souls of all Christians.

So it should be your desire, your care and your chief occupation to form Jesus in you, to make Him live and reign in you together with His spirit, His devotion, His virtues, His sentiments, His inclinations and dispositions. This should be the aim of all your goodworks. God places this task in your hands, for you to work at it without interruption.

Two most compelling reasons should stir you up to work energetically for the completion of this task:

1. You should desire the accomplishment of the Eternal Father's plan and of His great yearning to behold His Son living and reigning in you. Since His Beloved Son destroyed Himself for His glory and your love, He wants to repay Him, for His annihilation, by establishing Him in all things and making Him reign over all creatures. He loves His Most Amiable Son so much that He desires to see nothing but Him in all things, nor does He wish any other object to contemplate, delight in, or love. Thus He wants Him to be in all things omnia in omnibus (I Cor. 15, 28), so as to see and love nothing but Him in all things.

2. You should desire that Jesus, once established in your hearts should there give His Eternal Father and Himself the love and glory they deserve, according to the words of St. Peter: ut in omnibus honorificetur Deus, per Jesum Christum (I Peter 4, 11), since He alone is capable of glorifying His Eternal Father and Himself worthily or adequately.

These two reasons ought to enkindle in you a most ardent desire to form and establish Jesus within yourself and to seek out every possible means of achieving this end. A few of these methods will now be proposed for your consideration.

### XXXII. MANNER OF FORMING JESUS WITHIN YOU.

There are four things to be done, in order to form Jesus within you.

1. You must make it your practice to see Him in everything, in your devotions and in all your acts, to have no other objective than Him and all His states, mysteries, virtues and actions. He is in all

### 80 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

things. He is the being of things that exist, the life of things that live, the beauty of things beautiful, the power of the strong, the wisdom of the wise, the virtue of the virtuous, and the sanctity of the saints. There is hardly any action of your ordinary lives that does not find some counterpart in the actions He performed during His time on earth, so you must keep your eyes on every similar act of His, and imitate it in performing your own. By this means you shall fill up your understanding with Jesus, and shall form and establish Him in your mind, by thus frequently thinking of Jesus, and seeing Him in all things.

2. You ought to form Jesus, not only in your mind, by thinking of Him, seeing Him in everything, but you must also keep Him alive in your hearts by the frequent practice of His divine love. To do this, you should become accustomed to lifting up your hearts frequently to Him in love, after the manner of the various exercises in this book, and to do everything purely for love of Him and to consecrate every affection of your heart to Him.

3. You ought to form Jesus in yourself by a complete annihilation of yourself and of all things within you. If you want Jesus to live and reign in you perfectly, you must destroy all creatures in your minds and hearts. You must no longer look at them or love them in themselves, but only in Jesus, seeing and loving Jesus in them. You must see to it that the world and all that is in the world, so far as you are concerned, is

put to death, and that nothing remains for you but Jesus, and that you no longer seek to please, contemplate or love anyone but Him.

You must also labor to destroy yourself, your own opinion, your own will, self-love, pride and vanity, all your perverse inclinations and habits, all the desires and instincts of a depraved nature, and everything that comes from yourself. Everything in you is depraved and corrupted by sin and, by that fact, is contrary to Jesus Christ and opposed to His glory and love, therefore it is necessary for all to be destroyed and consumed in order that Jesus Christ may live and reign perfectly in you.

Here you have the main foundation, the first principle and the first step in Christian living. It is what is called, in Holy Scripture

## **TRUE CHRISTIAN DEVOTION**

81 -

and in the lives of the saints, being lost to self, dying to self and self renunciation. It is one of the chief cares incumbent upon you, one of your principal tasks to practise abnegation, humiliation and mortification, both inward and outward: and this development of self-denial is one of the most effective means to form and establish Jesus in you.

4. This great work of forming Jesus in you is incomparably beyond your own achievement, so the fourth and most important means is to have recourse to the power of divine grace, and to the prayers of the most Blessed Virgin and of the saints.

Pray often and fervently to the most Blessed Virgin and all the angels and saints, asking them to help you in this task by their prayers. Surrender yourself to the omnipotent power of the Eternal Father and to His most burning love and zeal for His Divine Son, begging Him to annihilate you altogether, in order to make His Son live and reign in you.

Offer yourself with the same intention, and address the same prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Abandon yourself, and all your possessions at the feet of Jesus, begging Him, by the very great love in which He did annihilate Himself, to come with His divine power to destroy you and establish Himself in you, saying to Him, to this end:

"O Good Jesus, I adore Thee in Thy divine annihilation which the Apostle describes in the words: Exinanivit semetipsum (Phil. 2, 7). I adore Thy most great and strong love for Thy Father and Thyself, which did so annihilate Thee. I give and abandon myself altogether to the power of that divine love, that it may destroy me completely. O Most Powerful and Most Good Jesus, do Thou employ Thine own power and infinite goodness to annihilate me and establish Thyself in me. to destroy in me my self-love, my own will, my own mind, my pride, and all my passions, sentiments and inclinations, in Order to establish Thy holy love and make it reign in me, together with Thy divine spirit, Thy most deep humility and all Thy blessed virtues.

"And also annihilate in me all attachments to creatures, and erase me from the minds and hearts of all creatures. Establish Thyself in their place and in mine, so that men may no longer see, esteem, desire, seek or love anything else but Thee, and that men may speak of

## **82- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

Thee only, and do nothing except for Thee. Thus mayest Thou be all and do all in all things, to love and glorify Thy Father and Thyself in us and for us, with a love and glory such as He and Thou deserve."

## PROPER USE OF CONSOLATIONS AND AFFLICTIONS

### XXX111. PROPER USE OF SPIRITUAL CONSOLATIONS.

The life of the Son of God on earth included two contrasting states: a state of consolation and joy, and a state of affliction and suffering. In the sublime heights of His divine soul He rejoiced in all eternal delight and contentment, but in the depths of His human soul and in His body, He endured all kinds of bitterness and pain. So also the life of His servants and members, being a continuation and imitation of His own, is ever a mixture of joy and sadness, of consolation and affliction. The Son of God imparted divine accomplishment to both these opposing states and glorified His Eternal Father just as much in one as in the other; therefore, you must likewise study how to make a holy use of them, so as to give God all the glory He requires of you, that you may be able to say with David, the holy king: I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be always in my mouth" (Ps. 32,2).

It is for this reason that I discuss, at this point, the use you should make of sorrow and consolation, if you are to be faithful to God and glorify Him in times of joy and affliction.

Every saintly writer who has treated of the matter teaches that you should not set much store by consolations, whatever they may be, whether interior or exterior. You should not desire them, nor ask for them when they are wanting in you, nor fear to lose them when they are present, nor consider yourself better than other souls on account of your fine thoughts, your great lights, your various sensible feelings of devotion, your inner sweetness or tears or other such manifestations; for you are not in this world to enjoy yourself but to suffer. The state of bliss is reserved for heaven and the state of suffering is assigned to this earth, out of homage to the sufferings borne here below by the God of earth and heaven.

'Nevertheless, when God is pleased to grant you consolations, you must not reject or despise them, lest you become guilty of pride or

## THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

presumption. Indeed, your sole concern should be to use them profitably and to direct all things to the service of God as follows:

1. You must fully humiliate yourself before God, recognizing that you are most unworthy of any grace or consolation. You must remember that He is treating you as weak and imperfect creatures, as little children not yet able to eat solid food, or to stand on their own feet, but needing to be fed with milk and carried in protecting arms, without which care they would perish.

2. Your self-love must not be allowed to feast on these spiritual tastes and feelings, nor is your mind to relax and rest in them at ease. Rather, you must trace these joys to their source, and give them back to Him who favored you with them; that is, refer them entirely to God, since He is the principle of all consolation, and He alone is worthy to be enjoyed. Protest before Him that you desire no pleasure but His pleasure and that, with the help of His grace, you are ready to serve Him forever for love of Him, without seeking or claiming any consolation or reward.

3. You should place all your good thoughts, sentiments and consolations in the hands of Jesus Christ, and beg Him to turn them to whatever use He designs for His glory. You should direct them to the advantage of God, using them as means to spur you on to a more ardent love, and a more courageous and loyal service of One who treats you with such gentleness and love, after you have so often deserved to be stripped of all His graces and utterly abandoned by Him.

#### **XXXIV. HOLY USE OF SPIRITUAL DRYNESS AND AFFLICTIONS.**

Since the whole life of our Father and Head, our Lord Jesus Christ, was filled with labors, bitterness and pain, both inward and outward, it is scarcely reasonable that His children and members should travel by any other road but His. He is giving you a great grace, so you cannot murmur in complaint when He gives you what He took for Himself and makes you worthy to drink with Him from the chalice, that chalice of suffering given Him by the Eternal Father with so much love, which He presents to you with equal love. This is His way of showing you more love and giving you unmistakable indications that

#### **PROPER USE OF CONSOLATIONS AND AFFLICTIONS**

85 -

your trifling services are pleasing in His sight. Do you not hear His Apostle exclaim that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (1 Tim. 3, 12); and the Angel Raphael saying to holy Tobias: "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary (note well this word) that temptation should prove thee" (Tob. 12, 13); and the Holy Ghost speaking to us as follows, in Ecclesiasticus: "Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation. Humble thy heart, and endure: incline thy ear, and receive the words of understanding: and make not haste in the time of clouds. Wait on God with patience: join thyself to God, and endure, that thy life may be increased in the latter end. Take all that shall be brought upon thee: and in thy Sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience. For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation" (Eccli. 2, 1-6). These words are divinely inspired and teach you that real piety and devotion are always accompanied by, some trial Or afflictions, either from the world, or the devil, or else from God Himself, who sometimes seems to withdraw from souls who love Him, in order to test and prove their fidelity.

Therefore, do not be deceived into imagining that the paths of God are nothing but roses and delights. You will find there many thorns and labors. But whatever happens, always faithfully love Our Lord, and His love will turn the gall into honey and the bitterness into sweetness. Do better still: resolve to seek all your joy and satisfaction, as long as you are in this life, in crosses and sufferings. They are the means by which you may give God more glory and prove that you love Him, and in which your Father and Bridegroom, your Head, Jesus Christ, took all His joy and pleasure while in this world, since the Holy Ghost calls the day of His Passion, "the day of the joy of his heart" (Cant. 3, 11).

Such is the use you should make of every kind of bodily or spiritual affliction. It is not my intention, however, to speak in this place of outward and bodily afflictions, since I am reserving that for the sixth part of this book, where you will find an exercise that will help you to bear those trials with true Christian spirit. For the moment, I should like to set before you the way to make use of inward and

86 -

#### **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

spiritual afflictions, such as dryness, sorrows, annoyances, fears and troubles within yourself, feelings of distaste for the things of God, and all the other sufferings of the spirit that come upon souls devoted to the service of God. It is a matter of great importance to know how to use these things well and so remain faithful to God. Here is the way to set about doing so:

1. Adore Jesus in the sufferings, privations, humiliations, anxieties, sorrows and desolations which He bore in His holy soul, according to His own words: "My soul is filled with evils" (Ps. 87, 4); "now is my soul troubled" (John 12, 27); "my soul is sorrowful even unto death" (Matt. 26, 38). Adore the dispositions of His divine soul in this state of trial and the good use He made of it for the glory of His Father. Give yourself to Him to enter into the same dispositions and to employ your sufferings with merit even as He did. Offer them to Him in honor of His sufferings. Beg Him to unite your afflictions with His own, to bless and sanctify them by His own and to supply for your defects, and on your behalf, employ them as He made use of His own sufferings for His Father's glory.

2. Do not waste energy trying to discover, in detail, the reason for the state in which you find yourself, or in scrutinizing your sins. Humble yourself in face of all your faults and infidelities as a whole, and adore God's justice, offering yourself to Him to suffer all the pains ordained by His holy will, in homage to His justice, and considering yourself most unworthy that this divine justice should be exercised upon you. You must admit that the least of your sins deserves that you should be utterly forsaken by God. When you are in the state of dryness and distaste with respect to the things of God, and you can scarcely think of God or pray except with a thousand distractions, you ought to remember that you are most unworthy of any grace or consolation, and that Our Lord is indeed doing you a great favor when He permits you to live. You have most often deserved to share the lot of the damned, who will not be able for all eternity to entertain any thoughts but those of blasphemy and horror for God. So you must deeply humble yourself before God.

As a matter of fact, that is the intention God has in mind for you at such moments, and that is what He expects. He wants you to

## **PROPER USE OF CONSOLATIONS AND AFFLICTIONS**

87 -

recognize what you are of yourself and to develop a vivid, immediate and profound knowledge and consciousness of your own nothingness, so that, when He gives you some helpful thought or pious inspiration or some other grace, your pride and self-love may not claim it as your own, ascribed to your own effort, vigilance and cooperation but rather refer it to Him, recognizing that the inspiration comes, not from yourself, but from His mercy alone. Thus you may place all your trust in His goodness alone.

3. Above all, never let yourself be carried away by sorrow and discouragement. Instead rejoice in three special considerations:

(1) That Jesus is always Jesus, always God, always great and worthy of love, always in the same unchanging state of glory, joy and contentment, and there is nothing capable of lessening His joy and bliss. "Scitote quoniam Dominus ipse est Deus" (Ps. 99, 3). Say to Him: "O Jesus, it is enough for me, merely to know that Thou art ever Jesus! O Jesus, be Jesus forever, and I will always be happy, no matter what happens to me!"

(2) Be glad that Jesus is your God, that He is all yours and that you belong to so good and so lovable a Lord, remembering what the prophet David says: *Beatus populus cuius Dominus ejus*, "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 143, 15).

(3) Be glad in the knowledge that now you can serve Our Lord with more purity of intention and show Him that you love Him in truth, for love of Himself alone and not for the consolations He has given already. As an effective demonstration of the fidelity and purity of your love for Him, take care to perform your every activity with all possible purity and perfection. The more coldness, tepidity and weakness you feel in yourself, the more should you have recourse to Him Who is your strength and your all, giving yourself to Him yet more earnestly and lifting up your mind to Him more frequently. Continue to make constant acts of love for Him, paying no attention to the fact that you may be making them with less than your usual consolation and fervor. After all, what difference does it make whether you are satisfied or not, provided your Jesus is satisfied? As a matter of fact, it often happens that the acts we make while in a state of dryness and spiritual desolation are more pleasing and agreeable to Him,

## **88- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

provided we strive to make them with a pure intention of honoring Him, than the things we do with much fervor and sensible devotion. For the latter are generally accompanied by self-love, while the former are more purified. Finally, do not become discouraged over the failings and weaknesses of which you may be

guilty in this state; humble yourself before Our Lord, begging Him to repair your faults in His great mercy, and have great confidence that He will do so in His goodness. Above all, keep constantly alive in yourself an intent purpose and powerful resolution to serve and love Him perfectly and to be faithful to Him, no matter what happens, until your life's last breath, ever trusting in Him to give you that grace in His great kindness, regardless of all your infidelities.

89 -

## **SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM**

### **XXXV. MARTYRDOM, THE PERFECTION AND FULFILMENT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SANCTITY.**

The culmination and perfection of Christian life is holy martyrdom. The grace of martyrdom is the most powerful miracle that God can possibly work in Christian souls, and to suffer martyrdom for His sake is the greatest and most magnificent thing a Christian can achieve for God.

This immeasurable favor, conferred by Jesus Christ on chosen souls by perfecting their resemblance to Him not only in life but in their very death, and making them worthy to die for Him even as He died for His Father and for them, is the most excellent favor He can grant to those whom He loves with the most special love. Nowhere is the astounding power of His divine love more evident than in the lives of the holy martyrs. Among all the saints, the blessed martyrs command the greatest admiration in the presence of God. So you see that all the greatest saints of Paradise, such as St. John the Baptist and the Apostles, are martyrs. They are Christ's own saints. He Himself calls them that, speaking through the oracle of His Church, Sancti mei, "My saints" (Brev. Rom. Corn, mart. 8 resp.). Although each and everyone of the saints belongs to Jesus, the holy martyrs belong to Him in an entirely unique and special manner, because they lived and died for Him. For that reason, He shows them extraordinary love and promises them the greatest and most beneficent rewards.

1. Speaking by the voice of Holy Church, He promises that He will give them a special, prominent place in His Father's Kingdom: Dabo Sanctis meis locum nominatum in regno. Patris mei (Brev. Rom., Com. mart. 2 noct., 1 ant.).

2. He says that He will give them to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of His God, namely, Himself, as the learned doctors explain. This is equivalent to saying: You have lost a human and

90 -

## **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

temporal life for Me, I will give you being that is eternal and divine. For I will make you live by my life, and I myself will be your life in eternity.

3. He declares that He will give them hidden manna: Vincenti dabo manna absconditum (APOC. 2, 17). What else is this hidden manna but the divine love which reigns perfectly in the hearts of the holy martyrs? What is it but the surpassing love that, even on earth, transforms the bitterness of tortures and the hell of torments into a paradise of incredible sweetness and delight, and in heaven heaps upon them eternal and unspeakable joys, in exchange for the brief sufferings they have withstood on this earth?

4. He assures them that He will give them power over all nations, just as He received it from His Father, and such great power that they will be able to shatter the nations as the potter breaks the vessel he has made (Apoc. 2, 26-28). In other words, He will make them reign and dominate over the whole universe; He will set them up at His right hand as judges of the whole world: judicabunt nationes et dominabuntur populis (Wis. 3, 8). With Him, they shall judge and condemn the wicked on the day of reckoning.



5. He promises to invest them with His colors, namely, white and red, the colors of the King of martyrs, according to the words of the divine spouse: "My beloved is both white and ruddy" (Cant. 5, 10). These are also the colors of the martyrs, for they wear their Master's livery, and are garbed in white. "They have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb," says Holy Scripture (Apoc. 7, 14). "They shall walk with Me in white," says the Son of God, and "he that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments" (Apoc. 3, 4-5), because martyrdom is a fiery baptism that purges every kind of sin and clothes the souls of the martyrs in undying light and glory. They are also clad in red (rubri sanguine fluido, sings Holy Church), which signifies their flowing blood as well as the burning love with which they shed it.

6. Christ tells the martyrs that He will write upon them the name of His God, and of His Father, and the name of the city of His God (Apoc. 3, 12), which means, as the pious and learned Rupert explains, that they shall be Christ's father and mother; He shall look upon

## 91 - SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM

them and treat them as such. For he said: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, he is . . . my mother" (Matt. 12, 50). Martyrdom represents the most perfect operation and fulfilment of the will of God. Therefore, the Son of God, speaking of His Father and the holy martyrs, says that He has marvelously wrought all that He willed in them: Sanctis qui sunt in terra ejus, mirificavit omnes voluntates meas in eis. (Ps. 15, 3). He says, moreover, that "He will write also upon them a new name" (Apoc. 3, 12), which is Jesus. The holy martyrs imitated Jesus most perfectly in His life and in His death, while they were on earth, therefore they shall so admirably resemble Him in heaven as to be called Jesus, and even actually to be Jesus, in a certain and wonderful manner, through a perfect resemblance and a wondrous transformation.

7. He gives them His word: I will give to sit with me in my throne, as I . . . am set down with my Father in His throne" (Apoc. 3, 21). And Holy Church, on the feast of every martyr, shows Him to us speaking thus to His Father: Volo, Pater, ut ubi ego sum, illic sit et minister meus. I will, O My Father, that where I am My servant should also be" (Brev. Rom., Corn. mart., 5 ant. ad Laudes), that is, he should dwell and rest with Me in Thy bosom and Thy fatherly heart. I am well aware that most of those promises made to the martyrs are also addressed to the other  
ut they are nevertheless addressed to the martyrs in token of a most special recompense, because they are Christ's own saints, who bear His stamp and Godly character, saints whom He loves with a particular love, and to whom He gives extraordinary privileges.

O bounty! O love! O excessive love and goodness of Jesus for His holy martyrs! O Bountiful Jesus, how blessed are they whom Thou dost love and who love Thee in return! O how blessed are they who bear,

in themselves a perfect image of Thy holy life and of Thy most loving death! How blessed are they who are called the wedding feast Of the Lamb: Beati qui ad coenam nuptiarum Agni Vocati sunt (Apoc. 19, 9). How blessed are they who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb: Beati qui lavant stolas suas in sanguine Agni (Apoc. 22, 14). How blessed are they who want no life on earth,

## THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

except to spend it all for the glory, and sacrifice it for the love of this most sweet Lamb, so worthy to be loved! And all the more so, because, to borrow the words of the Holy Ghost, this is the end of all fulfilment and perfection, the final and perfect consummation of all sanctity (John 15, 13); because man can do nothing greater for His God than to sacrifice to Him what he holds most dear, that is, his blood and his life, and to die for Him (St. Thomas, Summa, 2<sup>a</sup> ae, Q. 124, a. 3).

There are, however, various kinds of martyrs and martyrdoms. Those who are truly disposed and willing to die for our Saviour are martyrs before God in a certain sense, even though they may not actually die for Him. St. Cyprian affirms that those who are ready to die rather than offend Almighty God are also martyrs in a certain sense. St. Isidore says, furthermore, that to mortify the flesh and the passions, to resist unruly appetites and to persevere to the end in self-abandonment for love of Our Lord is likewise a kind of martyrdom. And, according to St. Gregory the Great, if, for pure and sacrificing love of Christ, one patiently suffers the privations and miseries of poverty, starvation, deformity or any other sore affliction; or else meekly endures insults, calumny and persecution, not returning evil for evil, but blessing those who harm him by hurtful words, and loving those who hate him, this also is a species of martyrdom.

But true martyrdom consists not only in suffering, but in loss of life. Consequently, death belongs to the essence and nature of full and perfect martyrdom. This means that it is necessary to die, and to die for Jesus Christ, if one is to be a real martyr, in the sense in which the word martyr is taken by Holy Church.

It is true that one may perform some action for love of Our Lord, or suffer for Him some pain which should in the ordinary course of events, cause death; yet he is miraculously preserved by the power of God. In this case, God, who delivered Him from the death he was ready to suffer, will not deprive him of a martyr's crown, even though he may live long and die a natural death, provided he persevere until the end in the grace and love of the God of martyrs. Witness St. John the Evangelist, St. Thecla, the first of her sex to suffer martyrdom for Christ, St. Felix of Nola, and others honored by the

## **SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM**

93 -

Church as true martyrs, although they did not die in the clutches of the tyrants, or in the torments they underwent for Our Lord. In fact, they lived for many years afterwards and died ordinary deaths, having been preserved by a divine and extraordinary power from the death they were ready to endure for Jesus Christ.

But apart from such miraculous intervention preventing the occurrence of death, if one is to be a true martyr, he must die, and die for Our Lord Himself, or for the honor of His mysteries and sacraments, in defense of the Church, or in support of an article of Faith or a point of morals, or to avoid yielding to sin because it offends Him, or by the fact of loving Him so ardently that the sacred violence of His divine love actually causes death.

St. Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor, assures us that any act whatsoever, even if it be merely human and natural, can make us martyrs if referred to the glory of God and done for His love, and actually does so, if it happens to bring about our death (Summa, 2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>ae</sup>, Q. 124, a. 5, ad 3).

For this reason, I advise and urge you to make a point of lifting up your heart to Jesus at the commencement of your actions, offering them to Him and affirming that you desire to do these things for His love and His glory. If the spiritual or bodily help you give to the sick, for instance, causes you to contract a mortal illness, and if you really gave your services or performed your duty to the sick out of love for Our Lord, you will share in the glory of the holy martyrs who are in heaven. And much more will this be true if you love Him with such strong and burning love that the intensity and power of holy love end by consuming your bodily life. This kind of death is a super-martyrdom, the noblest and holiest of all martyrdom. This is the martyrdom of the Mother of Fair Love, the most holy Virgin, Mother of God. This is the martyrdom of great St. Joseph, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Theresa, St. Catherine of Genoa, and many other saints. It is even the martyrdom of Jesus, for He died not only in love and for love, but also from the excess and power of His love.

**XXXVI. SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM.**

All Christians, irrespective of their state in life, ought always to be prepared to suffer martyrdom for our Lord Jesus Christ. Several reasons oblige them to live in the dispositions and spirit of martyrdom.

1. They belong to Jesus Christ by an infinite number of bonds. They are bound to live for Him alone; therefore, they are bound also to die for Him, according to the words of St. Paul: "None of us liveth to himself; and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore, whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose again; that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living" (Rom. 14, 7-10).

2. Since God gave us life and being for His glory only, we are bound to glorify Him as perfectly as possible, by sacrificing to Him our being and our life in homage to His life and His supreme being, and by proclaiming thus that He alone is worthy to be and to live, and that every other life should be immolated at the feet of His sovereign and undying life.

3. God commands us to love Him with our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole strength, that is, with the most perfect love possible to us. Now if we are to love Him so, we must love Him to the extent of shedding our blood and laying down our life for Him. This is the highest degree of love, as the Son of God tells us: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15, 13).

4. From the very moment of His Incarnation, Our Lord had a most intense desire to shed His blood and to die for His Father's glory and our love; yet He was unable, at that time, to fulfil His desire by Himself, because the time appointed by His Father's ordinance had not yet come. SO He chose the Holy Innocents as martyrs, and accomplished, through them, His own desire, and, in a certain manner, died in them. So also ever since He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, He has always kept the infinite desire to suffer and die for His Father's glory and our love. He can no longer suffer nor can He die a second death; nevertheless, He still desires to suffer and die

**SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM**

95 -

in His members, and seeks everywhere for souls in whom He can accomplish this desire. Hence, if we have any zeal at all for the accomplishment of His divine plans, we ought to offer ourselves to Him as candidates for His renewed martyrdom that He may find in us a means to quench that burning thirst in the fulfilment once more of His yearning to shed His blood and die for love of His Father.

5. As I have said, every Christian made a solemn promise at baptism to adhere to Jesus Christ, to follow and imitate Him and consequently to be victims consecrated and sacrificed to His glory. This pledge obliges us to follow and imitate Him in His death as well as in His life, and to be ever prepared to sacrifice our lives and all that we have, according to these holy words: "Because for thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are counted as sheep for the slaughter" (PS. 43, 22).

6. Jesus Christ is our Head and we are His members. We must live by His life, so, too, we are also obliged to die His death, since it is evident that the members must necessarily live and die by the life and death of their head, as St. Paul says: "Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies~that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (11 Cor. 4, 10-11).

7. But, above all, the most valid and compelling reason that imposes upon us the obligation to become martyrs is the most agonizing martyrdom suffered by our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, for love

of us.

Our most lovable Saviour was not content merely to spend His whole life for our sake, but also willed to die for our love the cruellest and most ignominious death in the history of the world. He laid down an infinitely precious life, one moment of which was worth more than all the lives of angels and men. He would be ready, if necessary, to die over again a thousand times. He remains continually present > upon our altars both as host and victim, and there He is and will be immolated every day and every hour, until the Day of Judgment, as often as the divine sacrifice of the altar, bloodless and without pain, shall be celebrated until the end of time.

## 96- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

O what goodness, what love! I am not surprised that three hundred thousand martyrs shed their blood and gave up their life for Jesus Christ. Christ Himself died for all men; surely, therefore, all men should die for Him. No wonder the holy martyrs, and all those to whom Christ has given to know and feel the holy fire of that divine love, which nailed Him to the Cross, possessed so burning a thirst and so flaming a desire to suffer and to die for love of Him. No wonder that so many glorious saints have actually suffered such frightful torments, with so much happiness and joy that the executioners grew weary of inflicting tortures before they wearied of enduring them, while their cruellest torments were nothing to them in the face of their insatiable desire to suffer for Jesus Christ. What does make me wonder is the coldness of our love for so lovable a Saviour, and what cowards we are in the presence of the least of sufferings! How strong is our attachment to so wretched and trivial a thing as earthly life, and how far we are from desiring to sacrifice it for Him Who sacrificed so noble and precious a life for us!

What truth can there be in the claim that we are Christians and adore a crucified God, a God agonizing and dying upon a Cross, a God who for love of us gives up so noble and excellent a life, a God who sacrifices Himself every day, before our eyes upon our altars for our salvation, if we are not ready to sacrifice to Him all that we hold dearest in the world, and even life itself, which in any case belongs to Him by all rights? Surely we are not Christians if we are not in these dispositions. Therefore I say, and this will immediately be clear to anyone who gives a little thought to the truths I have outlined, that all Christians ought to be martyrs, if not in actual fact, at least in intention and in will. So true is this, that if they are not martyrs of Jesus Christ, they will be martyrs of Satan.

Choose whichever of the two you love more. If you live under the tyranny of sin, you will be a martyr to your self-love and your passions, and consequently a martyr of the devil. But if you desire to be a martyr of Jesus Christ, you must strive to live in the spirit of martyrdom.

What is the spirit of martyrdom? It is a spirit that has five excellent attributes:

## SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM

97 -

1. It is the spirit of strength and constancy which fears only God and sin, and cannot be shaken or overthrown, either by promises or threats, by persuasion or violence.

2. It is the spirit of deepest humility, which feels only horror for the vain glory and publicity of the world, and loves contempt and humiliations.

3. It is the spirit of self-mistrust and of most firm confidence in Jesus Christ our Lord, our Strength, in whom all things can be done.

4. It is the spirit of perfect detachment from the world and everything that is in the world. Those who are to sacrifice their lives to God must also sacrifice to Him all else besides.

5. It is the spirit of most burning love for our Lord Jesus Christ, who leads those animated by this spirit to do all and suffer all for love of Him, who did and suffered all for them. It so inflames them that, for love of Him, they consider mortification and suffering to be a paradise of joys, to be sought and desired while they avoid and detest the pleasures of this world as much as they would hell itself.

That is the spirit of martyrdom. Implore Our Lord, who is the King of Martyrs, to fill you with this spirit. Pray to the Queen of Martyrs, and all the martyrs, too, that they may obtain this spirit for you from the Son of God, by their holy prayers. Cultivate a particular devotion to the saintly martyrs. Make a point, also, of praying for all those who will have to suffer martyrdom, in order that God may grant them the spirit and grace of martyrdom. Pray especially for those who will have to suffer the persecution of antichrist at the end of the world, for it will be the most cruel and horrible of all persecutions.

Finally, strive to develop within yourself, by imitation, a perfect image of the lives of the holy martyrs and, what is more, the life of the King and the Queen of martyrs, Jesus and Mary, so that they may make you worthy to resemble them in death.

### **XXXVII. PRAYER TO JESUS, KING OF MARTYRS.**

O Jesus, most worthy to be loved, prostrate at Thy feet in the very depth of my nothingness and in union with all the humility, devotion and love in heaven and on earth, I adore, glorify and bless Thee as

#### **98 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

the first and sovereign martyr of Thy Eternal Father, and King of all the martyrs. I adore and bless Thee in the consummate martyrdom Thou didst suffer in Thy Passion on the Cross. I honor and reverence Thee in the most dolorous martyrdom Thy most holy Mother sustained at the foot of Thy Cross, where her pure soul was pierced with the sword of anguish, where she suffered, in her mother's heart, the same martyrdom Thou didst endure in Thy sacred body. So, also, do I praise and magnify Thee in the various forms of martyrdom suffered by Thy saints, who endured so many and so great torments for love of Thee.

I give Thee a thousand thanks for the great glory which Thou didst give to the Heavenly Father and to Thyself by these martyrdoms which Thou didst undergo in Thyself, in Thy most Blessed Mother and in Thy saints. I offer Thee all the love, glory and praises which were rendered unto Thee by Thy most holy Mother and Thy saints in their martyrdom. What joy for our hearts to contemplate the infinite glory accorded to the Omnipotent Father by Thy sufferings and death, and the glory Thy Heavenly Father didst give to Thee because of the death and torments Thou didst suffer for Him and for us! What consolation to behold Thee so loved and glorified by Thy holy martyrs, and to see them so glorified and so loved by Thee and in Thee!

O Jesus, object of all desires, Thou art no longer able to suffer or to die in Thyself; yet Thou dost still possess a most great desire to suffer until the end of the world in Thy members, to glorify Thy Father by the way of suffering and death, even until the end of time. Thou dost everywhere seek for souls in whom Thou mayest accomplish Thy designs. Behold us, O good Jesus, who now offer ourselves to Thee with all Our heart, indeed, with a thousand hearts and a thousand wills, that Thou mayest design to make use of us for that end. Behold my body is ready, with Thy grace, to suffer all kinds of tortures for the accomplishment of Thy desire, so that Thy most burning thirst to suffer and to die in Thy members, for love of Thy Father, may be somewhat slaked in us.

O Most Adorable Jesus, since Thou hast created us for Thy glory

### **SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM**

99 -

alone, grant that we may glorify Thee in the most perfect manner possible to us, by dying for Thy honor.

O sole object of all our love, Thou dost command us to love Thee with our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole strength. This is what we desire, O Lord, and to that end, we long to shed our blood and sacrifice our life for Thy love. But this will never be more than a wish, unless Thou, in Thy great mercy, dost fulfil the desire Thou hast been pleased to impart to us.

O Most Benign Jesus, since in an excess of admirable goodness Thou art pleased to be our Head, and to let us be Thy members, grant by that same goodness that we may live by the life of our Head and die by His death.

Such is our obligation, since Thou hast made us one body with Thyself by holy Baptism, in which Thou didst make us solemnly promise to adhere unto Thee and to follow Thee everywhere, and consequently, to imitate Thee by being victims destined to sacrifice for Thy glory. Give us, then, the grace to fulfil perfectly this holy, sacred promise and profession. Grant that we may follow Thee in Thy life and in Thy death, and that we may be immolated, like Thee, for Thy love and for Thy Father's glory.

O Thou, the well-beloved of our souls, when we contemplate Thee on the Cross, we see Thy most holy body all torn with wounds and anguish and drenched with blood from head to foot. Alas, O my Saviour, behold how Thou art in the utmost extremity of pain, anguish and agony. Behold Thee dying the most cruel and shameful of all deaths. Not satisfied with that, behold Thee again, as victim upon our altars, where Thou art sacrificed every day and every hour, to prove that Thou art yet ready to suffer and die a thousand times for love of us, most wretched and unworthy creatures.

Good Jesus, what return shall we make to Thee, what shall we suffer for love of Thee? It is not enough, no, not enough to have but one body to immolate for One who immolated so holy and noble a body for us. It is not enough to have but one life to lose for One who surrendered, on our behalf, a life of which one single moment was worth more than all the lives of men and angels. It is not enough to die but once for Him who died a death of infinite merit for love

## 100- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

of us. Surely, dear Jesus, if we had all the human bodies that ever were or shall be, we would most willingly, with Thy grace, deliver them up and abandon them to every kind of torment for Thy sake. And if we had all the lives of men and angels, with how glad a heart would we not offer them to be sacrificed to Thy glory? Would it were possible to die as often, for Thy love, as there are moments of time in all past, present and future centuries! How happy would we then esteem ourselves!

Thou one and only love of our hearts, who will grant us to behold ourselves redeemed with our own blood and filled with wounds and suffering for love of Thee, as Thou wast Once for love of us? If only we might one day see ourselves in this enviable state, how we would then praise and bless Thee! Oh! blessed be that day, yes, a thousand times blessed, in which Thou shalt accomplish the extreme desire to be sacrificed for Thy pure love! Come fires, flames, Swords, guns, gibbets, gehennas! Come all things that confound us, come all contempt and shame! Come all your torments, all rage and cruelty of men and devils, earth and hell, come upon us! We defy you, if only we may ever love our most lovable Jesus; if only we may love Him by our death, and die for His love, in order to love and bless Him forever in eternity!

Well we know, O Good Jesus, that of ourselves we do not have the power to endure the least suffering in the world. Yet we have the greatest confidence that in Thy infinite goodness Thou wilt be our strength and enable us to accomplish all things. We know that we are most unworthy of such great things. Since Thou hast died for us, Thou art most worthy that we should die for Thee, and Thou hast infinite goodness and power to make us worthy of this high achievement.

This, then, is what we beg of Thee most humbly and most urgently, O Most Kind Jesus, by the

burning love that compelled Thee to die for us On the Cross, by that Precious Blood which Thou didst shed, by that most painful death which Thou didst suffer, by the very great love which Thou hast for all Thy holy martyrs, and by their abounding love for Thee, in a word, by everything that Thou dost treasure in heaven and on earth.

#### SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM

101 -

Make us worthy of this mercy, by Thy great goodness, for love of Thyself and for the glory of Thy Holy Name. To that end grant us now, we beseech Thee, the spirit of martyrdom with the grace and dispositions required for it. Make us strong and firm to do and suffer all things with courage for Thy love, fearless of all the world except Thee and Thy displeasure. Let us have no reliance on our strength, nor on anything that is of ourselves; but let all our trust be in Thy goodness only. Make us abhor worldly glory, ambitions and delights, as we abhor hell; and let us seek all our happiness in contempt, abjection, labors and persecutions. Make us live in complete unawareness and oblivion of the world and in detachment from ourselves and all worldly things. Above all, may we be so consumed by the fire of Thy holy love that it may be our very life's breath, and that we may continually burn with a flaming desire to love Thee ever more and more, and to, do and suffer yet greater things, for Thy pure love. May our life be consumed at last in the flames of that divine love!

O Good Jesus, deeply implant in us these divine characteristics of the spirit Of martyrdom, and imprint them also upon all whom Thou hast chosen from all eternity to be numbered among the ranks of the holy martyrs, especially those who will have to suffer and die for Thee in the last, terrible persecution of antichrist.

O Mother of Jesus, Queen of martyrs, and O you holy martyrs of Jesus, we implore you to pray that, in His infinite goodness, He may fulfil these things in us; for His glory alone and for purest love of Him.

Finally, O Jesus Christ, most worthy of all love, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may live a life of perfect imitation of Thy most holy life, of Thy Blessed Mother and of the glorious martyrs, so that we may deserve to resemble Thee and them in death as well as in life, and to sing forever in their company with Thee the most sweet canticle of Thy holy praise and Thy divine love.

#### XXXVIII. PRAYER IN HONOR OF ALL THE MARTYRS.

Ant. Mirabilis es, Domine Jesu, magnus et laudabilis nimis in sanctis Martyribus tuis. Mirificasti omnes voluntates tuas in ipsis, et

#### 102 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

desiderium animae eorum tribuisti eis. Omnis spiritus laudet te, et omnes virtutes tuae benedicant tibi.

V. Orate pro nobis, omnes sancti Martyres. R. Ut digni efficiamur amore Jesu, et societate passionum ejus.

Oremus.

Domine Jesu, qui maxima potentiae et amoris tui miracula in passione ac morte tua, et in sanctis Martyribus demonstrasti: da nobis quaesumus, intercedentibus sanctis martyribus tuis, Stephano, Laurentio, Eustachio, Blasio, Clemente et Agathangelo, Thecla, Catharina, Felicitate, Caecilia, Agnete, et omnibus aliis, pro amore tuo prospera mundi despiciere; nulla ejus adversa formidare; in omnibus nos humiliare; te semper magis atque magis toto corde, ore et opera diligere; passionibus tuis sociari; morti tuae configurari; ac denique tibi viventes et morientes, velut hostias sanctas atque placentes, in sacrificium laudis, gloriae, et amoris immolare. Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre, in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

## PART TWO

### Some Devotional Exercises Necessary to, Live a Christian and Saintly Life and to Make Jesus Reign in Your Soul

#### Part Two

### SOME DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES NECESSARY TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN AND SAINTLY LIFE AND TO MAKE JESUS REIGN IN YOUR SOUL

#### MORNING EXERCISE

#### 1. EVERYTHING THAT You Do SHOULD BEGIN AND END WITH JESUS.

Jesus, the Only Son of God and the Only Son of Mary, is, to use the words of St. Paul, "the author and finisher of faith" (Heb. 12, 2), and of Christian piety. He is, to quote His own words, "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (APOC. 223 13) of all things. It is, therefore, most just that He should be the beginning and the end of your whole life, of every year, of every month, of every week, and of every day of your life and of every one of your devotional exercises. For this reason you ought to have consecrated the beginning of your life to Him, if you had been gifted with the use of reason at that time; and you earnestly seek to end it in His grace and in the exercise of His love. So, if you wish to obtain this favor from His goodness, you should take care to consecrate to Him by some special exercise of piety and love the beginning and end of each year, of each month, of each week, and especially of each day.

Consequently, it is a matter of great importance to begin and to end each day well; but especially to begin it well by fitting your mind first thing in the morning with good thoughts and by offering up your first actions to Our Lord, because on this depends the blessing of the Test of the day.

#### 11. WHAT YOU SHOULD DO UPON WAKING UP IN THE MORNING.

As soon as you awake in the morning, raise your eyes to heaven and your heart to Jesus, thus consecrating to Him the first use that

#### 106- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

you make of your sense and the first thoughts and affections of your mind and your heart.

Let your first words be the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary: Jesus, Maria. "O Jesus! O Mary, Mother of Jesus! O Good Jesus, I give Thee my heart forever. O Mary, Mother of Jesus, I give thee my heart; give it, I beseech thee, to thy Son. 7---Veni, Domine Jesu. "Come, Lord Jesus, come into my mind and my heart to possess and fill me entirely. O Jesus, be Jesus to me!"

Let your first exterior action be the Sign of the Cross: "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," at the same time giving yourself with your whole heart to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in order that they may possess you entirely.

When the time to rise has come, recall to mind the very great love with which at the moment of His Incarnation the Son of God came forth from the bosom of His Father—a place (if one may use the word) full of delights, of repose and of glory. He came down to earth to become subject to our miseries and to take upon Himself our sorrows and afflictions. In honor of this same love and in union with it, get up promptly and



courageously saying: Surgam et quaerum quem diligit anima mea. I will arise and seek him whom my soul loveth" (Cant. 3, 2). As you pronounce these words: quem diligit anima mea, "whom my soul loveth," have the desire of pronouncing them, as far as possible, with all the love that is offered to, Jesus both in heaven and on earth.

Then kneel down and adore our Lord Jesus Christ, saying: Adoramus te, Domine Jesu, et benedicimus tibi, et diligimus te ex toto corde nostro, ex tota anima nostra, ex totis viribus nostris. "We adore Thee, Lord Jesus; we bless Thee and we love Thee with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and with all our strength." And in saying these words, desire to say them with all the humility, devotion, and love in heaven and on earth, and on behalf of all the creatures in the universe.

#### **111. WHAT YOU SHOULD Do WHILE DRESSING.**

While you are putting On your clothes, to prevent the devil from filling your mind with useless or bad thoughts, fill it with good

#### **MORNING EXERCISE**

107 -

ones. Remember that by His Incarnation our Lord Jesus Christ put on, like garments, our humanity, our mortality, and all the human miseries and needs to which we are subject; and that He lowered Himself to a condition in which, like you, He had need of clothing; and that He did this all for love of you. Then lift up your heart and speak to Him as follows:

"O Lord Jesus, mayest Thou be blessed and exalted forever, because Thou didst so humble Thyself for love of me. O my Jesus, I offer

Thee the action I am now performing, in honor of the action Thou didst perform when Thou didst clothe Thy Divinity in our humanity, and also when Thou didst clothe Thy humanity in garments like these which we put on. I desire to dress myself in the same dispositions and with the same intentions with which Thou didst perform this human act."

Think also of the many poor people who have only rags to cover themselves. They have offended God less than you have. Yet Our Lord, by an excess of His goodness, has given clothing to you rather than to them. With this thought in mind raise your heart and speak to Him thus:

'O my God, I bless Thee a thousand times for all the mercies Thou hast shown in my regard. I beg Thee to provide for all the needs of the poor. And I also beg that, just as Thou hast given me clothing for my body, Thou mayest also clothe my soul with Thy own self, that is, with Thy spirit and Thy love, Thy charity, humility, meekness, patience, obedience, and all Thy other virtues."

#### **1V. YOUR WHOLE LIFE BELONGS TO JESUS AND OUGHT TO BE CONSECRATED To His GLORY AND EMPLOYED FOR IT ALONE.**

Your whole life, with everything that pertains to it and depends upon it, belongs to Jesus by reason of five general claims which include a countless number of special ones.

1. Jesus is your Creator, who gives you life, who impresses His image and likeness upon your soul. Because of this, your life belongs to Him absolutely and universally no matter what you do, and must be continually referred to Him as the image of its prototype.

2. He is your Preserver, who sustains you each moment in your

being, and carries you incessantly in His arms with more care and love than a mother carrying her tiny child.

3. He is the Son Of the Heavenly Father, who has given Him from all eternity, and still gives Him all things as a whole, and likewise each person individually.

4. He is your Redeemer, who has delivered you from the slavery of Satan and sin and bought you at the price of His Precious Blood. He has, therefore, purchased everything that is in you, your entire life, your time, your thoughts, words, and deeds, all the powers of your body and soul, as well as all external things that surround you in the world. By His death on the Cross He has acquired for you not only the graces necessary for the sanctification of your souls but also the things needed for the conservation of your bodies. Because of your sins you should have no right to walk upon the earth, to breathe the air, to eat a morsel of bread, to drink a drop of water, nor to use anything in this world, unless Jesus had acquired that right for you by His blood and His death. All that is in you, therefore, and all your use of things outside of you, belong to Jesus and must be employed only for Him, as beings which He has acquired at the price of His blood and His life.

5. Jesus Christ has given you all that He has and all that He is. He has given you His Father as your Father, by making you sons of His own Father. He has given you His Holy Spirit to teach you, to direct you and to lead you in all things. He has given you His holy Mother to be your Mother. He has given you His angels and saints to be your protectors and intercessors. He has given you all the other countless beings that exist in heaven and on earth for your use and to fill your needs. He has given you His own Person in the Incarnation. He has given you His whole life, of which He spent not a single moment that was not for your benefit. Nor did He have a single thought, utter a single word, perform one action or even take a single step that was not devoted to your salvation. Finally, He gives you His body and blood in the Blessed Eucharist, as well as His soul and His divinity and all the infinite treasures that are enclosed in His divinity and humanity. He does this every day for all men; and for you as often as you dispose yourself to receive Him.

#### MORNING EXERCISE

109-

Considering all these countless gifts, you must realize how important it is to give yourself entirely to Him, and to offer and consecrate to Him all the functions and exercises of your life. Indeed, if you had the lives of all the angels and of all the men who have ever existed, now exist and will exist, you would be obliged to spend them in His service, even if He had devoted but one moment of His life to you, since a single moment of His life is worth more than a thousand eternities, if I may use such words, of lives of angels and of men. How great, then, is your obligation to consecrate and expend in His service and for His glory, the short life and the brief time you have on earth!

The first and most important thing to do is to keep yourself with all care in His grace and friendship, fearing and flying from all that might make you lose Him, that is, from every kind of sin. Fly from sin more than the most terrifying things in the world, even death itself. But if by some unhappy chance you fall into sin, rise immediately by means of confession and contrition, of which I shall speak later on. For just as the branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit of a tree belong to the one who owns the trunk of the tree, so also, as long as you belong to Jesus Christ and are united to Him by His grace, all your life, with all that comes from it, and all the acts you may perform that are not evil in themselves, will belong to Him. But in addition, I am going to set before you three other methods, which are very satisfying and very easy to use, by which your whole life may be employed in a far more perfect and holy manner for the love and glory Of Jesus.

## **V. THREE METHODS BY WHICH YOUR WHOLE LIFE CAN BECOME A CONTINUAL EXERCISE OF PRAISE AND Love.**

Over and above what has been said, there are three others things to, be done, if you are to spend your whole life for the glory of Jesus. These things are contained in the morning prayer that follows.

1. Once you are dressed, before you go out of the house or do any other action, go down on your knees and take at least five minutes to adore Jesus, to thank Him and to offer yourself to Him, together with all the acts that you will do during the day, having the intention of

110 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

performing them all for His glory. The writings of St. Gertrude tell us that Our Lord assured her that he took considerable pleasure in her offering up to Him all her very smallest acts, even every breath she took and every beat of her heart. By virtue of this oblation, every step that you take, every breath that you draw, every beat of your heart, every use that you make of your interior or exterior senses and in general all the actions that you may perform, which are not in themselves evil, will belong to Jesus Christ, and will all be so many acts redounding to His greater glory.

Note that, when I urge you to kneel down each morning in your home to adore our Lord Jesus Christ, to thank Him and offer yourself to Him, I do not mean that these acts are to be made only in the sight of the Son of God and no other. but also in the sight of the Most Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. This infallibly happens even when you do not expressly intend it. Since Jesus Christ is one with the Father and the Holy Ghost and since the entire Holy Trinity, or, as St. Paul says, the plenitude of the divinity dwells in Christ (Col. 2, 9), it must necessarily follow that to adore and glorify the Father and the Holy Ghost and to offer Jesus all the glory that is given Him in heaven and on earth is to offer that same glory to Father and the Holy Spirit. And when you beg the Father and the Holy Spirit to glorify Jesus, you are supplicating Them to glorify Themselves. This brings me to the second thing that you should do in the morning, if you want your whole life to be an exercise of glorification and love of Jesus, and consequently of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

2. Offer up to Our Lord all the love and glory that will be given Him this day in heaven and on earth and unite yourself with all the praises that will be given to Him by His Eternal Father, by Himself, by His Holy Spirit, by His Blessed Mother, by all His angels and saints and by all His creatures. Thus you will be associated with the love and the praise that will continually ascend to Him during that particular day.

3. Pray to the Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin Mary, all the angels and saints to glorify and love Jesus for you during this day. They will surely do so, because this is the most agreeable

MORNING EXERCISE

111 -

petition you could possibly make to them and the one which they most willingly hear and grant. Thus you will have a special share in the love and glory that Jesus continually receives from those Holy and Divine Persons. And He will receive this glory and love as being rendered, in a certain manner, by you, since it is rendered at your request and insistence.

If you make faithful use of these three practices every morning, then every day of your life and your life as a whole will be a perpetual act of love and glorification of Jesus Christ. If it were possible to find in the world a man so detestable, that he would want all his actions and his every breath to be so many blasphemies against God, and if he also had the intention of uniting himself with all the blasphemies committed on earth and in hell: and if, not satisfied with that, he were to excite and urge all the demons and wicked men to blaspheme for him, is it not true that by reason of his abominable intention, all his acts and

his every breath would be blasphemies and all the blasphemies on earth and in hell could be imputed to him? So then, on the other hand, if you use the three practices I have proposed above, it is most certain that by virtue of your holy intention all the acts of your life will be as many acts of praise to God and you will be associated in a special manner in all the honor that is incessantly given to Him on earth and in heaven.

It would also be a good thing, over and above all this, if you were to make, every morning, out of love for Our Lord, an act of acceptance of all the afflictions you may have to bear during the day and also an act of renunciation of all the temptations of the devil and all the feelings of self-love and other passions which may come upon you during the day. These two acts have considerable importance, because a thousand little annoyances occur in the course of the day, and they pass on and you often do not take thought and offer them to God. In the same way many temptations and impulses of self-love creep into your acts without your taking notice of them. By virtue of the first act, however, God will be glorified by all the pains, both of body and soul, which will make themselves felt during the day, if you accept them first thing in the morning out of love for Him. Then, by virtue of the second act, He will give you strength to resist more easily all evil

## 112- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

temptations and to destroy more easily all effects of self-love and other vices.

These two acts, together with the three practices that precede them, are all embodied in the following prayer.

### **VI. MORNING PRAYER TO JESUS.**

O Most Lovable Jesus, I fall at Thy feet in the utmost depths of my nothingness. I adore and glorify Thee in the immense extent of Thy spirit, the infinite greatness of Thy love and all the virtues and powers of Thy divinity and humanity. I bless Thee and love Thee in all that Thou art universally, both in Thyself and in all things. I give Thee infinite thanks for Thy care and watchfulness over me during this night. I offer Thee all the honor that has been given Thee during this night in heaven and on earth.

O my Saviour, I offer and consecrate myself entirely and forever to Thee and through Thee to Thy Eternal Father. I offer Thee my body, my soul, my mind, my heart, my life, all the parts of my body, all the powers of my soul, every breath I draw, every throb of my heart and veins, every step I take, every look, every use I make of my senses and in general everything that has been, is and shall be in me. It is my desire that all these things may be consecrated to Thy glory and become so many acts of praise, adoration and love of Thee. Then may it please Thee, O my God, in Thy great power and mercy, to make this be so, in order that everything in me may render to Thee continual honor and homage.

I likewise offer up to Thee, O Most Lovable Jesus, and through Thee to the Blessed Trinity, all the love and glory that will be given Thee today and for all eternity in heaven and on earth. I unite myself to all the praise that ever has been, is now, and ever shall be given to the Father by the Son and the Holy Ghost, to the Son and the Holy Ghost by the Father, and to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost by the Blessed Virgin, by all the angels, all the saints and by all creatures.

O Jesus, adore and love the Father and the Holy Spirit for me.

O Father of Jesus, love and glorify Thy Son Jesus for me.

O Holy Spirit of Jesus, love and glorify Jesus for me.

O Mother of Jesus, bless and love thy Son Jesus for me.

O blessed St. Joseph, O angels of Christ and His saints, adore and love my Saviour for me.

And besides this, I now accept for the love of Thee, O my Lord Jesus, all the annoyances, contradictions, and afflictions, whether of body or of spirit, which may befall me today and during my whole life, offering myself to Thee to suffer everything Thou art pleased that I should suffer for Thy pure glory and good pleasure.

Furthermore, I declare that from now on I shall renounce all the suggestions and temptations of the devil and I disavow and detest all the motions, feelings and effects of pride, of self-love and of all other passions and evil inclinations that are in me.

And I beg Thee, O my Saviour, to imprint in my heart the hatred and horror and fear of sin, which is greater than all the evils in the world. Grant that I may die rather than offend Thee wilfully. Give me the grace to serve Thee today and all the rest of my life, with fidelity and love, meekness, patience, obedience and humility.

## **VII. ANOTHER MORNING PRAYER TO SANCTIFY ALL YOUR ACTIONS AND TO MAKE THEM PLEASING TO GOD.**

O my God, my Creator and Sovereign Lord, since I belong entirely to Thee, so also everything that proceeds from me should belong to Thee. Thou hast created me for Thyself; therefore, it is fitting that I should offer Thee myself and all my acts, which can have no value unless they be referred to Thee. And so do I, Thy truly insignificant creature, now and for all the moments of my life offer Thee myself and all my works, especially those that I am to do today, the good as well as the indifferent, the free as well as the natural acts. In order that they may be more pleasing to Thee, my God, I unite them to all the works of Our Lord and of His most holy Mother, as well as to those of all the souls of the blessed and of just men in heaven and on earth. I consecrate to Thee every step I take, every word, every breath, in short, all my actions, with the intention and the desire of giving Thee infinite glory and of losing Thee with an infinite love.

I offer Thee my heart, my will, my understanding and myself not only in the manner most agreeable to Thee (for this is my intention

114 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

in each one of my acts), but also with these acts, I refer to Thee the actions of all other creatures, especially those actions that are not offered to Thee. I offer Thee the perfection of all the angels, the virtue of the patriarchs, of the prophets and of all the apostles, the sufferings of the martyrs, the penance of the confessors, the purity of the virgins, the sanctity of all the blessed and finally Thy very Self. All this I do, not to obtain favors from Thee, not even paradise, but only to please Thee more and give Thee greater glory.

Moreover, I mean to offer Thee from this moment on in my present state of freedom, all the acts of love by which I shall love Thee necessarily in the blissfulness of eternity, as I hope to do by Thy bounty. In like manner, I offer Thee all the virtuous acts that I shall ever perform and all the perfect acts to be done by the blessed in the homeland of glory. Since all things are excellent in proportion as they are pleasing to Thee and in conformity with Thy divine will, I desire not only to conform my will to Thine in everything, but I also long to accomplish nothing but what is pleasing to Thee, desiring that Thy holy will and not my own may be done in all things. And I would do this, saying always with my lips and with my heart and by all the actions of my life: Fiat, Domine, voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra. "Lord, may Thy will be done on

earth as it is in heaven."

May it please Thee, O my God, to grant me this grace, in order that I may always love Thee more ardently, serve Thee more perfectly and act more purely for Thy glory, that I may become so transformed into Thee as to live in Thee alone, for Thee alone, and to find my paradise both in time and eternity in giving pleasure to Thee.

#### Prayer to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary

O Mother of Jesus, Queen of heaven and earth, I hail thee and honor thee as my sovereign Lady, to whom I belong by right and upon whom I depend after God. I pay thee all the honor that I can and must, according to God's will and thy own greatness. I give myself all to thee; may it please thee to give me thy Son. Grant that by thy prayers all that is in me may be consecrated to His glory and to thine and that I may die rather than lose His grace.

#### MORNING EXERCISE

115 -

#### Prayer to St. Joseph

O blessed St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus and worthy spouse of Mary, be my father, my protector and my guide today and all my life.

#### Prayer to Your Guardian Angel

O my holy guardian Angel, I give myself to thee: offer me to Jesus and His most holy Mother and ask them to give me the grace to honor and love them with all the perfection they demand of me.

#### Prayer to all the Angels and Saints

O holy angels, O blessed saints, I offer myself to you; offer me to Jesus and beg Him to give me His holy blessing, that I may faithfully employ this day in His service and that I may die rather than offend Him.

#### Prayer to beg a blessing from Jesus and Mary

O Jesus, O Mary, Mother of Jesus, I beseech you to give me your holy blessing. Nos cum prole pia, benedicat Virgo Maria. "May the Virgin Mary with her Divine Child bless us. Amen."

**EXERCISE DURING THE DAY****VIII. JESUS IS THE CENTER OF YOUR BEING AND SHOULD BE THE SOLE OBJECT OF YOUR LIFE.**

The first, most important, and, indeed, the only object of the contemplation, love, and delight of the Eternal Father is His Son, Jesus. I repeat: the only object. The Divine Father has willed that His Son Jesus should be "all in all things" (Eph. 1, 23), and that "He is before all, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1, 17), according to the words of St. Paul. This is why God the Father beholds and loves all things in His Son and sees nothing but Him in all things. The same Apostle also teaches that God made all things in Jesus and by Jesus (Col. 1, 16), and that likewise He made all things for Jesus (Heb. 2, 10). He has embodied in His Son "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2, 3), of His goodness and beauty, of His glory and joy, and of all His other divine perfections. He tells us most clearly, and on several occasions, that He has placed all His complacency and delight in this Only and Well-beloved Son. This does not, of course, exclude the Holy Spirit, since He is the Spirit of Jesus and is one with Jesus.

After the example of the Heavenly Father, whom you are obliged to follow and imitate as your own Father, you must make Jesus Christ the sole object of your mind and heart. You must see and love all things in Him; you must not see nor love anything except Him in all things. You must perform all your actions in Him and for Him. You must seek all your happiness and your paradise in Him; as He is the paradise of the Eternal Father, and as the Father takes all His pleasure in Him, so also this Holy Father has given Him to you to be your paradise. Therefore, He commands you to dwell in Him: *Manete in me*, "Abide in me" (John 15, 4). And His beloved disciple twice repeats this commandment to us. "Abide in him" he says, "And now little children, abide in him" (1 John 2, 27-28). And St. Paul would lead you to do this by assuring you that "there is ... no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8, 1). You may truly say

**EXERCISE DURING THE DAY**

117 -

even further that outside of Him there is nothing but perdition, malediction and hell.

Yet notice once more at this point, that when I say that Jesus Christ must be the only object of your life I do, not exclude the Father and the Holy Ghost. As Jesus Himself assures you that "he that seeth me seeth the Father also" (John 14, 9), it follows that whoever speaks of HIM also speaks of His Father and of His Holy Spirit; whoever honors and loves Him likewise honors and loves His Father and His Holy Spirit; and whoever makes Him the only object Of his life, includes the Father and the Holy Ghost.

Make our most amiable Saviour the sole object of your thoughts, desires and affections, the single end of all your actions, the centre of your being, your paradise, and your all. Wherever you may be, have recourse to Him, as to a place of refuge, by lifting up your mind and heart to Him. Remain always in Him, that is, let your mind and your heart, all your thoughts, desires and affections be His. Let all your actions be done in Him and for Him, in the manner that will be explained in 'Tart Three' of this book.

Meditate often His own words: *Unum est necessarium*, "but one thing is necessary" (Luke 10, 42), namely to serve, love and glorify Jesus.

Consider that apart from Him all is but madness, deceit, illusion, loss of time, affliction of body and spirit, nothingness, vanity of vanities; that you are on earth for this one thing alone, the principal, the most necessary, the most urgent, in fact, the only business you have in this world. It must be your chief and only care. All your thoughts, words, and actions must be directed to this one end. So you must be most careful, at the beginning of all your actions, especially the most important ones, to offer them to Our Lord, protesting that you wish to do them for His glory.

If you should fall Into some sin, do not be discouraged-not even if you fall many times-but profoundly humble yourself before God in spirit and retire sometimes, if circumstances permit, into some secluded place where you may kneel down and ask His pardon, making an act of contrition and begging our Lord Jesus Christ to repair

118- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

your fault and to give you fresh grace and strength to keep you from falling again. Ask Him to implant within you, once again, your resolution to die rather than to offend Him.

Remember from time to time that you are before God, in fact, in God Himself (Act. 17, 28); that our Lord Jesus Christ, in His divinity, surrounds you on all sides, and so completely penetrates and fills you that He is more intimately in you than you are in yourself; and that He is constantly thinking of you and keeps His eyes and heart ever turned toward you. May this arouse you in turn if not to think always of Him, at least never to allow a full hour to go by without lifting up your mind and heart to Him by one or another of the following aspirations or other prayers, it may please His divine spirit to inspire in you.

#### **IX. ASPIRATIONS TO BE SAID DURING THE COURSE OF THE DAY.**

O Jesus! O Good Jesus! O Possessor of my heart! O Beloved of my Soul!

O Object of all my love, when shall I love Thee perfectly?

O Divine Son, fill with light the shadows of my mind, set fire to the coldness of my heart!

O Light of my eyes, let me know Thee and know myself, that I may love Thee and hate myself!

O my sweet light, make me clearly see that all that is not Thee is nothingness, deceit and vanity!

O my God and my All, take away all that is not Thee, to unite me all with Thee!

O my beloved All, be all to me, and may all else be nothing to me!

O my Jesus, be Jesus to me!

O Life of my soul, O King of my love, live and reign in me perfectly!

Live, Jesus, live, King of my heart, live, Life of my life. Glory and love to Thee forever, in all and from all things!

O divine Fire, immense Fire, who art everywhere, consuming and devouring Fire, why dost Thou not consume me altogether in Thy sacred flames?

#### **EXERCISE DURING THE DAY**

119-

O Fire, O celestial Flame, come, transform me into a pure flame of love for my Jesus!

O Jesus, Thou art all fire and all flame of love for me! Oh, why am I not all flame and fire of love for Thee?

O Jesus, Thou art all mine; may I be all Thine forever!



Ah, God of my heart! Ah, my soul's only heritage! What is there for me to desire on earth or in heaven save Thee?

O Unum Necessarium! Unum quaero, unum desidero, unum volo, unum mihi est necessarium, Jesus meus et omnia! O Thou only Necessary One! It is Thou whom I seek, it is Thou whom I desire, it is Thou whom I long for, it is Thou whom I need, my Jesus, who art in all things and beyond whom all is nothing!

Veni Domine Jesu! Come, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, into my soul, there to love Thyself in all perfection!

Alas, Jesus, when will there be nothing left in me to oppose Thy love ?

O Mother of Jesus, show me that thou art the Mother of Jesus by forming Him and making Him live in my soul!

O Mother of Love, love thy Son for me!

O Good Jesus, give back to Thyself a hundredfold all the love I ought to have given Thee in all my life, and the love of all creatures ought to have given Thee!

O Jesus, I offer Thee all the love in heaven and earth!

O Jesus, I give Thee my heart; fill it with holy love!

O Jesus, may all my steps pay homage to the steps that Thou didst take on earth!

O Jesus, may all my thoughts be consecrated to the honor of Thy holy thoughts!

O Jesus, may all my words give homage to Thy holy words!

O Jesus, may all my acts give glory to Thy divine actions!

O my Glory, may I be wholly sacrificed to Thy glory forever!

O my All, I give up all that is not Thee and give myself to Thee forever!

Jesus, without whom all is nothing, is my all.

Thus I want all things, though I want not one!

For, having nothing, then will I have all,  
If you take all, and leave me Him alone!

120 -

### **EVENING EXERCISE**

IT IS just as important to end as it is to begin the day well and to make a special consecration to God of the last actions of each day as well as the first. To this end, before taking your rest in the evening, make a point of going on your knees for a quarter of an hour to thank God for the graces He has given you during the day, to examine your conscience and to renew the offering of yourself to Him by the following exercises and practices.

## **X. ACT OF THANKSGIVING.**

O Jesus, my Lord, I adore Thee as the One who, together with Thy Father and Thy Holy Spirit, art the source of all that is good and holy and perfect in heaven and on earth, in the orders of nature, of grace, and of glory. To Thee do I refer all the gifts and benefits, both earthly and heavenly, temporal and eternal, which ever came forth from Thee, but especially this day, both on earth and in heaven.

I give Thee infinite praise and thanks for all that Thou art in Thyself, and for all the effects of Thy goodness that Thou hast ever brought about, especially during this day, for the benefit of all Thy creatures. But I thank Thee more especially for those Thou hast accomplished for me, the most insignificant of Thy creatures, as well as for all the benefits Thou hast designed on my behalf from all eternity.

I offer Thee all the love and all the praises that have ever been given Thee, especially all those that have been given Thee today in heaven and on earth. May all the angels, all the saints, all creatures and all powers of Thy divinity and Thy humanity bless Thee forever.

## **XI. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.**

O Lord Jesus, I adore Thee as my sovereign judge. Most willingly do I submit to Thy power of judging me and I rejoice that Thou hast this power over me. May it please Thee to let me share a little of that

EVENING EXERCISE

121

light by which Thou wilt show me my sins, when I shall appear before Thy judgment seat at the hour of death, so that, in the brightness of that light, I may know the sins I have committed against Thy divine majesty. Let me share in the zeal of Thy divine justice and in Thy hatred for sin, so that I may hate my sins as Thou dost hate them.

Having said this prayer, make a brief examination of the whole day to see whether you have offended God. When you have recalled your sins, accuse yourself before Him and ask pardon of Him, making use of the following acts of contrition.

## **XII. ACT OF CONTRITION BEFORE RETIRING.**

O my Saviour, I accuse myself before Thee and before all Thy angels and saints, of all the sins that I have committed in my whole life, especially today, against Thy divine majesty. I implore Thee, my Lord, by Thy great mercy, by the Precious Blood which Thou didst shed for me and by the prayers and merits of Thy most holy Mother and of all Thy angels and saints, to give me grace, at this time, to conceive true contrition and repentance for my sins.

O my God, I detest my sins with my whole heart and with all the power of my will. I detest them because of the offense, injury and dishonor which I have given Thee by means of them. I hate them because Thou dost hate them and because they are infinitely displeasing to Thee. O Good Jesus, these sins of mine have been the reason for which Thou didst suffer the most frightful tortures that have ever been suffered, and Thou didst die the most cruel of all deaths. That is why I hold them in abhorrence, O my good Saviour, and renounce them forever. Oh, who will give me all the anguish of St. Peter or St. Mary Magdalen and all the penitent saints, that I may weep for the offenses I have committed against my God with all the feeling and all the regret with which they wept for theirs! Oh, who will bring me to hate all my iniquities as much as the angels and saints hate them!

Oh, my God, if it were only possible for me to have as great a horror for my sins as Thou hast Thyself! Lord, let me detest them, let me hold them in abhorrence even as Thou dost and let me abominate

all that is not pleasing to Thee!

122- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

O my sweet Lord, let me die a thousand times rather than offend Thee mortally again, or, indeed, rather than offend Thee in any way at all, by a deliberate act of will. I promise, with the help Of Thy grace, that I will accuse myself of all my sins at my next confession and I assure Thee of my firm resolution to avoid them in the future for love of Thee. Yes, my God, with my whole heart, I renounce every sort of sin forever and I offer myself to Thee to do and to suffer all Thou dost please, in satisfaction for my sins. In homage to Thy divine justice, I now willingly accept all the sufferings and penances it shall please Thee to inflict upon me, whether in this world or in the next, in expiation of my faults, to satisfy for the dishonor I have given Thee today by Thyself, Thy holy Mother, by Thy angels and saints and by all the holy souls there are on earth.

O Good Jesus, I give myself all to Thee. Destroy in me all that does not please Thee. Make reparation, on my behalf, for all the offenses I have committed before Thy Eternal Father, Thyself, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother, Thy angels, Thy saints and all Thy creatures. Give me the strength and grace to offend Thee no more.

O angels of Jesus, saints of Jesus, Mother of Jesus, make up for my defects, I beg you; atone on my behalf for the dishonor I have given God by my sins, and return to Him a hundredfold all the honor and glory I should have given Him today and in my whole life.

O Mother of Jesus, Mother of Mercy, ask thy Beloved Son to show me His mercy. Mother of Grace, implore thy Son to give me grace never to offend Him again and to serve and love Him faithfully.

O blessed St. Joseph, O my Guardian Angel, O blessed St. John and blessed St. Mary Magdalen, intercede for me that I may obtain mercy and grace to be more faithful to God.

**XIII. ACT OF OBLATION.**

O Jesus, I offer Thee the rest I am about to take, in honor of the eternal rest Thou dost enjoy in the bosom of Thy Father, and in honor of the sleep and temporal rest Thou didst take in the bosom of Thy Mother, as well as during Thy whole life on earth.

I offer Thee every breath I shall draw during this night, every pulse

**EVENING EXERCISE**

123-

of my heart and my veins, desiring that they may be so many acts of praise and adoration of Thee. I unite myself with all the praises which will be offered up to Thee, this night and forever, in heaven and on earth. I beg all Thy angels and saints, Thy Blessed Mother and Thy very Self to love and glorify Thee for me this night and for all eternity.

When you have said this and are lying down, you should make the sign of the Cross. Then say the last prayer that Jesus said to His Father at the last moment of His life: Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit' (Luke 23, 46). You should say this prayer with your life's last hour in view, and try to say it with just as much devotion as you would wish if you were indeed in that last hour. To do this, you must desire to make the offering, as far as possible, with the love, the humility, the confidence and all the divine and holy dispositions with which Jesus said these words Himself. At the same time unite yourself, as of that moment, with the final disposition in which Jesus ended His life, saying this prayer and imploring Him to impress those dispositions deeply within you

and to keep them there for you in your last hour, so that, by this means, you may die in Christ, that is, in the holy and divine dispositions in which He died, and thus you may be one of those of whom it is written: Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Apoc. 14, 13).

Finally, take care that your last action before falling asleep is the sign of the Cross; and that your last thought is of Jesus, that your last inward act is an act of love for Jesus and Mary. Thus you may merit the grace that the last words you say in your life will be these: Jesus! Maria! Live Jesus and Mary! O Good Jesus, be Jesus to me! O Mary, Mother of Jesus, be the Mother of my soul!

124 -

## CONFESSION

### XIV. PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION.

The frequent use of the Sacrament of Penance is a very useful, holy and necessary means for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls.

But it is a deplorable thing to see what a strange abuse many souls make of this Sacrament in our own day, when they come to, the feet of the priest to receive absolution for their sins, but get up and bear away their own condemnation because they have come without the dispositions necessary for true and solid repentance. This is a matter to be feared extremely, even by those who confess frequently, because there is a real danger of their going to confession more as a matter of routine than in a real spirit of penance, especially when they can detect no change in their life and no progress in Christian virtues. Therefore, the more you frequent this Sacrament, the more you should see that you make the proper preparation for receiving it. There are three things that will enable you to do, so.

1. You must fall on your knees before Our Lord, in some quiet place, if possible, to consider Him and adore Him in the rigorous penances, in the contrition and humiliation which He had to bear for your sins all through His life, especially in the Garden of Olives. And you should beg Him with great insistence to let you share in His spirit of penance, and to give you the grace to know your sins, to hate and detest them as much as He would wish, to confess them clearly, and to give them up absolutely and to be converted perfectly to Him, flying from all occasions of sin, while making use of the remedies necessary for the healing of the wounds of your soul.

To do this, you may use the following prayer:

O my dear Jesus, as I contemplate Thee in the Garden of Olives when Thou didst enter upon Thy Sacred Passion, I behold Thee prostrate upon the ground before Thy Father's face in the name of all sinners, since Thou hast taken upon Thyself all the sins of the

CONFESSION 125 -

world and, especially, my own. I see that by Thy divine light Thou dost place all those sins before Thy own gaze, to confess them to Thy Father in the name of all sinners, taking upon Thyself all the humiliation and contrition for them in His sight, and offering Thyself to Him to make whatever satisfaction and perform whatever penance is pleasing to Him.

O my Good Jesus, I behold Thee, as a result of this spectacle of the horror of my crimes and of the dishonor they give to Thy Father, reduced to an astounding agony, a frightful sorrow and to such an extremity of anguish and contrition, that the violence of the suffering makes Thy soul sorrowful unto death and causes Thee even to sweat blood, so terribly as to stain the ground about Thee.

O my Saviour, I adore, love and glorify Thee in Thy holy agony and in this spirit of penance to which Thou hast been reduced by Thy love and my offenses. I give myself to Thee now, that I may enter with Thee into this spirit. May it please Thee to give me some little share of the light that gave Thee cognizance Of my faults, that I may know them and confess them humbly. Give me some small share of the humiliation and contrition Thou didst bear before the Eternal Father, as well as some measure of the love with which Thou didst offer Thyself to Him in atonement and some fraction of Thy hatred and horror for sin. Give me the grace, I beseech Thee, to make this confession with perfect humility, sincerity and repentance and with a firm and strong resolution never to offend Thee again.

O Mother of Jesus, I implore thee to obtain for me those graces from thy Son.

O my holy guardian Angel, pray to Our Lord for me, to give me the grace to know my sins and confess them well, and to have true contrition for them and to be perfectly converted from them.

2. When you have said this prayer, you should examine your conscience with care and try to remember the sins you have committed since your last confession. Once you have recognized them, try to form in your heart real regret, perfect repentance and contrition for having offended so good a God, asking Him pardon for your faults, detesting them and renouncing them because they displease Him. making a firm resolution to avoid them in the future, with the

#### 126- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

help of His grace, flying from all occasions of sin, and making use of the proper and efficacious means to bring about a genuine conversion: for contrition is composed of all these elements.

Since, however, contrition is extremely necessary and important, not only in confession but in several other matters as well, I should like to show you in more detail the nature of contrition, and when and how you ought to make acts of contrition. This will be done after I have told you the third thing necessary for a perfect confession and what to do after you have confessed.

3. The third thing you must do, if you want to make a perfect confession, is to kneel before the priest as before one who represents the Person of Jesus Christ and takes His place. Present yourself to him as a criminal who has outraged the majesty of God, with the full intention of humiliating and confounding yourself, taking God's side against yourself, as against His enemy which you are in so far as you are a sinner, and being ready to arm yourself with His zeal for justice against sin and His infinite hatred for it. Do, not fail to bring with you the firm resolve to confess your sins humbly, completely and clearly, without disguises, without excuses, and without trying to shift the blame on to somebody else. But rather accuse yourself as though you were on the point of death. For it would be well to reflect that it is far better to state your sins in the ear of the priest than to bear the shame of them on the day of judgment, before the entire world, and then be damned forever.

Remember that you ought to be willing to accept with cheerfulness and courage the pain and confusion that go with the confession of sins, out of homage for the confusion and torments suffered by our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross for those very same sins, as well as to glorify Our Lord by your humiliations, remembering that the more you abase yourself, the more He is exalted in you.

#### **XV. THANKSGIVING AFTER CONFESSION.**

After you have confessed your sins and received pardon for them through the Sacrament of Penance, do not forget to thank Our Lord for having given you so great a grace. When He delivers you from some great sin, either by preventing you from falling into it, or by

pardoning you after your fall, even if it is only the smallest venial sin in the world, He is giving you a greater grace, for which You Owe Him more thanks, than if He had preserved you from all the plagues, diseases and other afflictions of the body that might beset you. Therefore, thank Him in such words as these, praying Him to preserve you from sin in the future.

Be Thou blessed, O Good Jesus, be Thou blessed a thousand times! May all Thy angels and Thy saints and Thy holy Mother bless Thee now and forever, for having established in Thy Church the holy Sacrament of Penance and for having given us so accessible, so easy and so efficacious a means of wiping out our sins and becoming reconciled with Thee! Be Thou blessed for all the glory that has been and will be given Thee by this sacrament until the end of the world! Blessed be Thou, also, for all the glory Thou hast Thyself rendered to Thy Father by the confession, if one may say such a thing, which Thou didst make to Him of our sins, in the Garden of Olives and by the humiliation, contrition and penance Thou didst bear for them! O my Saviour, engrave deep within me a great hatred, abhorrence and fear of sin, greater than all the other evils on earth and in hell and let me die a thousand deaths rather than offend Thee again.

## **XVI. NATURE OF CONTRITION.**

Contrition is so powerful, so holy and so desirable that a single act of true contrition is capable of wiping out a thousand mortal sins, if they were to be found in the soul.

Contrition is an act of hatred and abhorrence, of sorrow and repentance at the sight of a sin you have committed, because this sin offends God. It is an act of the will, by which you tell God that you desire to hate and detest your sins, that you are filled with shame for having committed them, and that you renounce them earnestly, not for your own interests but because of His. By this I mean, not so much because of the evil, injury and harm you have done to yourself, as because of the dishonor, great sufferings and most cruel death you have caused Our Lord to suffer by your sins.

It is true that the very slightest offense- against the infinite goodness

## 128 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

of God is so detestable that even if you were to weep until the day of judgment, or even if you were to die of grief over the smallest of your faults, it would not be enough. Nevertheless, in order to have contrition it is not absolutely necessary to shed tears, nor to conceive a pain that can be felt, nor a sensible feeling of anguish over our sins. Contrition is an interior and spiritual act of the will which is a spiritual power and not a faculty of sense; therefore, you may make an act of contrition without any sensible pain. It is enough to assure Our Lord, with the real will to carry out what you promise, that you want to hate and detest your sins and to avoid them in future, because they displease Him, and that you shall confess them at your next confession.

It should also be remembered that contrition is a gift of God and an effect of grace. Even if you had perfect knowledge of its essence and applied all the strength Of your mind and will to make an act of contrition, you would never be able to do so if the Holy Spirit did not give you grace. But you may console yourself with the thought that this grace will never be refused if you ask for it with humility, confidence and perseverance, and if you do not wait until the hour of your death to ask for it. For grace is ordinarily refused, in that last hour, to those who have neglected it during their lifetime.

Notice, also, that four things are necessary for true contrition. The first of these is to make restitution, at the earliest possible opportunity of things belonging to others, if you have anything that it is possible to return; also to restore the good name of another when you have robbed him of it by calumny or backbiting.

The second thing is to do everything in your power to bring about reconciliation with those with whom you are at odds.

The third is to have a firm and constant will, not only to confess your sins and renounce them, but also to use the necessary remedies and means to overcome evil habits, and to begin to live a truly Christian life.

The fourth thing is effectively to give up all active and passive occasions of sin-that is, the occasions you give others to offend God, as well as those by which you yourself are led into sin.

Such occasions are, for instance: for the promiscuously impure and

## CONFESSION 129 -

the adulterous, their partners in evil; for drunkards, their taverns; for gamblers and blasphemers, their games, when they have the habit of swearing and blaspheming or losing very much time and money at these pastimes; women and girls should avoid the least thing that tends to immodesty in dress, as well as excessive novelty and vanity in the matter of fashions; others should give up bad books, improper pictures, the wrong kind of parties and shows, and avoid certain groups, or certain individuals, as well as certain occupations which lead them into sin.

The Son of God Himself says: "If thy hand, or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into hell fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee having one eye to enter into life, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Matt. 18, 8-9). He is giving you here an absolute commandment under pain of eternal damnation (as the holy Fathers explain these words of Sacred Scripture), to cut off from yourself and entirely renounce all things that are occasions of ruin for yourself and others, even those which are not in themselves evil, even occupations and professions, if you cannot follow them without sinning, as well as things that are most close and dear and precious to you, if these things might occasion the loss of your soul.

Acts of contrition may be made at all times and in every situation, but they should be made particularly at such times as:

1. When you go to confession, for perfect contrition or at the very least attrition, which is imperfect contrition, is a necessary part of Penance. That is why I said above and here repeat, that, before you go to confession and after your examination of conscience, you should ask God for contrition and then try to make genuine acts of sorrow for sin.

2. When you have fallen into sin, so that you may instantly rise again by means of contrition.

3. In the morning and evening, so that if you have committed any sins during the night or in the day, they may be wiped out by contrition, and so you may always keep in God's grace. For this cause

## 130- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

I have set down various acts of contrition in the evening exercise, following the examination of conscience.

But over and above this, to give you readier access to the means and method of practising so necessary and important a virtue, which you need at every moment of your life, I have also added several varied acts of contrition which you may use, taking now one, now another, according to the promptings and guidance of the Spirit of God.

But do not make the mistake of imagining that, in order to have contrition for your sins, it is sufficient to read and pronounce with attention the acts set down in this book, or Others like them. True contrition must be accompanied by the conditions described above, but you must also remember in particular that you can not make a single act of contrition without a special grace from God. Therefore, when you want to have true repentance and contrition for your faults, be sure to pray Our Lord to give you grace to do so.

## **XVII. PRAYER TO BEG GOD FOR CONTRITION.**

O Good Jesus, I desire to have all the contrition and repentance for my faults that Thou desirest me to have. Yet Thou dost know that I can not have this unless Thou dost give it to me. Grant me contrition, I beg Thee, O my Saviour, in Thy great mercy. I know that I am unworthy that Thou shouldst look upon me and hear my prayer, but I trust in Thy infinite bounty, believing that Thou wilt give me what I ask of Thee most fervently, through the merits of Thy holy passion, of Thy holy Mother and of all Thy angels and saints.

O Mother of Jesus, O holy angels and blessed saints, pray to Jesus for me that He may give me perfect repentance for my sins.

After this prayer strive to make earnest acts of pure contrition:

## **XVIII. ACTS OF CONTRITION.**

O my Most Amiable Jesus, I hate and detest my sins for love of Thee.

O my Saviour, I renounce all sin forever because it offends Thee.

O my Jesus, I abhor my offenses because of the insult and dishonor I have given Thee by them.

## **CONFESSION    131 -**

O my God, would that I had never offended Thee, for Thou art so worthy of honor and love.

O my Lord, I desire to have all the contrition Thou dost will me to have for my sins.

O my God, would that I had in my heart all the sorrow and contrition possessed by all the penitent saints.

O Good Jesus, make me share the sorrow which Thou Thyself didst bear for my sins. I desire to have the greatest possible measure of the same contrition that Thou didst bear.

O Father of Jesus, I offer up to Thee and unite myself with the contrition and penance that Thy Well-beloved Son did feel for my Sins.

O Most Amiable Jesus, may I hate and detest my sins because they were the cause of Thy torments and Thy dreadful death on the Cross.

O my God, I want to hate my sins as vehemently as Thy angels and saints hate them.

O my God, I desire to hate and detest my sins with the same hatred with which Thou dost hate and detest them Thyself.

You might also make an act of contrition by striking your breast like the poor publican in the Gospel



and saying with him. Deus, propitius esto mihi peccatori: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18, 13). But you must desire to do and say this with the same contrition that the publican had, by virtue of which he went down to his house justified, as we are told by the Son of God Himself. -

These are a few acts of contrition, which are capable of wiping out all sorts of sins, provided only that they be uttered, either with the lips or in the heart, with a real will prompted by the workings of grace, and with a firm resolve to abandon sin and the occasions of sin, and to confess it, and carry out [at the earliest possible opportunity] all the other conditions mentioned above.

132 -

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

### **XIX. PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ comes to you in the Blessed Eucharist, with the greatest humility, abasing Himself so far as to take the form and appearance of bread, to give Himself to you, and with the most ardent love that impels Him to give you, in this Sacrament, all the greatest, most dear, and most precious things He has. You also should receive Him in this same Sacrament with the deepest humility and the greatest love. These are the two principal dispositions you should have when you go to Holy Communion.

### **XX. PRAYER BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION.**

O Jesus, my light and my sanctification, open the eyes of my spirit and fill my soul with Thy grace, so that I may realize the importance of the action I am about to perform, and do it in a holy and worthy manner for Thy glory.

O my soul, I pray thee, consider attentively how great and marvelous is the action thou art about to perform and how great is the holiness and dignity of Him whom thou art about to receive. Thou art about to partake of the greatest, most important, holiest and most divine action thou couldst ever perform. Thou art about to receive on thy tongue, in thy breast and in the most intimate recesses of thyself, thy God, thy Sovereign Lord and thy Saviour. Yes, thou art about to receive, really and actually, Jesus Himself in His own Person, who lives for all eternity in the bosom of His Father; Jesus Himself, who is the Life, the glory, the riches, the love and the delight of the Eternal Father; the very same Jesus whom so many patriarchs, prophets and just men of the Old Testament desired to see; the same Jesus who dwelt nine months in the womb of the Blessed Virgin whom she nursed and carried so often in her arms; the same Jesus who was seen walking and living on the earth, eating and drinking with sinners; the same Jesus who was nailed to the Cross.

HOLY COMMUNION

133 -

Thou art about to receive the same body that was bruised and torn and shattered for love of thee; the same blood that was shed upon the ground. Thou art about to receive next to thy own heart the very Heart which was pierced by a lance. Thou art about to receive in thy soul the soul of Jesus, which, when dying on the Cross, He commended into the hands of His Father. What a miracle of wonder! To think that I should receive into myself the very same Saviour who ascended in glory and triumph into heaven, who sits at God's right hand, and will come in power and majesty at the end of time to judge the universe.

O Most Great, Most Admirable Jesus, the angels purer than the sun do not esteem themselves worthy to look upon Thee, to praise Thee and to adore Thee; and today Thou dost not only allow me to contemplate Thee, Thou dost even desire me to take Thee into my heart and soul so that I may then have within myself all divinity, all of the most Holy Trinity and all Paradise. Ah, my Lord, what goodness is this! Whence comes this happiness to me, that the Sovereign King of heaven and earth should desire to take up his abode in me,

who am a hell of wretchedness and sin, in order to change me into a paradise of graces and blessings? O my God, how unworthy I am of such a favor! For I do indeed avow, in the presence of heaven and earth, that I far rather deserve to be cast into the bottom most depths of hell, than to receive Thee into my soul, so full of vices and imperfections.

Yet since it pleases Thee, O my Saviour, thus to give Thyself to me, I desire to receive Thee with all possible purity and love and devotion. With this intention, O Good Jesus, I give Thee my soul. Do Thou Thyself prepare me as Thou Thyself dost desire. Destroy in me everything that is contrary to Thee, fill me with Thy divine love and with all the other graces and dispositions with which Thou dost will me to receive Thee.

O Father of Jesus; annihilate in me everything that is displeasing to Thy Son and impart to me a share of Thy love for Him, with which Thou didst receive Him into Thy paternal bosom on the Day of the Ascension.

#### 134- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

O Holy Spirit of Jesus, I offer Thee my soul; adorn it with all the graces and virtues necessary to receive our Saviour.

O Mother of my God, may it please thee to let me share the faith and devotion, love and humility, the purity and sanctity with which thou didst so often receive Communion after thy Son's Ascension.

O holy angels and blessed saints, to you also, do I offer my soul. Offer it to my Jesus and pray Him to make it ready Himself, and that He may allow me to share in your purity and holiness, and in the very great love you bear for Him.

O my Dear Jesus, I offer Thee all the humility and devotion, all the purity and sanctity, all the love and all the preparation with which Thou hast ever been received by the holy souls that are, and ever have been, on the earth. Would that I had in myself the holy fervor, the divine love of all the angels, of all the seraphim, of all the saints on earth and in heaven, in order the more worthily to receive Thee. O my sweet Love, Thou art all love for me in the Sacrament of love and Thou dost come to me with an infinite love. Alas, why am I not also all love for Thee, that I might receive Thee into a soul entirely transformed into love for Thee.

And yet, O my Lord, nothing is worthy of Thee but Thine own Self, and there is no love by which Thou couldst be worthily received, except thine own divine love. Therefore, in order to receive Thee, not into myself, as being too unworthy of such a thing, but into Thy own Self, with the love which Thou hast for Thyself, I reduce to nothingness before Thee both myself and all that is mine. I give myself to Thee; I beg Thee to take up Thy abode in me, and to establish in me Thy divine love, so that when Thou dost come to me in Holy Communion, Thou mayest be received not into me, but into Thyself, with all the love with which Thou lovest Thyself

Take special note of the last part of this prayer, for in it is to be found the true disposition with which we are to receive the Son of God in Holy Communion. I have placed it here at the end for the benefit of more spiritual and more advanced souls.

Notice also that it is by no means useless to desire to have in you all the devotion and love of all holy souls, because Our Lord revealed to St. Mechtilde, a nun of the holy Order of St. Benedict, that if,

when she went to Communion, she did not feel any devotion in herself, she should desire to have the devotion and the love of all the holy souls who had ever received Communion and He would consider her as if she did indeed possess it.

We also read of St. Gertrude, a contemporary of St. Mechtilde, a member of the same order and of the same monastery, that one day, when she was about to receive Communion, and did not feel herself to be as well prepared or as full of devotion as she desired, she turned to Our Lord and offered Him all the preparation and devotion of all the saints and of the Blessed Virgin. The result of this was that He appeared to her and spoke to her the following words: "Now indeed thou dost appear in my sight, and in the sight of my saints, clad in just those garments and ornaments that thou hast desired!"

Ah, Lord, how good Thou art thus to accept our good desires as real effects!

## **XXI. THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.**

There are three things you should do after Holy Communion:

1. You should prostrate yourself in spirit at the feet of the Son of God abiding within you, to adore Him and ask His pardon for all your sins and ingratitude and for having received Him into so unworthy a place, with so little love and so poorly disposed.
2. YOU must thank Him for having given Himself to you, and in Invite all things in heaven and on the earth to bless Him with you.
3. Since He has given Himself all to you, you should give yourself all to Him, and beg Him to destroy in you everything that is contrary to Him and to establish in you forever the empire of His love and glory.

## **XXII. PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.**

O Jesus, O my God and my Creator, my Sovereign Lord, what marvel is this? That I should truly, at this very moment, possess in my heart the One who resides eternally in the bosom Of the Father! That I should indeed bear within me the same Jesus whom the most holy Virgin bore within her pure womb! That the most amiable Heart of Jesus, upon which the well-beloved disciple rested, which

136- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

was pierced by the lance upon the Cross, should truly rest in me, so close to my heart! That His most holy soul should be living in my own soul! That the divinity, the Most Holy Trinity, all that is most admirable in God and in heaven should have become merged in me, a most insignificant and most unworthy creature! O God, what mercies, what favors are these! What can I say, what can I do when I behold such great and astonishing marvels?

Ah, my Lord Jesus, let all the powers of my soul and body prostrate themselves before Thy divine majesty to adore Thee and render Thee fitting homage! May heaven and earth, and all the creatures that are in heaven and on earth come now and cast themselves at Thy feet that, with me, they may render to Thee a thousand acts of homage and adoration! But, O my God, how great is my boldness, that I should receive Thee, the Saint of saints, into so vile an abode, with so little love, so little preparation! Forgive me, my Saviour; with all my heart I beg forgiveness for this as well as for all the other sins and acts of ingratitude during my past life.

O Most Gentle and Amiable Jesus, O Thou the only One of my heart, O well-beloved of my soul, O object of all my affections, O my sweet life, my dear soul, my one and only love, my treasure and my glory,

my joy and my only hope! My Jesus, what am I to think of Thy bounties, so exceeding great to me? What am I to do for Thy love, when Thou hast wrought so many wonders for me? What thanks can I give Thee? My Saviour, I offer Thee all the blessings that ever have been and ever will be given Thee for all eternity by Thy Father, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy holy Mother, by all Thy angels and by all the holy souls who have ever received Thee in Holy Communion.

My God, may all that is in me be transformed into love and praise of Thee! May Thy Father, Thy Holy Spirit, all Thy angels, Thy saints, and all Thy creatures bless Thee eternally for me! Father of Jesus, Holy Spirit of Jesus, Mother of Jesus, angels of Jesus, saints of Jesus, bless Jesus for me!

O Good Jesus, Thou hast given Thyself to me with a love most great. In this same love I give myself to Thee. I give Thee my body, my soul, my life, my thoughts, my words and my deeds, and all that

#### HOLY COMMUNION

137-

depends upon me. I give myself all to Thee, that Thou mayest dispose of me and of all that belongs to me, in time and in eternity, according to Thy most adorable will. O my Lord and my God, do Thou Thyself make use of the power of Thy own hand to ravish me from myself, from the world and from all that is not Thyself, that Thou mayest entirely possess me. Destroy all my self-love, my own will and all my vices and unruly desires. Establish in my soul the kingdom of Thy pure love, of Thy holy glory and of Thy divine will, so that I may henceforth love Thee perfectly. And let me love nothing, except in Thee and for Thee.

May all my pleasure be in pleasing Thee, all my glory in glorifying Thee and in leading others to give Thee glory. May my most perfect happiness consist in carrying out Thy holy desires. O Good Jesus, establish in me the reign of Thy humility, Thy charity, Thy gentleness and patience, Thy obedience, Thy modesty, Thy chastity and all Thy other virtues. Clothe me in Thy spirit, Thy thoughts and inclinations, so that I may no longer have any thoughts, desires, or inclinations except Thy own. Finally, annihilate everything in me that is opposed to Thee, and so in me love and glorify Thyself in all the ways Thou dost desire.

O my Saviour, I offer Thee all the persons for whom I am bound to pray, and especially N.N. . . . Destroy in them all that is displeasing to Thee. Fill them with Thy divine love. Accomplish all the plans Of Thy divine goodness for their souls, and give to them everything that I have asked for myself.

#### **XXIII. THREE OTHER ACTS OF ADORATION, OF OBLATION AND OF LOVE.**

Since you are On earth only for the purpose of honoring and loving Jesus, and you belong to Him by an infinite number of ties, your chief preoccupation and business in life should be to adore and love Him, and to give and unite yourself without ceasing to Him. Thus, it would be a good thing to add to the preceding morning and evening exercises another quarter of an hour, either before or after noon, to make the three following acts. They are easy to make and take but little time; nevertheless they are most useful, for they gradually and imperceptibly establish those who persevere in their practice, in a

138-

#### THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

very close union and submission, and in a spirit of love and trust for Jesus. They should be made, not with haste or excitement, but in repose and tranquillity of mind. You should dwell upon the one you find most attractive or appropriate. Here is the way to make these acts.

##### *1. Act of Adoration:*

O Great and Admirable Jesus, I adore and honor Thee as my God and Sovereign Lord, upon whom I

depend and to whom I belong. I adore and honor Thee with all my power, and in every way possible to me. I offer up to Thee all the adoration and all the honor that ever has been, is now, or ever shall be offered to Thee in heaven or on earth.

Oh, would that I were entirely transformed into adoration and praise of Thee! May heaven and earth adore Thee now with me, and may all that is in heaven and on earth be transformed into adoration and glorification of Thee.

## *2. Act of Oblation:*

O Jesus, my Lord, I belong of necessity to Thee by a thousand ties, but I also desire to belong to Thee of my own free will. I, therefore, entirely offer, give and consecrate to Thee my body, my soul, my life, my heart and my mind, all my thoughts and my acts, everything that goes with or belongs to my being and my life. I desire that all that ever has been, is now, or ever shall be in me may belong totally, absolutely, exclusively and eternally to Thee. And I make to Thee this oblation and gift of myself, not only with all my strength and power, but also I give myself to Thee in all the virtue of Thy grace, in all the power of Thy spirit, and in all the strength of Thy divine love, which is mine since all that is in Thee is mine. I beg Thee, O my Saviour, do Thou in Thy great mercy Thyself make use of the strength of Thine arm and the power of Thy spirit and love to tear me away from myself and from all that is not of Thee and to possess me perfectly and forever for the glory of Thy Holy Name.

## *3. Act of Love:*

O Most Amiable Jesus, Thou art all goodness and all love, and all infinitely worthy of love. Thou hast created me to love Thee, and dost ask no other thing of me except that I should love Thee. I desire

## HOLY COMMUNION

139 -

to love Thee, O my Dearest Jesus, I desire to love Thee with my whole heart, my whole soul and all my strength. I desire, besides, to love Thee to the full extent of Thy divine will, with all the strength of Thy heart, and in all the virtues and all the powers of Thy love. For all these things are mine, and I can make use of them as of things belonging to me, since in giving Thyself to me Thou hast given me all that is Thine. O my Saviour, I desire to annihilate, at any cost, whatever in me is opposed to Thy love. O Good Jesus, I give myself to Thee to love Thee in all the perfection Thou dost ask of me.

Do, Thou Thyself remove in me every Obstacle in the path of Thy love, and do Thou love Thyself in me in all the ways Thou dost desire, since I give myself to Thee to do and suffer all it may please Thee, purely for Thy love.

O Jesus, I offer Thee all the love that ever has been, is now, and ever shall be borne for Thee in heaven and on earth. Oh, may the whole earth love Thee now with me, and may everything that is in the world be transformed into a pure flame of love for Thee! O Father of Jesus, Holy Spirit O Jesus, Mother of Jesus, Blessed St. Joseph, Blessed St. Gabriel, angels and saints of Jesus, love Jesus for me and repay Him a hundred times over, all the love I should have given Him in my whole life, as well as the debt of love owed to Him by all the wicked angels and all ungrateful men.

## **XXIV. PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD.**

O Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, Queen of Men and Angels, Wonder of Heaven and Earth, I pay thee all possible reverence, according to God's word, according to the desires of thy Only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I offer thee my soul and my life, and desire to belong to thee forever and to render thee particular homage and service, in time and in eternity. Mother of Grace and Mercy, I choose thee as Mother of my soul

because it pleased God Himself to choose thee for His Mother. Queen of Men and Angels, I accept and recognize thee as my sovereign, in honor of the dependence upon thee, as His Mother, that the Son of my God, my Saviour and my God, willed to have. I give thee, as my sovereign, all possible power, in accordance with God's holy will, over my soul and my life. O Holy Virgin, look upon

140- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

me as thy very own, and in thy goodness treat me as the subject of thy power, and as the object of thy mercies.

O Fount of Life and Grace, Refuge of Sinners, I have recourse to thee to be delivered from sin and saved from everlasting death. Let me remain under thy patronage and share in thy privileges. May I obtain through Thy powers and privileges, and through my right as thy bondsman, the graces I do not merit to Obtain, because of my sins. Let my life's last hour, that hour which will determine my eternity, be in thy hands, in honor of that happy moment of the Incarnation in which God became man and thou didst become the Mother of God.

Virgin and Mother, Holy Temple of the Godhead, Marvel of Heaven and Earth, all thy glories entitle thee to make me thine own. But I desire to belong to thee by my own choice and free will. Therefore, I give myself to thee and to thy Only Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and I wish to let no day go by without rendering to Him and to thee some particular homage and some token of my dependence and servitude, in which I desire to die and to live forever. Amen.

141 -

## PROFESSIONS OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

CHRISTIAN LIFE and sanctity are founded upon eight principal bases, which have been explained in 'Part One' of this book. The eight foundations of Christian holiness are faith, hatred of sin, humility, self-denial, renunciation of the world and of all things, the abandonment and submission of oneself to the divine will, the love of Jesus and His most holy Mother, the love of the Cross, and charity to our neighbor. These are the principles of heavenly theology, of Christian philosophy, of the science of the saints, which our Lord Jesus Christ taught by His words and still more by His example. You are obliged to follow these teachings if you wish to be true Christians. You are bound by the solemn profession you made at Baptism.

It is, therefore, very important to renew each day this profession, which is included in the eight following prayers. But be especially careful not to make them in haste, cursorily; take plenty of time, weighing what you say and letting it make a deep impression on your mind. If time does not permit, select one profession, or two, each day, and leave the others until a later hour or even another day. If you have few leisure moments, it would be better to employ only one prayer each day, with firm attention, rather than to use them all in a rush, without the application of mind demanded by the importance of these matters.

## XXV. PROFESSION OF FAITH.

O Jesus, I adore Thee as the author and consummation of faith, as eternal light and the source of all light. I give Thee infinite thanks that it hath pleased Thee, in Thy very great mercy, to call me forth from the shadows of sin and of hell into Thy admirable light, the light of faith. I beg pardon a thousand times over, because in the past I have not acted in accordance with this divine light, and I realize that I have often deserved to be deprived of that light. I protest that I wish to live in future only in accordance with the word of Thy

holy Apostle, St. Paul, who tells us that "the just man liveth by faith" (Rom. 1, 17).

To this end I give myself to the spirit of Thy holy faith and, in the power of that spirit as well as in union with the most lively and perfect faith of Thy Blessed Mother, the holy apostles and of all Thy holy Church, I make my profession before heaven and earth. And I am prepared, with the help of Thy grace, to make it also before all the enemies of that same faith. I profess entire and firm belief in all that Thou dost teach us both by Thyself and by Thy holy Church; I desire to give my blood and my life and to suffer all kinds of tortures, rather than to abandon one single item of that faith and adhere in the smallest degree to the errors opposed to it: I desire to live and conduct myself no longer according to the senses, as do the animals, or merely according to human reason like the scientists, but according to the light of faith like true Christians, and according to, the maxims of faith, which Thou hast left us in Thy holy Gospel. Preserve these holy resolutions in me, O my Saviour; make them grow and give me the grace to carry them out perfectly for the-glory of Thy Holy Name.

## **XXVI. PROFESSION OF HATRED AND DETESTATION OF SIN.**

O Jesus, I adore Thee in Thy incomprehensible sanctity and in Thy infinite hatred for sin. From the bottom of my heart I beg Thee to forgive all the sins I have committed in my whole life. I give myself to Thy spirit of sanctity and to Thy spirit of hatred for sin. In this spirit, I make profession of a hatred and detestation of sin more than of death, or of the devil, or hell, and more than of all the most detestable things imaginable; of hatred for sin alone: I profess that I will never grieve over anything but the offenses committed against Thy divine majesty, since there is nothing in the world which deserves to be the object of our enmity and the subject of our sorrows, save only this hellish monster. I profess to hate it so much that, with the help of Thy grace, if I were to behold on one hand all the tortures of earth and of hell, and on the other sin, I would choose the former sooner than the latter. O my God, preserve and increase more and more this hatred in my heart.

PROFESSIONS OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

143 -

## **XXVII. PROFESSION OF HUMILITY.**

O Most Adorable and Most Humble Jesus, I adore and bless Thee in Thy profound humility. I reduce myself to nothingness and confusion before Thee, when I consider my pride and vanity, and I most humbly beg Thee to forgive me. I give myself with all my heart to Thy spirit of humility. In this spirit, as well as in all the humility in heaven and on earth, plunging down into the depths of my own nothingness, I recognize before the whole world that I am nothing, have nothing, can do nothing, know nothing, and have no value whatsoever, and, therefore, of myself I have no power to resist even the slightest evil, or to do even the smallest good act; that, left to myself, I am capable of all the crimes of Judas, Pilate, Herod, Lucifer, and antichrist, and, in general, of all the sins of earth and of hell, and that, if thou didst not uphold me with Thy very great goodness, I should fall into a hell of all kinds of abominations; that I have deserved the wrath of God, and of all God's creatures, and merit only everlasting punishment. Such is my heritage. This is all I have to boast about-this, and not one thing more.

Therefore, I make profession of the desire to abase myself below all other creatures, considering and esteeming myself, and desiring to be considered and esteemed in all things and in every place, as the least of all men. I profess horror for all praise, honor, and glory, as of a curse and a poison, according to Thy words, O my Saviour, "Woe to you when men shall bless you" (Luke 6, 26). I profess the desire to embrace and love all scorn and humiliation as something that is due to a wretched reprobate such as I am, because I am a sinner and a child of Adam, which makes me, as I learn from Thy Apostle, *natura filii irae* (Eph. 2, 3), a child of wrath and malediction by my own natural condition. I profess the desire to be totally

reduced to nothing in my own estimation and in that of others, so that I may no longer have any regard for esteem of, or preoccupation with myself; and also so that no one may see me or esteem me any more than they would something that does not exist, but rather that all may see and esteem Thee only. O Good Jesus, eternal Truth, deeply impress

144- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

upon me these truths and sentiments, and grant that they may manifest their effects in me by Thy great mercy, for Thy holy glory.

## **XXVIII. PROFESSION OF ABNEGATION.**

O Jesus my Lord and my God, I adore Thee uttering these words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," and also, "Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple" (Matt. 16, 24; Luke 14, 33). I give myself to the spirit of light and grace with which Thou didst speak these words, so that I may recognize their importance and show their effects. In this spirit, I recognize three great truths, which exercise upon me a powerful compulsion to renounce myself and all things.

I see that Thou alone art worthy to be, to live, to act, and, therefore, that every other being must be reduced to nothing before Thee. If I am to exist and live in Thee, as it is Thy very great desire that I should do, it is necessary that I emerge from myself and all things, by reason of the corruption which sin has put into me and into all things. And I see that, by my sins, I have deserved to be stripped of all things, even of my own being and of my own life.

Therefore, I make the following profession, in the power of Thy grace, and in union with that same love by which Thou didst desire to live stripped of all worldly things, as well as in the power of the divine spirit by which Thou didst utter these terrible words: "I pray not for the world" (John 17, 9), and these also, in speaking of Thy followers: "They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world" (John 17, 16). In public, and most solemnly do I now profess that I desire henceforth to view the world and abhor it as being excommunicated, damned and another hell, and to renounce entirely and forever all the fame, money and enjoyment the world can offer; that I desire to take no voluntary satisfaction, pleasure or repose of spirit in any of these things, but to employ them as if I used them not, making no account of them, and not attaching myself to them in the least, but only using them through necessity, to obey Thy holy will in all things, and only for Thy pure glory.

I will try to live in this world of the old Adam as though I were

## **PROFESSIONS OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES**

145 -

not in it, and as one belonging to the other world, that of the new Adam, which is heaven. I resolve to live in this world as if it were a hell, that is, not only with detachment from it, but hatred, opposition and horror towards all that is in it. And I will live in love, desire and longing for the world to come, with patience towards this world, suffering it as Thou dost suffer it, my Saviour, in spite of Thy great hatred of it, and Thy infinite desire to destroy it and reduce it to ashes, as Thou wilt do in the day of Thy wrath.

May I live in the same manner, in the midst of this world, as a truly Christian soul would live if such a soul had been placed in the midst of hell by Thy command. May I remain on earth as one who is not on earth; and let my mind and heart and my conversation be in heaven, that is, in Thyself, for Thou art my heaven, my paradise, my world and my all.

And yet, my Lord, I do desire to progress further, even beyond this. I want to follow Thy word in



which Thou dost declare to me that if I wish to come after Thee I must not only renounce all things, but my own self as well. To this end, I give myself to the power of the divine love by which Thou didst reduce Thyself to nothingness, and in union with that same love I profess to renounce entirely and forever everything belonging to myself and to the old Adam; to annihilate at Thy feet, as far as possible, my mind, my self-love, my own will, my life and my being. I most humbly beg Thee to exert Thy divine power to annihilate me, in order to establish Thy kingdom in my heart, that Thou mayest live and reign and work in me in accordance with Thy designs.

I desire no longer to exist, or live, or act, or speak in and by myself, but in Thee and by Thee. I make this profession not only for now, but for all the moments, all the actions of my life, and I beg Thee with my whole heart to look upon my resolution and accept it as if I were making it every minute, and in every one of my acts, and to bring about that I may put this profession into practice for Thy glory, through Thy great goodness and power, so that I may say, together with Thy holy Apostle: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2, 20).

146- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

#### **XXIX. PROFESSION OF SUBMISSION AND ABANDONMENT OF SELF TO THE DIVINE WILL.**

O my Saviour, I adore Thee speaking these divine words: I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6, 38). I adore Thee in the most perfect submission rendered by Thee to all the desires of Thy Father. I implore pardon for all the obstacles I have placed in the way of Thy holy desires. I yield myself to Thy spirit in Order to follow Thee, from now on, in the practice of this virtue of submission. In the light of this divine spirit, I recognize that Thy holy will governs and disposes all things, whether by absolute command, or by permission. I also recognize that Thou hast placed me upon the earth only that I may here do Thy divine will. Consequently, this is my end, my centre, my element and my sovereign good.

And so, in union with the most perfect submission which Thou and Thy most holy Mother and all Thy saints render to the divine will, I profess to renounce entirely and forever all my wishes and inclinations. I desire never to have any other will but Thine, and to fix my eyes always upon it, and follow it wheresoever it leads, as perfectly as possible, in time and in eternity. I prefer to die, and to suffer a thousand hells, rather than to do anything against Thy most lovable will; and I wish in life and in death, in this world or the next, no other treasure, no other glory of joy or satisfaction, no other paradise but Thy most adorable will. O most dear will of my God, Thou art henceforth my heart, my soul, my life, my strength, my riches, my delight, my honor, my crown, my empire and my sovereign good. Live and reign in me perfectly and forever.

#### **XXX. PROFESSION OF LOVE FOR JESUS AND MARY.**

O Most Amiable Jesus, and dearest Mary, Mother of Jesus, I honor you in all your perfections and in the intensity of your great mutual love. I beg a thousand pardons for having loved you so little up to, now, and for having so often offended you. I surrender myself totally to your divine love. And in this same love, as well as in all the love in heaven and earth, recognizing that I am on earth only that

PROFESSIONS OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

147 -

I may love and glorify you, that I am obliged to do so for an infinite number of reasons. I profess my constant desire to employ myself with all my strength in loving and serving you; to desire to do all that I shall ever do, as perfectly as I can, for love of you; to desire rather to be annihilated than to give away, to anything whatever, the slightest spark of the love I owe to you; to place all my happiness and delight in honoring, serving and loving you; to desire to cause you to be loved and glorified by as many souls as I can

and in all the different ways that lie in my power.

### **XXXI. PROFESSION OF LOVE FOR THE CROSS.**

O Jesus, my dear crucified Love, I adore Thee in all Thy sufferings. I beg Thy forgiveness for all the failings of which I have been guilty in the afflictions it has pleased Thee to send me. I give myself to the spirit of Thy holy Cross, and in this spirit, as well as in all the love in heaven and on earth, I embrace, with my whole heart and for love of Thee, all the crosses of body and of spirit that shall come to me. I profess to seek all my glory, my riches and my satisfaction in the Cross, that is, in humiliations, privations and sufferings, saying with St. Paul: *Mihi acutè absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi* (Gal. 6, 14). "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "For my part, I solemnly profess that I desire no other paradise in this world but the Cross of my Lord Jesus Christ."

### **XXXII. PROFESSION OF CHARITY TOWARDS YOUR NEIGHBOR.**

O Jesus, God of love and of charity, I adore Thee in all the excesses of Thy divine charity. I beg Thy forgiveness for my failings in this virtue, which is the queen of all virtues. I surrender myself to Thy spirit of charity. And in this spirit, as well in all the charity of Thy holy Mother and of all the saints, I profess never to hate anything, except sin; to desire to love all men, for love of Thee; never to think or do any evil to anybody, but always to think and judge and say and do what is good, in regard to everybody; to excuse and bear the faults of others; to put a favorable interpretation upon things; to have compassion for the spiritual and bodily woes of my neighbor and to

148 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

conduct myself towards each and every one with all gentleness, benignity and charity. O Eternal Charity, I give myself to Thee. Annihilate everything in me that is opposed to Thee, and establish Thy kingdom in my heart and in the hearts of all Christians.

149 -

### **PART THREE**

#### **Devotional Exercises to Be Done Each Day to Live a Christian and Saintly Life and to Make Jesus Reign in Your Soul**

151 -

### **Part Three**

#### **DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES TO BE DONE EACH DAY TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN AND SAINTLY LIFE AND TO MAKE JESUS REIGN IN YOUR SOUL**

#### **SANCTIFICATION OF YOUR DAILY ACTIONS**

### **I. OBLIGATION AND METHOD TO PERFORM YOUR ACTIONS DEVOUTLY.**

I have already explained to you, in 'Part Two of this book, the way to begin and end each day well. My present purpose is to offer you a few practices by which it will be very easy, with the grace of Our Lord, to sanctify every one Of the actions which you are obliged to do not only as a religious but also as a Christian. For I cannot repeat too often that it is most important for everyone to understand that not only religious

but all Christians no matter what their state in life, are obliged, as members of Jesus Christ, to live the life of their Head, that is, a thoroughly holy life, and to perform all their actions, whether great or small, in a Christian manner. What do I mean when I say in a Christian manner? I mean in a divine and holy manner, in the manner which characterized Jesus Christ in everything that He did. I mean with the spirit of Jesus Christ, with His holy and divine dispositions.

You are obliged by countless reasons to act in this way, and in the first part of this book I presented some of the most compelling of these reasons. But in addition, I beg you to return often to the consideration of the fact that Jesus Christ is our Head and all of us are His members, and that our union with Him is much more perfect and intimate than that of the members of a natural body with their head, because the principle of this union is His grace. Hence you are obliged to do everything in Him and for Him; for Him because the members belong to Him, because everything in the members belongs to the

## 152 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

Head; in Him, that is, in His spirit, dispositions and intentions, because the members must follow and imitate their Head, and must be animated only by His spirit, with no other dispositions and intentions but His.

This is a matter of the highest importance, because the greater part of your life is taken up with a succession of repeated little acts such as drinking, eating, sleeping, reading, writing, conversing with one another and so on. Now by all these little actions, if you would only set your mind on doing them well, you might give great glory to God and make rapid progress along the road of His love. By your neglect of these little things God is deprived of the glory you owe Him, and you lose the graces He would otherwise give you.

For this reason St. Paul exhorts you to do everything, whether you eat or drink or do any other thing, no matter how insignificant or trifling, for the glory of God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (COL. 3, 17). What does it mean, to do what you do in the name of Jesus Christ? It means to do it in the spirit of Jesus Christ, with the dispositions and intentions with which Jesus Christ performed the same actions that you perform, while He was on earth, with which He would yet again perform them, were He in your place now. Whoever acts in the name of another has to act, as far as possible, in the spirit of the person represented, that is, with his dispositions and intentions, just as he himself would act, if he were present.

You may object: Who is able to know the dispositions and intentions with which Jesus Christ performed His actions? By way of answer, let me tell you two things:

1. The light of faith reveals to us that His dispositions were humility, meekness, patience, charity towards others, recollection - of God and all kinds of virtue: His intentions were to love His Eternal Father, to glorify Him, to give Him pleasure and to carry out His divine will.

2. It is not even necessary to know them; it is sufficient to have the desire and intention of performing your actions in the spirit of Jesus Christ, with His dispositions and intentions. And so it is really easy, with the help of God's grace, to do all that you do in a Christian and holy manner.

## SANCTIFICATION OF YOUR DAILY ACTIONS

153 -

Make a point, then, of lifting up your heart to Jesus when you begin any action or at least any of your most important acts, and of assuring Him: (1) that you renounce yourself, your self-love and your own mind, that is, all your own personal dispositions and intentions; (2) that you surrender yourself to Him, to His holy love and to His holy spirit, in your desire to perform your various acts with the

dispositions and intentions with which He performed His. By this means, you will give Him very much glory in everything that you do, and you will make great progress, in a short time, along the road of His grace.

Now turn to the practice of this holy exercise, as set forth in divers ways in the following prayers. These may be uttered with the lips or with the heart alone, now in one way, now in another. You do not have to follow the exact words given here, but need only to keep to the meaning and substance of the words.

## **11. PRAYERS TO SANCTIFY THE PERFORMANCE OF ALL YOUR ACTIONS.**

1. O Jesus, I renounce myself, my own mind, my self-love and all that pertains to me. I give myself to Thee, to Thy holy spirit and Thy divine love, in order to carry out what I am about to do through Thee, under the guidance of Thy spirit and Thy pure love.

2. O Jesus, as far as it is possible to me, I cast at Thy feet my own mind, my own self-love, my own dispositions and intentions, everything that is mine. I give myself entirely to Thee; destroy me Thyself and take up Thy abode in me, so that it may be Thou that speakest and workest in me, according to Thy spirit and Thy dispositions and intentions.

3. O Good Jesus, I surrender myself totally to Thy divine power and Thy holy love. Draw me out entirely, if it please Thee, from myself, hide me in Thyself and absorb me into Thyself that I may no longer live or speak or act save in Thee and by Thee and for Thee.

4. O Good Jesus, I offer Thee this action in honor of the action Thou didst perform in the world. I desire, if it be pleasing to Thee, to do this in union with the same dispositions and intentions as those with which Thou didst perform all Thy holy actions.

5. O my God, since it is true that Thou art always with us, and

154- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

that Thou dost operate in all our works, grant, I beseech thee, that I may also be always with Thee, and perform each action with the same intentions as Thou, in union with the same love, perfections, and sanctity with which Thou dost now perform it with me.

6. O Good Jesus, let there be nothing for me, nothing for self-love, nothing for the world; but all for Thee, O my Saviour, all for Thy glory, and all for Thy pure love.

## **111. How To SANCTIFY A PROLONGED ACTIVITY, OR ONE REQUIRING THE FULL ATTENTION OF THE MIND.**

When you have to perform some action which by its long duration or its demands upon your concentration threatens to distract you from God's presence, make a point of turning to your good angel, to the other angels and saints, and to the most Holy Virgin, before you begin and say to them: "Angels of Jesus and His saints, Mother of Jesus;" and say this with the intention of asking them to love and glorify Jesus on your behalf as long as you are engaged in the performance of this action.

## **IV. PRAYER BEFORE CONVERSATION.**

O Jesus, I give myself to Thee. Inspire my lips with things Thou dost wish me to speak and grant that all my words pay homage to Thy holy words.

O Jesus, may all my conversations be consecrated to the honor of Thy divine converse with men on

earth. Grant me, if it please Thee, a share in the humility, meekness, modesty, and charity which marked Thy friendly discourse with persons of every type.

## **V. PRAYER BEFORE MEALS.**

O my God, there are many people who have nothing to eat, and yet they have not offended Thee as much as I. But by an excess of charity, Thou dost give this meal to me rather than to them. My dearest Lord, I desire to eat it for love of Thee, because it is Thy holy will. I wish to partake of this food in union with the same love with which Thou dost give it to me; and I desire, if it please Thee, that all the motions

### **SANCTIFICATION OF YOUR DAILY ACTIONS**

155 -

I shall make, taking each bite, may be so many acts of praise and love for Thee.

O Jesus, I offer Thee this repast in honor of the meals Thou didst take on earth. I renounce all self-love, and I desire to eat now in union with the love which subjected Thee to the need of eating and drinking, and in union with all the holy dispositions and intentions with which Thou didst partake of earthly nourishment.

## **VI. PRAYER BEFORE RECREATION.**

O Jesus, I offer Thee this recreation in honor of and in union with the holy recreation and divine rejoicings of Thy mortal life in company with the Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother and the angels and saints. Referring to Thyself, Thou didst say: *Delectabar per singulos dies, ludens coram eo omni tempore, ludens in orbe terrarum; et deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum.* "I was delighted every day, playing before him at all times; playing in the world. And my delights were to be with the children of men" (Prov. 8, 30-31). The holy Gospel tells us that Thou didst rejoice in the Holy Spirit, and didst command the apostles to rest after work.

## **VII. PRAYER FOR A JOURNEY.**

O Jesus, may all my journeys, my travels, my goings and comings, and my every step, give glory to the various journeys, the travels up and down, the goings and comings and every step of Thy blessed feet on earth.

O Jesus, may every movement of my eyes, lips, feet and of all my exterior and interior senses pay homage to the divine use of Thy deific eyes, Thy sacred lips, Thy blessed hands, Thy holy feet, and all Thy outward and inward senses.

## **VIII. PRAYER TO BE SAID WHILE AT WORK.**

O Jesus, may this work I am doing give honor to Thy holy labors in the world. Please impart Thy blessing to my activity.

156- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

## **IX. PRAYER BEFORE HEARING A SERMON.**

O Jesus, I offer this sermon in honor of Thy sublime preaching upon earth. I desire to take part in this function in honor of and in union with the profound devotion of Thy holy Mother as she listened to Thy divine teachings.

O Good Jesus, grant that I may share in the love, attention and devotion with which Thou dost hear the pronouncements of the Father. He is ever speaking to Thee, and Thou dost listen most attentively to Him, and dost most faithfully carry out all His counsels and instructions.

#### **X.. PRAYER BEFORE SPIRITUAL READING.**

There are many holy activities which can help souls to maintain their position and to make progress in divine love, but one of the most excellent is spiritual reading, of which I have already spoken in 'Part One.' Hence, with all the earnestness I can muster, I renew my advice and exhortation to you never to let a day go by without reading, for at least half an hour, from some good book. Now in order to do this reading in the right way, in addition to following suggestions already made, you should also call to mind what is related of the Son of God in the fourth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, namely that having entered into the synagogue upon the Sabbath day, He took up a book and read (Luke 4, 16). Offer Him your reading in honor of His, as follows:

O Jesus, I offer Thee this reading in honor of Thy holy reading; I wish to read in union with the same love, and the same dispositions and intentions with which Thou didst read. I give myself to Thee. By means of this reading, work in me all that Thou desirest to operate for Thy glory.

#### **XI. PRAYER BEFORE WRITING.**

You should recall that several Doctors of the Church tell us that Our Lord wrote letters to Abagar, King of Edessa. You should offer Him your action in writing, in honor of His, thus:

O good Jesus, I offer Thee this action in honor of Thy holy

#### **SANCTIFICATION OF YOUR DAILY ACTIONS**

157 -

writing. I desire to do this in union with the charity and other dispositions and intentions with which Thou didst write. May all the words and letters that I write be so many praises and blessings of Thee.

O my Dear Jesus, guide my spirit and my pen, that I may write nothing except what is of Thee, by Thee and for Thee. During the time I am writing upon this paper, do Thou please write upon my heart the law of Thy divine love and the virtues of Thy holy life.

#### **XII. PRAYER BEFORE GIVING ALMS.**

O Jesus, it is for Thy pure love, in honor of and in union with Thy charity towards the poor, that I desire to make this donation.

#### **XIII. PRAYER To BE SAID WHEN VISITING THE POOR, THE SICK OR THE AFFLICTED.**

O Jesus, I offer Thee this action in honor of and in union with Thy great love as Thou didst come from heaven to earth, to visit the poor and to console the sorrowful. I give myself to Thee to console and assist the afflicted and the poor as much as Thou dost will me to do. Grant that I may share Thy exceeding great charity towards afflicted mankind.

#### **XIV. PRAYER WHEN FASTING, OR DOING PENANCE OR MORTIFICATION.**

O Good Jesus, I offer Thee this act in honor of Thy divine justice and Thy holy Passion. I desire to suffer this privation, this penance and mortification purely for Thy love in union with that same love with which Thou didst bear so many and such extraordinary privations and mortifications on earth, as well as in

satisfaction for my sins, and to accomplish Thy divine design for my soul.

O Most Humble Jesus, I Offer Thee this act with all similar acts that ever were or ever shall be performed in honor of Thy holy humiliations and those of Thy Blessed Mother. O Good Jesus, destroy all pride and vanity in me, and cause Thy divine humility to reign in their stead.

158- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

#### **XVI. PRAYER BEFORE DOING A CHARITABLE ACT.**

O Most Charitable Jesus, I offer Thee this action, with all the others like it that ever were, are now, or ever shall be performed, in honor of and in union with Thy infinite charity. Destroy all self-love and self interest in me, and establish in me the kingdom of Thy divine charity.

#### **XVII. PRAYER BEFORE DOING AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE.**

O Most Obedient Jesus, I offer Thee this act of obedience to my superior, to my father or mother, or this act of submission to the rules and obligations of my state in life, in honor of Thy most perfect obedience, and in honor of the subjection which Thou didst will to undergo not only to the rules and laws of Thy Father, but also of men, and even of Thy enemies. Eliminate my own judgment and my own will, and cause me to have no longer any other will but thine and the will Of those who represent Thee in my regard.

#### **XVIII. PRAYER FOR ALL OTHER ACTIONS.**

In all other actions, of every sort, you may follow the method indicated in the foregoing prayers, for there is hardly any act or virtuous practice possible in human and Christian daily life that does not find its counterpart among the actions of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. And if you wish to sanctify your actions, you should offer them to Him in honor of and in union with His own.

I have suggested these little practices to point out the way you must follow in order to walk ever before God and live in the spirit of Jesus. This spirit will inspire many other methods in your heart if you make a point of giving yourself to our Blessed Lord at the beginning of everything you do. For I beg you to note carefully that the one essential practice, the secret of secrets, the devotion of devotions, is to be attached to no one practice or exercise of devotion in particular, but to take care, in all your exercises and activities, to surrender yourself to the holy spirit of Jesus, with humility, confidence and detachment from all things.

When you are thus free from attachment to your own way of looking at things, or to your own devotions and tastes, He will have complete

SANCTIFICATION OF YOUR DAILY ACTIONS

159 -

power and freedom to act in you according to His holy will and to arouse in your soul whatever dispositions and devout sentiments He desires, and to lead you by whatever paths He may choose. After you have given yourself to Him, you should progress and be faithful in cultivating the good sentiments and dispositions He will arouse in you, and in following His impulsions, inspirations, and guidance. If He inspires you to make use of the above and the following exercises, and if they prove to be a source of grace and blessings to you, well and good! If He attracts you to other more perfect ways, or methods in which you find more grace and devotion, follow His attractions with simplicity and humility.

## **XIX. THE PRACTICE OF OFFERING ALL ACTIONS TO JESUS IS THE REAL WAY TO REMAIN CONSTANTLY IN GOD'S PRESENCE.**

By means of the practice I have explained, and by frequent lifting of your mind and heart to God, your whole life will belong to Jesus; all your acts will give Him glory, you will walk ever before Him and will be always in His presence. For this is the true secret and the easiest way of keeping always in the presence of God and of living a life that is a single uninterrupted act of love for Him.

Of course I know that if a person is in God's grace, and offers Him in the morning everything that he may do in the course of the day, all his actions (so long as they are not evil in themselves), will give glory to God even if he should not think of God at all for the rest of that day. But Our Lord offered up for you to His Father all the acts He performed on earth, and never allowed a moment to go by in which He did not think of you and love you; consequently it would show very little gratitude and love for Him if you were to think of Him only once or twice a day. Indeed, if you really loved our most amiable Saviour, you should find all your happiness in thinking of Him, and in frequently lifting up your mind and heart to Him. This may be done without the least trouble or mental strain, with great ease and most pleasantly. With His precious grace, which He will never fail to give you, together with the exercise of a little care and fidelity on your part, you can soon develop this holy practice into a habit so strong that it becomes almost second nature to you.

### **160 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

I can prove it by telling you in all truth that I know a certain ecclesiastic (May his name be written in the Book of Life!) who by frequent use of this exercise has reached the point where it is easy for him, even when at table, actually to make nearly as many acts of love for Jesus as he takes mouthfuls of food. He accomplishes this not only without mental strain or any injury or inconvenience to his health, but even with so much ease and so readily that it does not prevent him from conversing, enjoying fitting recreation, and being specially charitable towards other persons. I am not telling you this in order to make you do as much yourself, for some would meet this suggestion with loud complaints that I was asking them something far too difficult. I only mention it to show you how strong a holy habit can become, and how wrong the world is in imagining a thousand difficulties and repellent obstacles where there is really nothing but pleasantness and delight.

## **XX. EMPLOYING THE ACTIONS AND SUFFERINGS OF OTHERS FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.**

Not only is it possible, but it is necessary to make a holy use of every personal occurrence for the glory of Our Lord, but also of everything that ever has happened, is happening now, or ever shall happen in the world. You can do this because it is within your power to make use of what is your own. Now, as has been said, St. Paul assures you that all things without a single exception, past, present or to come, belong to you (1 Cor. 3, 22). You must make use of them because you are bound to utilize and employ everything that is yours for the glory of Him Who gave you everything.

Hence, when you perform some act, the love and zeal you are bound to have for the glory of Our Lord ought to incite you not only to offer Him this action, but also to unite it with all other actions, past, present and future, similar to the one being performed, to offer and consecrate them to His glory together with your own act.

For instance, when you are at work, consider how many people there have been, are now, and shall be in the world who did, are doing, and will do the same work as you, only they neglect to offer it to God. Unite all that work with your own and offer it up to Jesus



as belonging to you, in honor of His labors. Do the same thing whenever a trial or affliction, whether of body or mind, comes upon you, as well as whenever you engage in any mental or physical activity.

This is the way you ought to take holy advantage of all things for God's glory. This is the way you ought to carry on and express in yourself Christ's exceeding great zeal for the glory of His Father, making use of all things to glorify Him. His zeal for His Father's glory was infinitely great, and every action that ever was, or is, or shall be done on earth was just as present to Him as what He was doing then, and He looked upon them all as His own, given to Him by the Omnipotent Father. Therefore, you can not doubt that He consecrated all the acts of mankind together with His own, to the glory of His Father. He compensated for the deficiencies of men and made use of every gift to glorify His Father. What I have said of actions may also be applied to sorrow and suffering, since the Son of God left nothing on earth unemployed for the glory of His Father. Let us enter into His sentiments and dispositions, and unite ourselves with Him in His sacred employment of all things to honor His Father; allow nothing to slip by, whether good or evil, in yourself or in others, but take advantage of everything to lift up your heart to Jesus, and to make everything that occurs a means of glorifying Him, just as He Himself makes all things cooperate for your good and utilizes everything for the advantage of your soul.

## **XXI. IN TIME OF AFFLICTION.**

As soon as any affliction of body or spirit visits you, go at once and cast yourself down at the feet of our Blessed Lord Who said: "Him that cometh to me I will not cast out" (John 6, 37), and "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened: and I will refresh you" (Matt. 11, 28). Adore His divine will. Humble yourself before Him at the sight of your sins, which are the cause of all your trials; offer Him your affliction; ask Him for the grace to bear it in a holy manner, and reconcile yourself with Him by means of Confession and Holy Communion. For if you are not in His grace and love, even though you were to suffer martyrdom, it would be useless both for God's

## 162- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

glory and your own sanctification. You are robbing God of the very great honor you might give Him in time of tribulation, if you were only in fit condition, and you yourself suffer the loss of incalculable riches of grace and glory.

## **XXII. PRAYER TO JESUS IN TIME OF AFFLICTION.**

O Jesus, my Lord, I cast myself down at Thy feet, adoring, blessing and loving Thy Divine Providence with my whole heart, in all that it ordains and permits now and ever in regard to me and my affairs. For what Thou dost ordain and dost permit, O great God, are to be equally adored and loved. Yes, my Saviour, may Thy holy will be done in all things, everywhere, in spite of the weakness of my own will. May Thy divine ordinances and permissions be forever adored and glorified.

I admit, O my God, and I confess before heaven and earth, that Thou art just and that I fully deserve this suffering a hundredfold for the least of my sins. And so, in spite of the reluctance of my own mind, I desire to embrace this affliction to the full extent of my will, in homage to Thy divine justice, in submission to Thy holy will, in honor of Thy extreme sufferings on earth, in satisfaction for my sins, to accomplish Thy designs for me, and as something which comes from Thy beloved hand and from Thy Heart overflowing with love for me.

Blessed be Thou, Good Jesus, because Thou art pleased to give me the opportunity to suffer something for love of Thee. Grant that I may share in the love, humility, patience, meekness and charity of

Thy Passion; and give me grace to endure all things for Thy glory and for Thy pure love.

### **XXIII. PRAYER AGAINST TEMPTATIONS.**

When some bad thought or other kind of temptation comes to you, do not become upset, but turn with confidence of mind and heart to Jesus. Humble yourself deeply before Him and ask for strength.

"O my Saviour, I confess that my sins fully deserve that Thou shouldst permit me to be harassed by all sorts of temptations, nay even vanquished and overwhelmed by them. I admit that, of myself,

SANCTIFICATION OF YOUR DAILY ACTIONS

163 -

I have no strength to resist the slightest temptation, and that if Thou didst not sustain me now and always, I should fall into a terrifying hell of sin. Alas, my Jesus, what frightful danger confronts me now! I behold myself on the edge of the abyss and the jaws of the lion of hell open wide to devour me. I am on the point of losing Thy grace, of being cut off from Thee, of being led away by Satan as a slave and, most terrible of all, of crucifying Thee with the utmost cruelty and infinite dishonor, if I allow myself to be overcome by this temptation. O dearest Lord, prevent this. Free me from this danger, give me the grace and strength to turn this temptation to good use and to make it an occasion for glorifying Thee. My God, with all my might I renounce the evil spirit, sin, and everything that displeases Thee. I surrender my will to Thee; take it into Thy safe-keeping and do not allow me to take sides, in any way, with the will of Thine enemies. My Saviour, I conjure Thee by Thy holy Passion, by Thy boundless goodness and mercy to grant me the favor of suffering all the ignominies and torments in the world, and indeed, of dying a thousand deaths rather than ever offend Thee."

## THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

### XXIV. MANNER OF ASSISTING WORTHILY AT THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

To assist worthily at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to give God the glory He deserves, there are four things you must do.

1. As soon as you leave the house to go to Mass, you should realize that you are going not merely to attend or watch, but actually to perform an action more holy and divine, greater and more sublime, more noble and admirable than any other in heaven or on earth. Consequently, you must perform it in a holy and divine manner, that is, with thoroughly holy and divine dispositions, with great care and attention of mind and heart, and with the realization that what you are going to do is more vitally important to you than anything else in the world. I stress the words "you are going to perform" because all Christians are one with Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest, and, therefore, they share in His divine Priesthood. Hence, they are called priests in Holy Scripture (I Peter 2, 9). The faithful are consequently entitled not only to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but also to participate in the action of the priest, that is, to offer with him and with Jesus Christ Himself the Sacrifice that is offered to God on the altar.

2. Upon entering the Church, you should profoundly humble yourself in spirit, considering yourself most unworthy to enter the house of God, to appear before His face, and to take part in so great a mystery, - a mystery which contains in itself all the mysteries and all the wonders of heaven and earth. Remember your nothingness and your sins, for which you ought to enter into a spirit of penance, humiliation and contrition at the beginning of the Mass, accusing yourself of your sins with the priest at the Confiteor, asking God's forgiveness, and begging Him to give you the grace and strength to keep yourself free from sins in future. To make reparation, offer your Heavenly Father the Holy Sacrifice of the Precious Body and Blood of His Son,

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

165 -

once offered to Him on the Cross, and now about to be offered to Him on the altar.

3. Having adored our Lord Jesus Christ, Who becomes present on the altar to receive the homage and adoration we owe Him, pray that He, who changes the base and earthly nature of bread and wine into His body and blood, may also change and transform the heaviness, frigidity and dryness of our earthly and hearts into the ardor, tenderness and vitality of the holy dispositions of His divine Heart. Then remember that all Christians are one with Jesus Christ, as members with their Head, and, therefore, share all His qualities. Recollect that Jesus Christ consummates this sacrifice as both Priest and Victim at the same time, so all present must likewise attend Mass both as priests and sacrificers, to offer up one and the same Sacrifice with Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest, and as hosts and victims, forming one Host with Jesus Christ just as they form one Priest with Him, one Host to be immolated with Jesus Christ, to the glory of God.

Thus you participate in the divine priesthood of Jesus Christ. As a Christian and member of Jesus Christ you bear the name and character of priest; therefore you ought to act in that capacity and exercise the rights it confers upon you, the right of offering up to God, together with the priest and with Jesus Christ Himself, the Sacrifice of the divine body and blood of God the Son in Holy Mass, and to offer it as far as possible, with the very dispositions with which it is offered by Jesus Christ, His Son, with holy and divine dispositions. What holy and filial dispositions! What humility, what purity and sanctity, what detachment from self and from all things, what attentiveness to God, what charity towards man and what love towards His Father! Unite yourself in desire and intention with these sublime dispositions. Pray to Jesus to implant them in you, enabling you to offer up this divine Sacrifice with Him in union with the

dispositions of His adorable Heart.

Unite yourself also to the intentions for which Christ offers His endless Sacrifice. There are five principal intentions. The first is to honor God the Father in all that He is in Himself and in all things, and to pay Him fitting honor, glory, and love. The second is to render

#### 166 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

the All-bountiful Father a tribute of thanksgiving that measures up to His goodness and all the benefits He has ever bestowed on all His creatures. The third is to make complete satisfaction for all the sins of the world. The fourth is to perfect the fulfilment of all His designs and His holy will. The fifth intention is to beseech Divine Providence to grant you the things necessary to all men, both for their bodies and their souls. So, in conformity with these intentions of Jesus Christ, you ought to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as follows:

(1) In honor of the Most Holy Trinity, in honor of all that Jesus Christ is in Himself, in all His states, mysteries, qualities, virtues, actions and sufferings, and in honor of all that He is and achieves whether through mercy or justice, in His Blessed Mother, in all the angels and saints, in His whole Church Militant, Suffering and Triumphant, and in all creatures of heaven, earth and hell.

(2) In thanksgiving to God for all the benefits and graces whether temporal or eternal, imparted to the sacred humanity of His Son, to the most Blessed Virgin, to all angels and men, to all creatures and especially to yourself.

(3) In satisfaction to His divine justice for all your sins and for all the sins of the world, especially for those of the poor souls in Purgatory.

(4) For the fulfilment of all His designs and desires, especially those He entertains on your behalf.

(5) To obtain from His goodness all the graces necessary to you and to all mankind, so that He may be served and honored by all creatures with the perfection He demands of each one.

All this you should perform in the Christian role of priest. But over and above that, in the role of host, when you offer Jesus Christ to God in Holy Mass as a victim you are obliged to offer yourself also, like Him, as a victim. Better still, pray that Jesus Christ will enter into you and draw you into Himself to unite and incorporate you with Himself as host, to sacrifice you with Him for the glory of His Father.

The Host to be sacrificed must be slain and consumed by fire; so you must implore Our Lord to make you die to yourself, to your passions, to your self-love and to all that displeases Him, that He may consume

#### THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

167 -

you in the sacred fire of His divine love, and cause your whole life to be henceforth a perpetual sacrifice of praise, glory and love for His Eternal Father and for Him.

4. You should prepare yourself for communion-if not sacramental, at least spiritual communion. Consider that our Lord Jesus Christ, Who loves you beyond measure, becomes present in the Sacrifice not only to be with you, but to be with you in intimate friendship and to impart to you His gifts and graces. And what is far more, He wills to be actually within you. He has a most ardent desire to dwell in your very heart, and give Himself to you in sacramental or spiritual communion. Therefore, you ought to prepare yourself to receive Him by fostering dispositions necessary to communicate sacramentally, namely, sentiments of humility and love. Humble yourself before Him, considering yourself most unworthy to

receive Him; nevertheless, since He so earnestly desires to have communion with you, you must also long to receive Him and invite Him, by countless acts of love, to enter your heart and to live and reign in you perfectly.

5. Finally, after having thanked Our Lord for the graces He has given you in Holy Mass, leave the church with a firm resolution to spend the day well in His service, with the thought that you must henceforth be a host at the same time living and dead: dead to all that is not God, living in God and for God, totally consecrated and sacrificed purely to the glory and love of God. Declare to Our Lord that you will be a victim of His love, and that you offer yourself to Him to do and suffer, for that end, whatever may please Him. Pray that He may accomplish this in you by His very great mercy; ask Him to give you the grace to lift up your heart to Him frequently during the day, to do everything for His glory. and choose to die rather than offend Him. For all these intentions, ask Him to give you His holy blessing.

Such is the way you should make use of so divine an event as the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If you do not feel the need of so many intentions to keep your mind devoutly occupied during Mass, select the most helpful and inspirational. To assist you to acquire greater facility in the use of these exercises, I now present them in the form of prayers, which you are to use not in haste and confusion, but

168- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

in a leisurely and recollected state of mind and heart, if you want to reap fruits for God's glory.

#### **XXV. PRAYER AT THE BEGINNING OF HOLY MASS.**

O my God and Sovereign Lord, behold me prostrate at the feet of Thy mercy. Deign to look with kindness upon so insignificant a creature, who recognizes and confesses before heaven and earth, that he is the most unworthy and ungrateful of all creatures.

O Father of mercies, I accuse myself before Thee, before the angels and saints, of all the lapses of my past life, all the offenses I have committed against Thy divine majesty, my great coldness in Thy ardent love, my neglect in Thy holy service and in following Thy inspirations, and countless other faults of which Thou well knowest me to be guilty. O my God, when I consider that Thy well-beloved Son, whom I am here to adore, gave me even the first moment of His life, I account myself exceedingly guilty for not having consecrated to Thee the very first use of reason given me by Thy divine majesty.

O my Lord Jesus, Thou didst spend all Thy days in poverty and suffering and didst end them on the Cross for love of me. Thou didst spend Thy whole life in uninterrupted works of ardent and exceeding great charity towards my soul. Yet I, treating my days and my life as something all my own, spend them ordinarily in useless or indifferent neglect, and often in offending Thy divine majesty. O my Saviour, grant that I may detest all my faults, since the very least of them was a reason why Thou didst will to be born in a stable and die on the Cross to expiate even that fault before the justice of Thy Father.

O my Jesus, the very least of Thy humanly divine and divinely human actions, repeated so often for my benefit during the thirty-four years of Thy life on earth, possesses such value and merit, that even if it had taken place no more than once, it could rightfully claim that my whole life should be devoted to doing Thy will, as a mark of gratitude and thanksgiving and by way of repayment to Thy divine majesty. Yet I do not do this. On the contrary, it would seem that I was born for the sole purpose of offending and insulting Thee. O what ingratitude! What infidelity! How I detest my treachery! How

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

169 -

sorry and ashamed I am, Most Lovable Jesus, of having been so unfaithful and ungrateful, and of having

corresponded so miserably with so great and strong a love as Thine for me! My God, I cast all my sins into the stream of Thy Precious Blood, into the abyss of Thy mercies, into the fire of Thy divine love. Cleanse me and utterly consume my sins. Atone for all my failings, O Good Jesus, and accept in satisfaction this most holy Sacrifice of the Precious Body and Blood, which Thou didst offer on the Cross, and I now offer Thee in reparation.

O my sweet Saviour, the disordinate love of myself and of the world is the source of all my offenses. Forever and with all my might I renounce that love. O Most Amiable Jesus, annihilate in me all earthly affections and establish in me the kingdom of Thy divine love.

## **XXVI. PRAYER DURING HOLY MASS.**

O Jesus, my Lord and my God, Thou dost descend upon this altar that I may contemplate and adore Thee, love and glorify Thee, to recall to my memory the great love that caused Thee to suffer and die for me on the Cross. O great God, I adore Thee and glorify Thee to the full extent of my limited powers. O abyss of love, O infinite goodness, O immense charity, would that I were all love for Thee! O Most Beloved, Most Loving and Most Lovable Jesus, when will the time come when I shall love Thee perfectly? O ye Seraphim, angels and saints of paradise, give me your love, that I may employ its ardor to love my Jesus. O ye men, O creatures capable of love, give me all your hearts that I may sacrifice them to my Saviour. O loving Redeemer, would that I possessed all the love of heaven and earth! With what willingness would I direct it all to Thee! O Thou Wellbeloved Son of the Eternal Father, O Thou treasure and delight of heaven and earth, how art Thou now adored, loved and glorified on this altar by the thousands of angels who there surround Thee! How much shouldst Thou be venerated, praised and loved by men, since it is not for the angels but for love of men that Thou art present! Let all angels and men, all creatures on earth and in heaven be transformed into adoration, glorification and love of Thee! May all the powers of

170- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

Thy divinity and humanity be employed in magnifying and loving Thee forever!

O Most Mighty Jesus, I adore the power of Thy sacred words by which Thou dost change the earthly nature of bread and wine into the substance of Thy most Precious Body and Blood. I surrender myself absolutely to Thy might, so that it may transform my sluggishness, apathy and aridity into the warmth, tenderness and vitality of Thy celestial and divine Heart. Grant that I may be so transformed into Thee as to be of one heart, one mind, one will, one soul and one life with Thee.

O my most gentle Redeemer, Thou art present on this altar to recall and re-enact before us Thy bitter Passion and cruel death. Grant that I may possess a continual remembrance and vivid realization of all Thou didst do and suffer for me. Grant that I may bear with humility, submission and love all the contradictions that may befall me to-day and during my whole lifetime. O Good Jesus, Thou dost so abhor sin that Thou didst die to put it to death; and Thou dost so cherish and prize my soul as to give Thy life to make it live. Grant, O my Saviour, that I may henceforth fear and abhor nothing save sin alone, that I may prize and seek only Thy glory, and that I may hold everything else as unworthy of my love or hatred.

## **XXVII. PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST, HIGH PRIEST.**

O Jesus, I adore Thee as High Priest, Thou who dost ceaselessly exercise this function in heaven as well as on earth, sacrificing Thyself for Thy Father's glory and our love. Blessed be Thou a thousand times, O Good Jesus, for the infinite honor Thou dost give the Heavenly Father, and for the exceeding great love Thou dost manifest for us in this divine Sacrifice. Thou art not satisfied with sacrificing Thyself for us so many times, but Thou dost further desire to associate us with Thee in this great work, causing us all to participate in the character of high-priest, giving us the power to participate with Thee in this supreme

and wonderful act, that is, to offer Thee in sacrifice when Thou dost offer Thyself, at the hands of Thy holy priests, for the glory of the Almighty Father and for our salvation. Unite me with Thee, O Divine Jesus, since it is Thy will that I should now

#### THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

171 -

offer with Thee this most Holy Sacrifice. Grant that I, too, may offer it with holy and divine dispositions like Thine. Oh, with what devotion, what purity and sanctity, what charity for us, what recollection and love for Thy Father dost Thou perform this holy action! Implant these dispositions in me, that I may accomplish with Thee and like Thee this act which Thou dost perform in a manner so holy and divine.

O Father of Jesus, Thou hast given us Thy Son and Thou hast, as it were, placed Him in our hands, in our power and possession. Hence I offer Thy Divine Son to Thee as though He were truly mine to give, and I desire to offer Him in union with the humility, purity, charity, love and all the other holy dispositions with which He offers Himself to Thee.

So also I desire to offer Thy Beloved Son for the same intention, with which He sacrificed Himself. Hence I offer Him to Thee:

1. In honor of all that Thou art, O my God, in Thy divine essence, in all Thy divine perfections, in Thy Three Eternal Persons, and in all the great external works Thou dost effect. I offer this sacrifice in honor of all that Thy Son Jesus is in Himself and in all His states, mysteries, qualities, virtues, acts and sufferings, and all that His external dispensations, either of mercy or of justice, in heaven, on earth and in hell.

2. I offer this sacrifice to Thee in thanksgiving for all the benefits and graces, both temporal and eternal Thou didst ever impart to the sacred humanity of Thy Son, to His most Blessed Mother, to all angels and men, and above all to me, the most unworthy of all creatures.

3. I offer this sacrifice to Thee in satisfaction for all the dishonor given Thee by all the sins of the world, past, present and future, and above all by my own, and those of the people for whom I am especially bound to pray, both living and dead.

4. I offer this sacrifice to Thee for the fulfilment of all Thy designs, especially Thy providential designs for me and all my associates, begging Thee never to permit us to impede Thy holy will.

5. I implore Thee, O my God, that in virtue of this holy oblation and precious gift that I render unto Thee, Thou mayest grant us all

#### 172- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

the spiritual and bodily graces we need, to serve and love Thee perfectly and to be Thine entirely and forever.

#### **XXVIII. PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST, SACRIFICIAL VICTIM.**

O Jesus, I contemplate and adore Thee in this mystery as the sacred Host laden with the sins of the world which Thou dost expiate, and as the Victim immolated by Thine own self for the glory of God and the salvation of men. I learn from St. Paul that Thou dost desire us all to be living and holy hosts, worthy of being sacrificed with Thee to the glory of God the Father (Rom. 12, 1). O my Saviour, in honor of and in union with Thy supreme oblation and sacrifice, I offer myself to Thee to be for ever a victim of Thy will, a victim immolated to Thy glory and to the glory of Thy Eternal Father. Unite me to Thee, O Good Jesus.

Absorb me into Thy sacrifice so that I may be sacrificed with Thee and by Thee and, since it is necessary that the host of a sacrifice should be slain and consumed by fire, make me die to myself, that is, to my vices and passions and to all that displeases Thee. Consume me utterly in the sacred fire of Thy divine love, and grant that henceforth my whole life may be a continual sacrifice of praise, glory and love of Thy Father and Thyself.

#### **XXIX. PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.**

O Most Good and Lovable Jesus, I am not worthy to think of Thee, nor that Thou shouldst think of me; still less am I worthy to appear before Thee, or that Thou shouldst deign to become present to me. Yet Thou dost not only think of me and become present to me in the Holy Eucharist, but Thou dost even long to give Thyself to me, with an infinite desire of abiding in my heart and in my soul. O dearest Lord, how wondrous are Thy mercies and how great is Thy kindness! Alas, what is there in me, wretched creature full of filth and sin, what is there capable of attracting Thee to me? Surely it is nothing but the excess of pure charity that urges Thee to come into my soul. Come, come then, O Dearest Jesus, for I love and desire Thee beyond measure! Would that I were utterly transformed into aspirations, desire, longing and love for Thee! Come, my sweet light, come, my dearest love, hasten and delay not to come into my heart

#### **THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS**

173 -

which renounces all else and desires nothing save Thee alone. O Thou king of my heart, O Thou life of my soul! O my treasure beyond all price, my only joy, my most dear, most desired and most beloved Jesus! O my all, come into my mind, come into my heart and into my soul! Annihilate my pride, my self-love, my self-will and all my other vices and imperfections. Come and establish Thy humility, charity, sweetness, patience, obedience, zeal and all Thy other virtues., Come to me, there to love and glorify Thyself and perfectly unite my spirit with Thy divine spirit, my heart and Thy Sacred Heart, my soul with Thy holy Soul. Grant that this heart, this soul and this body, which are often so closely and so intimately united with Thy Heart, Thy soul and Thy body by the Blessed Eucharist, may never have any other ideas, affections, desires or emotions save those of Thy holy Heart, Thy sacred body and divine soul. Come, my Jesus, enter into me there to live and reign absolutely and forever. Veni, Domine Jesu.

#### **XXX. PRAYER AT THE END OF HOLY MASS.**

O Jesus, most worthy of love, I praise and thank Thee countless times. I summon all the angels, all the saints and creatures to bless and glorify Thee with me, for all the graces Thou hast given me by this divine sacrifice. May it please Thee to preserve and multiply in my soul all the holy desires, thoughts, affections and sentiments which Thou hast implanted in my soul during this Holy Mass, and to give me the grace to bring forth the fruit Thou dost expect of me. Thou hast lowered Thyself to become present to me by this holy mystery. Grant, I beseech Thee, that during this day I may not let one hour go by without lifting up my heart and becoming present to Thee in spirit. Thou didst descend to this altar to take possession of our hearts and receive from us the homage we owe Thee as our Sovereign Lord. Then take possession of my heart, Good Jesus; consecrate it to Thee forever. I recognize and adore Thee as my King and Sovereign Lord.

I render homage with my being, my life and all my acts, especially those I shall perform today. Take them and do with them whatever pleases Thee. Give me the grace to die rather than offend Thee, and to be a host at the same time living and dead

174 -

#### **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

-dead to all that is not Thee, living in Thee and for Thee. May my whole life be a perpetual sacrifice of praise and love for Thee, and may I be utterly immolated and consumed for Thy pure glory and for Thy holy love. To this end I implore Thee with my whole heart, O Good Jesus, to give me Thy most holy blessing.



## THE DIVINE OFFICE

### XXX1. PREPARATION FOR THE DIVINE OFFICE.

The chief reason why you are often harassed by distractions and useless and wandering thoughts during vocal prayer is because your mind needs to be occupied with some thought, whether good or bad. So, if you prevent evil and useless thoughts, you have to take great care, from the very beginning of your prayer, to give your heart and your mind quite definitely to Jesus, that He may take full possession of them. You must develop the habit of filling your mind at the outset with good thoughts and holy dispositions, taking care not to slip into performing so holy an action in a careless and perfunctory fashion, more as a matter of habit than out of true devotion.

So, therefore, at the beginning of the Divine Office, remember that you are about to perform one of the greatest and most important functions possible to you, or, for that matter, to anyone in heaven or on earth. So great and exalted an act is this, that it not only is ever the ceaseless occupation of so many millions of angels and saints, with the Queen of Angels and Saints, but it always is the eternal concern of the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity, who are continually rapt in mutual praising, blessing and glorification. An action so thoroughly holy and divine-it is called the Divine Office-must necessarily be performed with holy and divine dispositions.

Consider, then, the greatness and sanctity of this act and realize that of yourself you do not possess the least qualification to recite it worthily, but rather that your whole nature hinders you. Realize that you are completely unworthy to stand before the face of God and enter into the presence of such exalted majesty. Annihilate yourself, therefore, at the feet of your Heavenly Father. Offer yourself to Jesus, and implore Him to annihilate you and to establish Himself in you, so that He Himself may perform this function on your behalf, that He Himself may glorify His Father and Himself in you, since He alone is worthy to do so. Surrender yourself to the zeal and exceeding

## 176- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

great love with which He praises His Father, without ceasing, in heaven, on earth and in hell. For, strictly speaking, it is Jesus alone, in the whole universe, who praises and glorifies God in heaven forever by Himself and through His Blessed Mother, His angels and His saints. He praises and glorifies Him in heaven by Himself and through His Blessed Mother, His angels and His saints. He praises and blesses Him on earth ceaselessly in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, where He remains in a continual state of praise and adoration, and in all holy souls who praise God on earth, whether in public or privately. He praises and magnifies His Eternal Father in hell where He ceaselessly operates before the eyes of His Father as He does in heaven. Finally, He praises and exalts Him without interruption throughout the whole universe, which is entirely filled with His divine presence and majesty and with the unending praises and blessings He everywhere renders to His Father.

Unite yourself with all these everlasting praises which Jesus gives to His Father and to the Holy Trinity in every time and place and unite yourself also with the humility, recollection, love, purity, sanctity and all the other divine dispositions of Jesus Christ as He constantly renders fitting praise to His Father and the most Holy Trinity.

### XXX11. MANNER OF RECITING THE DIVINE OFFICE DEVOUTLY AND OF HONORING THE WHOLE LIFE OF JESUS IN EACH DAY'S OFFICE.

Having thus devoutly prepared yourself for the sublime action of the private or public recitation of the divine office, you may honor the whole life of Jesus in the course of each day as follows:

When you recite the first nocturn of Matins, offer it to Jesus in honor of His divine and eternal life in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, before the creation of the world.

The second nocturn is offered in honor of Christ's life in the world from the creation to the Incarnation.

The third nocturn is offered in honor of His life in the sacred womb of His most holy Mother.

Offer Lauds in honor of His Holy Childhood, from His infancy until He reached the age of twelve.

## THE DIVINE OFFICE

177-

Offer Prime in honor of His hidden life of labor, which lasted until He was thirty.

Offer Tierce in honor of His public life and ministry, lasting from the time He was thirty until His death.

Offer Sext in honor of His passion, death and burial.

Offer None in honor of His Resurrection and Ascension, and His glorious life in heaven, not only in Himself, but in His Blessed Mother, His angels and His Saints.

Offer Vespers in honor of His life on earth since the Ascension, in the Holy Eucharist and in His Church.

Offer Compline in honor of His universal kingship over the world of nature, grace and glory, over men, angels and all creatures; also in honor of all that He ever did or shall accomplish for His Father, Himself, His Holy Spirit, His Blessed Mother, His angels, saints and all creatures.

So, when you recite each part of your office, you should reflect attentively on the mystery designated for each particular hour. You should consider the details of each mystery of His life, for instance, His thoughts and designs, His affections and dispositions, the things He did, the virtues He practised, His inward activity in relation to the Father, His own self, the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Mother, the angels and saints, and especially the thoughts, designs and love He cherished for you in particular. Consider also the glory and praises rendered to Him in that part of His life by the Omnipotent Father, the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Mother, the angels and saints.

After these considerations you should reflect upon yourself. When you see how far removed your life is from the perfection and sanctity of the life of your Head, whom you are obliged to imitate, you should profoundly humble yourself and ask His forgiveness. Then give yourself to Him to honor and imitate that aspect of His life in all the perfection He requires of you. Pray that He will implant it within you and there glorify it Himself, destroying everything in you that might place an obstacle in its way. And finally, unite yourself with all the praises that ever were, are, or shall be given Him, in this phase of His life, by His Father, His Holy Spirit, His Blessed Mother, His angels and saints.

## 178- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

If in reciting the office you are honoring a mystery of the temporal life of Jesus, you ought to offer and consecrate to Him the phase of your life which corresponds to the part of His life you are honoring. Implore Him to destroy all the evil in that part of your life and to cause all its happenings to render honor and glory to what took place in the corresponding phase of His own life.

For instance, when saying Lauds, after you have considered the Holy Childhood of Jesus Christ and reflected upon your own childhood, considering how different it was from the perfect holiness of the Sacred Childhood of Jesus, and having profoundly humbled yourself for all this, you should then offer yourself to Him to honor His divine childhood in whatsoever manner He pleases. You should consecrate your childhood in honor of His own, imploring Him to destroy all that was evil in your youth, and to cause all that took place in it to give undying honor and glory to His most adorable Childhood.

Similar reflections should be employed in the recitation of other parts of the Divine Office.

You should realize, however, that there is no necessity to stop or to interrupt the recitation of office. to engage in these exercises. All this may be done by concentration on these subjects while you are chanting or reciting the office. If you have any familiarity at all With the interior life, you will not need to take extra time to perform these acts. On the contrary, the time spent thus will seem very short, so great will be the sweetness and devotion derived from the inward application of your mind and heart to Jesus, the source of all unction and consolation.

### **XXXIII. ANOTHER METHOD OF SAYING THE DIVINE OFFICE WITH DEVOTION.**

Here is another exercise which may be of great help to you in chanting or reciting the Divine Office with devotion.

1. Prepare yourself in the manner suggested above. Then lift up your mind to heaven, and consider with what love, attentiveness, purity and sanctity the Son of God is there ceaselessly praised, blessed and glorified by His Father, Himself, His Holy Spirit, His Blessed

THE DIVINE OFFICE

179 -

Mother and all His angels and saints. Unite yourself with these loving praises and blessings, as follows:

During the first psalm, unite yourself with all the praises that the Eternal Father gives to His Divine Son and with all the love with which He glorifies Him forever, offering all these praises to Jesus Christ in satisfaction. or reparation for all your failures to praise and glorify Him during your life.

During the second psalm, unite yourself with all the glory Jesus gives to Himself by His Divine Person and by His sacred humanity, offering Him all this glory in reparation for your deficiency in praising Him.

During the third psalm, unite yourself with all the blessings which the Holy Spirit renders to Jesus Christ offering Him all these blessings in reparation for the maledictions which your sins caused Him to suffer on earth.

During the fourth psalm, unite yourself with the praises given by the Most Blessed Virgin to her Son, for of herself alone she praises Him more worthily than all the angels and saints together. Unite yourself with all her attention, her very great love and all her other holy dispositions as she sings His praises without ceasing, offering her praise to Jesus in satisfaction for all your negligence.

During the fifth psalm, unite yourself with all the praises of the seraphim, eternally offered before the throne of Jesus Christ, and with all the fervor and love of their endless chant of adoration, offering Him these praises in reparation for your coldness, distractions and lack of devotion.

And so, as you recite each psalm, unite yourself successively with each choir of angels and order of saints, one after another, in their perpetual chorus of praise to the Son of God. Here is a list of them, which

it would be well to memorize for your use in the present exercise.

The nine chairs of angels: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels.

The orders of saints: Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Priests, Confessors, Virgins, Widows, Innocents.

2. Next, descending from heaven to earth, unite yourself with all the

## 180- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

praises of Christ proclaimed by the various orders of Holy Mother Church, that is: by the order of pontiffs and bishops, the order of pastors and priests, the Orders of St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Norbert, St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Theresa, St. Ignatius of Loyola, by all religious orders and the many good souls who are in the world and there greatly glorify Our Lord.

Consider how many people there are in the world who have no knowledge of the Son of God, who do not love Him and, instead of blessing Him, do nothing but dishonor Him. Then stir yourself up to bless and glorify the divine Redeemer on their behalf.

You should likewise rejoice in the thought that all the irrational creatures and inanimate objects in the universe are engaged in blessing and magnifying their Creator without interruption, with their entire being. The beloved disciple St. John assures us that he heard all the creatures in heaven, on earth, in the sea and under the earth, that is, in hell, giving blessing, honor and glory to God and to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, each according to his state. Some praised God out of love and of their own will, others by a happy necessity, others again by compulsion and by force. Unite yourself with all these blessings given to Jesus by all creatures.

3. Leaving the earth, descend in spirit to purgatory, to unite yourself with all the praises that are given to the Son of God by the holy souls in that blessed place of purification. Go down also in spirit to hell, there to adore and praise Jesus in the midst of His enemies and to glorify Him with a fervor and attention at least equal to the intentness of those unhappy souls in blaspheming Him. Unite yourself with all the glory and praises given in hell to the infinite justice of Jesus Christ by His Eternal Father, the Divine Judge, and His Holy Spirit. In conclusion, you should desire that everything in heaven, earth and hell, and especially everything that is in yourself, in your body or your soul, may be transformed into praise, benediction and glory for Him who can never be blessed or glorified enough. The words of David, the holy psalmist, should be your inspiration: *Benedic anima mea Domino, et omnia quae intra me sunt, nomini sancto ejus*, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and let all that is within me bless his holy name" (Ps. 102, 1).

## THE DIVINE OFFICE

181 -

### XXXIV. DEVOUT RECITATION OF THE OFFICE OF OUR LADY.

The preparation suggested for the Canonical Office may also serve to stimulate the right dispositions for saying the Little Office of Our Lady. There you may use the following method, assisted by Our Lord's grace. In saying the Canonical Office, it is possible in the course of the day to honor the whole life of Jesus; so too, in reciting the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, you may honor in each day her whole beautiful life, or, to express it more aptly, the whole life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus. Thus you may never separate the Son from the Mother, nor the Mother from the Son, and you may behold nothing but Jesus in Mary and Mary in Jesus. Here is the way to do this:

Offer Matins to Jesus in honor of His life in the Blessed Virgin, and her life in Him, from her Immaculate Conception to her Nativity. For, from the very first, the Son of God was abiding in the mind and soul of the Blessed Virgin. He dwelt in her, sanctifying and illuminating her from the moment of her conception, beautifying her soul with glowing virtues, utterly filling her with grace, sanctity and love. And she in turn was living a most holy and admirable life in Him; and her mind ' her soul and her heart indeed dwelt more in the divine object of her sacred love than in her own self.

Offer Lauds to Jesus in honor of His life in the most holy Virgin and hers in Him from her birth to the time of His Incarnation by the wonderful works of grace, virtue, light and love which the Son of God effected during this time, without interruption, in the holy soul of this blessed child, as well as by the faith, hope, desire, contemplation, love and praise of Him which were the constant occupation of the divine soul of the most holy Virgin.

Offer Prime in honor of the wondrous and most delectable life of Jesus in Mary and Mary in Jesus during the nine months in which He dwelt in her sacred womb.

Offer Tierce in honor of the life of Jesus in Mary and Mary in Jesus from the birth of Jesus until the end of His Childhood, that is, until He was twelve years of age.

#### 182- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

Offer Sext in honor of the life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus until the end of His hidden life - that is, until He was thirty.

Offer None in honor of the life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus from the beginning of His public life and ministry until the beginning of His life of glory, that is, from the time He was thirty until His Resurrection.

Offer Vespers in honor of the life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus from His Resurrection and Ascension until the Assumption of the Blessed Mother. For even though Jesus had ascended to His Father in heaven, He nevertheless remained with His Blessed Mother and in her until her Assumption. And in a certain sense He lived more fully in her than in heaven during this time, because He was ever producing in her greater graces and more love than in all the citizens of heaven. So, too, she was more truly in heaven with her Son than on earth, and lived more fully in the life of her glorious Son than in her own.

Offer Compline in honor of the glorious and immortal life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus amid the joys of paradise.

As you recite each part of this office, you should consider quietly, without too much mental exertion, the particular part of the life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus honored by each hour Of the office. You should meditate on the intercourse of Jesus and Mary in that part of their life: their sentiments, dispositions and relationship toward each other, their holy discourses and conversations, their divine actions, their most eminent virtues, as well as how the Mother uninterruptedly contemplated, glorified and loved the Son, and how the Son filled the soul of His Mother with light, grace and divine love.

Then you should reflect upon yourself, and when you see how remote is your life, full of sin and imperfection, from that most holy and most perfect life of Jesus and Mary, whom you should regard and imitate as your father and mother, you ought to humble yourself profoundly and beg Jesus for forgiveness. You should offer Him all the honor which His most Blessed Mother gave Him, or, rather, which He gave to Himself through her by His most perfect life in her, and hers in Him, to atone for the dishonor you have given Him by your

sinful and imperfect life. And finally implore him to cause your whole life, past, present and future to render eternal homage and glory to His most adorable life and the most lovable life of His Blessed Mother, destroying all in you that goes against this glory.

#### **XXXV. ANOTHER METHOD OF SAYING THE OFFICE OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN With DEVOTION.**

The second method suggested for the recitation of the canonical Office may also be applied to the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin, uniting the Mother and the Son in the following manner:

When you say the first psalm, unite yourself with all the praises which the Eternal Father ever gave and shall give forever to His Son Jesus and to the most Blessed Virgin, offering to the Son and the Mother all these praises to satisfy for your many failures to praise and glorify them.

When you say the second psalm, unite yourself with all the glory Jesus ever gave and shall give forever to Himself and to His Mother most worthy of honor, offering to the Son and to the Mother all this glory in ' satisfaction for your faults.

At the third psalm, unite yourself with the Holy Spirit in all the praises He ever gave or ever shall give to Jesus and Mary, offering them these praises in reparation for your negligences.

At the fourth, unite yourself with the seraphim, with all the other choirs Of angels, with the glorious company of saints and with the orders of creation, as outlined in the second method of reciting the Divine Office.

184 -

#### **THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN**

#### **XXXVI. THIS DEVOTION IS VERY HOLY AND PLEASING TO GOD.**

Only mental blindness or prodigious ignorance of the things of God could lead us to doubt that the devotion of the Rosary of the Most Blessed Virgin came from heaven and was inspired by God. It is approved and practised by the universal Church; it contains the holiest prayers anyone could possibly say, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Creed, and it is a most excellent means of honoring the first mystery of the life Of Jesus, the greatest wonder God ever accomplished on earth, the miracle of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the most holy Virgin Mary. This incomparable wonder and admirable mystery, which perpetually enraptures all heaven and is there adored without interruption, should be adored just as incessantly on earth, because it transpired On earth for the benefit of the dwellers of the earth, and because the Church Militant is bound to follow and imitate the Church Triumphant in heaven.

The mystery of the Incarnation is indeed continually adored on earth, in several different ways, especially by the three Hail Marys of the Angelus, repeated three times a day at the sound of a bell, in the morning, at noon and in the evening, and by the recitation of the Rosary, made up of fifty-three Hail Marys. Each devout repetition of the Hail Mary commemorates and honors that ineffable mystery, which was effected in the Blessed Virgin by the divine salutation, "Hail, full of grace," pronounced by the Archangel Gabriel when he greeted her on behalf Of God and announced to her the coming and Incarnation of the Son of God, and her reception Of the most lofty dignity of Mother of God.

Hence, you can not too often utter words so holy and so pleasing to the Son of God, so Prized and honored by His glorious Mother, words which should be so cherished and highly revered among you. The Son

of God delights in these words because He is well pleased that His most noble Mother should be hailed and honored, because all

#### THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

185 -

honor given to her returns again to Him and everything done for her is done for Him, even more than anything done for the least of His little ones. Then, too, these sacred words recall to mind the first mystery of His life, the mystery of His exceeding great love for His Father and for us. They are most dear to and most honored by His Blessed Mother because they brought her the greatest and most sublime message of all time. These words should be highly valued and loved because they tell of the coming of One so eagerly awaited, so desired and prayed for on earth for five thousand years, the Redeemer descending to earth to deliver mankind from the tyranny of Satan and of sin, to reconcile man with God and to effect in each soul such great and marvelous things for love of men.

For these reasons the practice of reciting the Rosary, composed of repetitions of this holy and angelical salutation, is most holy, most pleasing to God and to the Mother of God, and it ought to be the customary practice of all true Christians.

I am very much afraid that those who shall be overtaken by death without this symbol, which is one of the characteristics of the servants and children of the Mother of God, may easily be disowned by her, and consequently rejected by her Son, as unworthy to share in the mercies of the Son or the favors of the Mother. But it is not enough simply to own and carry a rosary. The main thing is to say it well. And here is the way to do so.

#### **XXXVII. DEVOUT METHOD OF RECITING THE ROSARY OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.**

First kiss the cross of your rosary and make the sign of the Cross with it in honor of and in union with the exceeding great love of the Son of God when He kissed and took upon His shoulders the burden of the Cross, thereby accepting and prizing in union with His love, all the crosses, trials and afflictions He may send you in your whole life. After that, say the Credo on the Cross.

In reciting the Creed, that apostolic summary of our faith, we must give ourselves to Jesus in union with the exceedingly ardent love with which He died for us and with the love of all the holy martyrs who died for Him. We must, I repeat, in union with that same love,

#### 186 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

offer ourselves to Him to die and shed our blood a thousand times, were it possible, for His pure love, for the glory of His mysteries, and in preference to the slightest deviation from the faith of His Church. So also, we must surrender ourselves to Him to be filled with a great love and devotion for all the mysteries of His life and of His Church, that He may implant and glorify them in us according to His holy will.

With the recitation of the Our Father and the three Hail Marys introducing the first decade, we should annihilate ourselves at the feet of the Son of God and His holy Mother, considering ourselves most unworthy to appear before them or to think of them, or to have them think of us. And we should give ourselves to Jesus, imploring Him to annihilate us Himself, and to take up His abode in us, that He Himself may honor His most blessed Mother on our behalf, for He alone can give her fitting honor. Each One of us must also unite himself to His zeal, love and devotion for her. Then we should offer our prayer to the Blessed Virgin, in union with the devotion, love, humility and purity of her Dear Son and in union with all the devout prayers and all the glory and praise, past, present and future, ever addressed to her Son and herself.

This should be offered for the accomplishment of their heavenly design, especially on behalf of ourselves.

After that, as each decade of the Rosary is said, we should offer it to the Son and the Mother, in honor of one or another of their most eminent virtues, never separating Jesus from Mary or Mary from Jesus. The offering of the decades proceeds as follows:

The first decade should be offered to Jesus and Mary in honor of the deep humility that characterized all their thoughts, words and actions.

The second decade should be said in honor of the perfect purity of the Heart of Jesus and Mary. This virtue consists chiefly of two elements, namely: first, a very great hatred, horror and flight from sin, together with perfect detachment from all that is not God; and second, a most holy union with God and the pure glory of God, which existed most eminently in the holy soul of the Son of God and that of His most holy Mother.

#### THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

187 -

The third decade should be recited in honor of the divine meekness and charity which Jesus and Mary practised towards others in their thoughts, words, actions and sufferings.

The fourth decade should be said in honor of the most holy obedience of Jesus and Mary to every operation of God's holy will. They never sought to do their own will, but rather chose the will of God in all and by all things, and the will of others for the love of God. What is more, they sought their entire satisfaction and joy in submitting to all that was willed by God and in fulfilling His every command or wish.

The fifth decade should be offered in honor of the boundless and ardent pure love of Jesus Christ for His Heavenly Father and of Mary for Jesus: for they both lived in an uninterrupted act of this pure love, and never had a thought or uttered a word or performed any action save in this pure love. It should also be said in honor of the last day, the last hour, the moment, and the death of Jesus and Mary—a death all divine and all for love.

Now, as you say each decade:

1. You should meditate on each of these virtues of Jesus and Mary, considering their eminent sanctity and with what perfection they practised each virtue throughout their lifetime in thought, word and action.

2. You should consider yourself and see how far removed you are from this virtue, and how little you resemble your Father and Mother (that is, Jesus and Mary) in this. Then, you should profoundly humble yourself on this account and beg them to forgive you, to make reparation for your failures and to offer to the Eternal Father all the honor accorded Him by their practice of this virtue, in satisfaction for the faults you have committed against it.

3. Offer yourself to Jesus and to His holy Mother with an earnest resolution to attend with more care to the practice of this virtue in future, imploring the Divine Son, by His absolute power and the inviolate Mother by her prayers and merits, to destroy in your soul all that can possibly prevent you from making this progress, and to establish the reign of this virtue for His pure glory.

But please remember well what I have said elsewhere, that in all



these devotions, even though I may suggest various ideas and practices to you, there is no need for you to make use of them all every time, but only of those from which you happen to derive the most spiritual benefit. Or else, use now one, now another, according to the inspiration of Our Lord's grace. For instance, if your mind finds enough to occupy it in contemplation of one or two of the virtues that have been mentioned, or in some other virtues of Jesus and Mary, there is no need to go on to the consideration of the others, which may be considered at another time.

It remains to be said that, when you recite the last decade in honor of the last hour and most holy death of Jesus and Mary, you should offer them the last moment of your life and the instant of your death, in honor of the last day, the last hour, and the last moment of their life, and their most holy death, imploring them to grant that all that shall occur in your last day and moment may be consecrated to the homage and the glory of what took place on their last day and at the moment of their death and that you may die in the state and practice of divine love, and that your last breath may be an act of most pure love for Jesus.

### **XXXVIII. ROSARY OF JESUS, MARIA.**

You should earnestly desire that the last words you utter in life should be: Jesus, Maria. And in order to dispose yourself to obtain this grace from divine mercy, it would be a good thing to end each day with the recitation of this very brief rosary, which I call the rosary of Jesus, Maria, because it is composed of these two words alone: Jesus, Maria, "Jesus, Mary." These Holy Names contain all that is greatest and most admirable in heaven and on earth, together with the entire virtue and sanctity of the most excellent prayers and devotions that could possibly be practised.

This rosary is made up of thirty-four small beads in honor of Christ's thirty-four years on earth, in honor of Mary's participation in them and the honor she gave Him always.

To begin with, you should say three times *Veni Domine Iesu*: "Come Lord Jesus," with the intentions suggested for the Rosary of the Glory of Jesus, which may be found in "Part Six" of this book.

### **THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN**

189 -

On each small bead pronounce the words Jesus, Maria, "Jesus, Mary," trying to say each with all the love and devotion you would want to have if you were at the hour of death, and as if it were the last word you should ever utter. Your intention should be to pronounce each name with all the love, or in union with all the love (for these two terms mean but one thing), which ever was offered or shall be offered forever in heaven and on earth, to Jesus and Mary. You should give them this totality of love as something of your own, since, as has been said, everything belongs to you, making the offering in satisfaction for all your failures to love and serve them during your life.

On the large beads say the words: *Benedicta tu in Mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui*, Jesus, 'Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is fruit of thy womb, Jesus'; and as you say them, offer to Jesus and Mary all the praises and blessings that ever were, are, or shall be given to Him forever On earth and in heaven, in reparation for your failures to bless and glorify them.

**PART FOUR**

**Devotional Exercises to Be Done Each Week  
to Live a Christian and Saintly Life and  
to Make Jesus Reign in Your Soul**

**Part Four**

**DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES TO BE DONE EACH WEEK  
TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN AND SAINTLY LIFE AND  
TO MAKE JESUS REIGN IN YOUR SOUL**

**1. THE THREE SPECIAL DAYS OF THE WEEK.**

There are three week-days that should stand out above the others, and be spent with more devotion and attention to God.

Monday should be consecrated to the honor of the first day of Christ's life in the world. On this day you should renew your desire to begin a new life for Our Lord, and resolve to spend the week devotedly in His service.

Friday is dedicated to the last day of Our Lord's life on earth. You ought to regard every Friday as though it were the last day of your life, and spend it accordingly.

Saturday is consecrated to the honor of the life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus, a life to which all Christians are bound to have special devotion. On Saturday you should render love and praise to the most Blessed Virgin with more than usual zeal and affection, and try to make reparation for having fallen away during the week from your duties to her and her Son. So, too, at the close of this day, it is well to honor the Blessed Virgin in the last day and the last hour of her life as I shall set forth in «Part Six."

**11. MANNER OF HONORING THE WHOLE LIFE OF JESUS IN THE COURSE OF EACH WEEK.**

In order to spend the remaining days of the week devoutly, it is a good thing to dedicate each day to some mystery of the life of Christ, in order to give particular honor to His life on that day and to try to implant its special virtues in your soul by consideration and imitation. According to St. Paul, we are all dead in Adam and living in Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15, 22), and since Jesus Christ is our life (Col. 3, 4),

**THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

none of us have any right to live on earth except by the life of Jesus Christ. Remember that God lets you remain here only that you may work to destroy in you the wicked and sinful life of the old Adam and to establish there the holy and divine life of Jesus.

Hence, your chief care and occupation should be to consider, adore, and imitate the life of Jesus, in order that, by this means, you may form and establish within yourself a perfect image of that life.

Here are a few meditations for each day of the week, which sum up the whole life of Jesus, and which I present in the form of prayers, so that every type of person may use them to honor the various phases of the life of Christ.

## MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

### III. FIRST MEDITATION-SUNDAY.

The Divine Life of Jesus in the Bosom of His Father  
from all Eternity

1. O Jesus, my Lord and my God, I contemplate, adore and glorify Thee in Thy divine life from all eternity in the bosom of the Eternal Father, before Thy Incarnation in the virginal womb of Thy Mother. Oh, how holy a life this is, how pure, divine, wonderful and filled with glory, greatness and delights! What joy to see Thee living, from all eternity, a life so filled with perfection, contentment and wonders! Blessed be Thou, O Father of Jesus, for having imparted such a life to Thy Well-beloved Son! O Jesus, I offer Thee all the glory, love and praise Thou dost derive from the Father and the Holy Spirit throughout the eternity of Thy divine life.

2. O Jesus, when I consider Thy divine and eternal life, I see that Thy chief function for all eternity is to contemplate, glorify and love Thy Father, to refer Thyself to Him as to Thy principle, to give Him Thy being, Thy life, Thy perfections and all that Thou shalt be forever, as gifts received from Him, to be employed in glorifying and loving Him, and to offer Him infinitely worthy praise and love. Blessed be Thou, O Jesus, for all these things. O Most Amiable Father, how I rejoice to behold Thee so loved and glorified by Thy Son! I offer Thee all love and glory that Thou dost receive from Him during\*all eternity, by His divine life in Thy fatherly bosom before His Incarnation.

3. O good Jesus, Thou hast expended all Thy divine life for my benefit. From all eternity Thou dost think " of me, love me and offer me to the Father, and Thou dost offer Thyself also to Him, to come one day upon earth to be made flesh, to suffer and die on earth for love Of me. O Dearest Jesus, Thou hast loved me from all eternity, and I hardly know if I have yet begun to love Thee as I ought.

Forgive me, my Saviour. From now on, and for all eternity, let me live but to love Thee!

### IV. SECOND MEDITATION-MONDAY.

**The First Moment of the Temporal Life of Jesus**

1. O Jesus, I adore Thee at the moment of Thy Incarnation, which is the first instant of Thy mortal life. I adore all the marvelous things that took place in Thee at that moment. What great accomplishments were effected in Thee and by Thee, in that blessed instant, in the eyes of the Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy sacred humanity, and Thy Blessed Mother! What thoughts, what affections, what love! How Thy holy soul in that instant devoted itself, before Thy Father's face, to adore and glorify Him and sacrifice Thee entirely to His glory, and to accomplish all that He willed! O Good Jesus, I adore Thy first thoughts and Thy first acts of adoration, oblation, love and praise, which Thou didst offer to Thy Father at that time. How exalted and divine were the love and glory Thou gavest Him then! Truly Thou didst give Him infinitely more honor and love in that moment alone than all the angels and all men accorded Him in the five thousand years that preceded Thy Incarnation, or ever shall give Him for all eternity. O Father of Jesus, what satisfaction for my soul to behold Thee so loved and glorified by Thy Son! O Jesus, be Thou blessed, adored and glorified forever for the honor and love Thou didst give to Thy Father at the blessed moment of Thy Incarnation!

2. O Jesus, when I consider Thee in this mystery, I see by the light of faith that Thou dost entertain most exalted thoughts and great designs upon her in whom the Incarnation was accomplished, and that Thou

dost indeed effect great and marvelous things in\*her. O Jesus, I adore Thy first thoughts, Thy first acts of love and movements of grace, of light and of eminent sanctity which Thou didst produce in Thy Blessed Mother at the moment of Thy Incarnation. So, too, do I adore the first acts of adoration, praise and love of the most admirable Mother for the Most Adorable Son. Blessed be Thou, O Jesus, Son of Mary, for all the wonders Thou didst work in Thy divine Mother by this stupendous mystery. Blessed be Thou, O Mother

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

197-

of Jesus, for all the glory thou hast given thy Son in this same mystery. Unite me, I implore Thee, to all the love and honor thou didst give thy Dear Son in the first instant of His life, and grant that I may share in thy peerless love for Him and in thy zeal for His glory.

3. O Most Amiable Jesus, at the same instant that Thou didst look up to the Father, after the Incarnation, Thou didst also look upon me. Thou didst begin to think of Him, refer Thyself to Him and love Him and Thou didst likewise begin to think of me, to give Thyself to me and love me. At the very instant Thou didst begin to live, it was to live for me, to prepare and acquire for me most extraordinary graces, and to form plans for my salvation. From that very moment Thou didst plan and desire to create in me an image of the mystery of Thy Incarnation and to become incarnate in me,, that is, to unite me to Thyself, and Thyself most intimately to me, both physically and spiritually by Thy holy grace and Thy divine sacraments, and then to fill me with Thyself, and establish Thyself in me to live and reign perfectly in me.

O what goodness! What boundless love! Infinitely blessed be Thou, O Good Jesus! May all Thy mercies and all Thy wonders for the children of men bless Thee forever! I most humbly beg Thy forgiveness for the obstacles which I have put in the way of the accomplishment of the great designs Thou hast deigned to have in my regard. Never allow me to impede Thy grace again. From now on I desire to annihilate, at all costs, everything in me that opposes Thy holy will. My Jesus, may it please Thee to grant me the grace and strength to do this.

## **V. THIRD MEDITATION-TUESDAY.**

### **The Holy Childhood of Jesus**

1. O Great and Admirable Jesus, Thou wast not satisfied to become man for love of men, but Thou didst also will to become a child, subject to all the lowliness and weakness of infancy, in order to honor the Eternal Father in every condition of human life, and to sanctify all the states of our life. Blessed be Thou, Good Jesus, for

198- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

these favors. May all Thy angels and saints bless Thee eternally. O most amiable Child, I offer Thee my own childhood, although it is past, imploring Thee most humbly that, by virtue of Thy divine Childhood, Thou mayest wipe out all that was bad or imperfect and cause my whole life as a child to render homage to Thy most adorable Childhood.

2. O Divine Jesus, when I contemplate Thee in Thy holy Childhood, I see that Thou art never idle, but dost effect great things for Thy Eternal Father, contemplating, adoring and loving Him, and also for Thy Blessed Mother, heaping upon her a world of graces and blessings, also for St. Joseph, and little St. John the Baptist and the other saints with whom Thou didst associate as a Child, accomplishing in them most wonderful works of illumination and sanctity. I adore Thee, love Thee and bless Thee in all Thy divine occupations and in the marvelous effects of Thy divine Childhood. I offer Thee all the honor and love Thou didst receive in Thy holy Childhood from Thy Father, Thy Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, St. Gabriel, and from the other angels and saints who are in any special way associated with Thy divine

Childhood.

3. O most amiable Child, I adore all Thy thoughts and designs and Thy most burning love for me. Thou wast thinking of me, and didst love me without interruption in Thy Childhood. Thou didst cherish the plan and the strong desire to imprint upon my heart an image of Thy divine Childhood, that is, to make me enter upon a state of holy and sacred childhood, which should imitate and honor the meekness, simplicity, humility, purity of body and spirit, the obedience and innocence of Thy holy Childhood. O my Jesus, I give myself to Thee to accomplish Thy plan and desire and to enter into this state. I shall henceforth strive, with the help of Thy holy grace, which I invoke with my whole heart, to become meek, humble, simple, pure, obedient, free of all arrogance, bitterness and malice, like a child, so that I may render some small honor to Thy Childhood which so deserves to be honored.

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

199 -

## VI. FOURTH MEDITATION-WEDNESDAY.

### The Hidden Life of Jesus

1. O Jesus, although Thou didst have so many and such great things to do on earth, converting so many souls, working so many miracles, doing so much good by Thy blessed example and holy preaching, if Thou hadst gone out among men, yet Thou didst not will to do this. Instead, Thy choice on earth was a life hidden and unknown until the age of thirty, performing in that time no outward act that might make Thee known to men. Thou didst remain hidden and withdrawn into the Father, in whom Thy mind, heart, thoughts, desires and affections were uninterruptedly enclosed. And Thou didst choose this hidden life to honor Thy hidden life from all eternity in the bosom of Thy Father, and to teach us that solitude and retirement are pleasing to Thee. Of the thirty-four years of Thy life upon earth, no more than four were spent in active intercourse among men, while thirty were spent in retirement and solitude. Blessed be Thou, O Good Jesus, for all the glory Thou didst give Thy Father during these thirty years of Thy hidden life! Grant that I in their honor may henceforth love retirement and solitude, both interior and exterior. Draw me apart and hide me in Thee. Absorb my mind into Thine, my heart into Thy Heart and my life into Thy life. I desire henceforth, with the help of Thy grace, to make every effort to withdraw my thoughts and affections from all things into Thee, O my Jesus, as into my place of refuge, my center, my element and my paradise, outside of which all else is hell and perdition. I wish to dwell ever in Thee, following thy commandment: Manete in me; "Abide in me" (John 15, 4), that is, in Thy spirit, Thy love, Thy sentiments and inclinations, never to leave Thee again.

2. O Most Great and Most Adorable Jesus, Thou didst will to lead an unknown and despised life, a life base and abject in the eyes of men. a life of poverty, labor and suffering, bearing the name and following the trade of carpenter, to teach us first by example what Thou didst later teach us by words, namely, that "what is high to men is an abomination before God"; quod hominibus altum est,

200-

### THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

abominatio est ante Deum (Luke 16, 15). O Jesus, imprint this truth deeply in my mind and firmly implant in my heart a great hatred and horror of all fame, praise, greatness and vanity, and for all that catches and dazzles the eyes of men, giving me a very strong love for all that involves lowliness, abjection and humiliation.

3. O Jesus, Thou art Godlike Thy Heavenly Father and Thou art but One God with Him; Thou hast but one power and operation, and with Him Thou art the Creator, Preserver and Governor of our vast universe. From all eternity Thou dost send forth with Him a God and a Divine Person, that is, the Holy Ghost, who is God even as the Father and Thou. This and other exalted things worthy of Thy supreme greatness. Thou dost accomplish. Yet in Thy hidden and laborious life on earth, I see that Thou dost lower Thyself to the commonest and most lowly actions of human life, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, working, earning Thy living with the toil of Thy hands and in the sweat of Thy brow. I am filled with wonder and consolation

because Thou art no less great and admirable in small things than in great. In these lowly commonplace activities Thou didst render infinitely great glory to the Omnipotent Father because, O Jesus, Thou didst perform all actions, even the smallest and most ordinary, not with common or ordinary dispositions, but with an infinite love for the Father and for us. Thou didst merit and acquire, by the power of Thy holy actions, a special grace for all our acts, to enable us to perform them meritoriously. Hence we can and must do everything, in a devout manner. Otherwise we nullify and waste the graces Thou hast acquired for us in the performance of like things. Do not allow this to happen, O Good Jesus! Give me the grace Thou hast acquired for me by Thy holy actions, so that I may perform all my own acts with holiness. This is my desire and my resolve. Grant me grace to carry it out purely for Thy glory, that in future I may offer up all my acts, even the smallest, in honor of Thine and that I may, as far as possible, perform my tasks with the dispositions and intentions that exalted the lowliness of all Thy most humble, human deeds.

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

201 -

## **VII. FIFTH MEDITATION-THURSDAY.**

### **The Public Life of Christ on Earth and in the Most Blessed Sacrament**

1. O Most Amiable Jesus, Thou dost live, reign and commune for all eternity with the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit. How rich is this association and how delightful to Thee! What glory and praise Thou dost receive from the Father and Holy Spirit! Yet Thou didst will to come forth from the bosom of the Father to appear on earth, to associate, eat and drink in familiar visible companionship, not only with Thy Blessed Mother, St. Joseph and the holy apostles and disciples, but even with sinners, from whom Thou didst receive all kinds of outrages and indignities. Thou didst will to do this: (1) By association with Thy Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, the holy apostles and the disciples, to give homage to Thy divine and holy association with the Father and Holy Spirit from all eternity. (2) By the pain Thou didst suffer from associating with sinners, to deliver us from the punishment, so rightly deserved by our sins, of being reduced for ever to the wretched company of demons, and to make us worthy to live eternally in the company of the angels and saints, Thy Blessed Mother, and the Three Divine Persons. (3) In order to show us how true are thy words: Thy delights are to be with the children of men (Prov. 8, 31). (4) To acquire for us, by the merit of Thy active life, the grace we need to behave virtuously in our relations with one another. (5) In order that the perfection of Thy holy and divine conduct in Thy relations with other men might serve as a model and example of the way we should act towards our neighbor.

2. I adore Thee, O Jesus, I bless Thee and love Thee for all these things. I adore Thee in Thy public life and active ministry, which lasted from Thy thirtieth year to the day of Thy death. I adore and give Thee glory for everything in this period of Thy life, inward and outward, that is, all the actions, words, teachings, miracles, journeys, labors and weariness, and for all Thy thoughts, feelings, intentions, affections and inner dispositions. I bless Thee for all the glory Thou didst render to the Eternal Father. I offer Thee all the love and

202- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

honor accorded during the time of Thy active life by all the holy souls who came in contact with Thee. I also offer Thee all my own associations and contacts, whether past or future, in homage to Thine own, and I implore Thee to cause all my actions relating to my neighbor to be consecrated to the glory of Thy public life.

3. O Jesus, I adore the thoroughly holy and divine dispositions which characterized Thy activity among men. With what dignity, charity, meekness, patience, modesty, detachment from creatures and attention to God didst Thou move and act in the world of men! O my Saviour, I desire that such dispositions

may henceforth characterize all my relations with my neighbor. Alas! How far I am from such perfection and how many faults I have committed in the days gone by! For all these I beg Thy forgiveness, imploring Thee to implant in me all the dispositions I have set down above.

4. O Lord, Thou wert not satisfied with having lived and associated with mankind during Thy mortal life. When Thou wast on the point of returning to heaven, Thy most insatiable love and Thy exceeding great desire to prove the tremendous truth that Thy delight is to be with the children of men inspired Thee to devise a most admirable invention that would keep Thee ever with us, and give Thyself to us with all the essence of Thy riches and wonders. All this was accomplished by means of the Holy Eucharist, which is a compendium of all Thy wonders and the greatest of all the effects produced by Thy love for us. O love, O goodness, how is it that I am not utterly transformed into love and praise for Thee? O Jesus, forgive me my past abuse of so great a grace, grant that in the future I may make a better use of this Divine Sacrament and that, as Thou dost find Thy delight in being with me, I may also find all my delight in Thy company, in thinking of Thee, and in loving and glorifying Thee.

## **VIII. SIXTH MEDITATION-FRIDAY.**

### **The Sufferings and Death of Jesus**

1. O Jesus, Thou art the love and the delight of God and the angels, of heaven and earth. Thou art the God of consolation, the

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

203 -

source of all joy and bliss, joy and blessedness itself. And yet, when I behold Thee on the final day of Thy mortal life, I see that Thou art the object of the wrath and persecution of heaven, earth, hell, of God, men and all creatures. I see the universe and the powers of evil leagued against Thee, expending all their energies in making Thee suffer. Thou art, as it were, a target exposed to every volley of contradiction and outrage. I behold Thee so filled with sorrow, anguish and torments in every part of Thy body and soul, that Thou dost seem to be transformed into pain and sufferings. Hence the Prophet Isaias calls Thee the Man of Sorrows, Virum dolorum (Isa. 53, 3). O my Dearest Jesus, what has reduced Thee to so pitiable a state? It is Thy goodness, my Saviour, and the excess of Thy love. O my sweet love, let me adore and love and bless Thee in all Thy sufferings, both interior and exterior; let me adore in Thee the holy and divine dispositions of Thy suffering. With what submission to Thy Father's will, with what deep humiliation under the burden of all the sins of the world, with what charity for us, with what meekness and patience towards Thine enemies Thou didst endure the magnitudes of all sufferings. How ashamed I am to behold my Jesus suffering so extremely, with such dispositions, while I see how sensitive I am to the slightest pain, and so far from sharing His dispositions! O Good Jesus, I give myself to Thee to suffer all Thou dost will and I offer Thee all that I have suffered and am yet to suffer in my whole life. May it please Thee to unite my works and trials with Thine; bless them through Thine; use them as Thine own, to glorify the Father and to honor Thy holy Passion. Grant that I may share in the love, humility and other dispositions with which Thou didst suffer!

2. O Most Amiable Jesus, the torments of the Cross and of death were borne with so much love for the Father and for us that the Holy Spirit speaks of the day of Thy Passion as the day of Thy Heart's joy (Cant. 3, 11) to show that Thou didst find joy and satisfaction in suffering. O my Saviour, let me also find my joy and all my happiness in this world in trials and labors, in contempt and sufferings, if by them I can give Thee greater glory and love! Implant these dispositions in my soul, and imprint upon my heart in

tense hatred for the delights and pleasures of this earth, and a particular affection for hard work and suffering.

3. O Jesus, I contemplate and adore Thee agonizing and dying on the Cross. I adore Thy last thoughts, words, actions and sufferings, the last use of Thy bodily senses and of the faculties of Thy soul, the last graces Thou didst infuse into the soul of Thy Blessed Mother and the other persons who remained at the foot Of the Cross; Thy last acts of adoration and love for the Heavenly Father; the last sentiments and dispositions of Thy Heart and soul and the last breath that yielded up Thy life. I offer Thee the last moment of my life and my death in honor of Thy holy death and the consummation of Thy life. Bless my death, O Jesus, my Saviour, and sanctify it by Thine own; unite it to Thine; grant that I may share the holy and divine dispositions with which Thou didst die. Grant, if it please Thee, that the last things of my life, that my last breath may be consecrated to the honor of Thy last breath, and that it may be an act of most pure and perfect love for Thee.

### **IX. SEVENTH MEDITATION-SATURDAY.**

#### **The Life of Jesus in Mary and that of Mary in Jesus**

1. O Jesus, Thou only Son of God, only Son of Mary, I contemplate and adore Thee living and reigning in Thy most holy Mother, the divine Author of her existence. St. Paul says: Thou art all and dost all in all things (Eph. 1, 23; 1 Cor. 12, 6), so surely Thou art and dost all in Thy most holy Mother. Thou art her life, her soul, her heart, her spirit, her riches. Thou art in her, sanctifying her on earth and glorifying her in heaven. Thou art in her, accomplishing greater works and giving to Thyself, in and by her, greater glory than in all the other creatures of heaven and earth. Thou art in her, clothing her with Thy qualities and perfections, inclinations and dispositions, imprinting in her a most perfect image of Thyself, of all Thy states, mysteries, and virtues, and making her so like Thee, that whoever sees Jesus sees Mary, and he who sees Mary beholds Jesus. Blessed be Thou, O Jesus, for all that Thou art and all that Thou dost accomplish in Thy most holy Mother! I offer Thee all the delights,

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

205 -

all the love and all the glory Thou didst ever have or ever shalt have in her.

2. O Mother of Jesus, I honor and venerate thy most holy and admirable life in Thy Son Jesus: a life resplendent with every kind of virtue and perfection; a life Of which one single moment is more dear to God than all the lives of angels and men; a life that gives more honor and love to God than all other lives combined in heaven and on earth. This life is none other than the life of thy Son Jesus, which He communicates to thee from moment to moment by a most particular and ineffable favor. Blessed be thou, O holy Virgin, for all the honor thou hast given to thy Well-beloved Son in thy whole life. I Offer thee all my life, O Mother of life and grace, and I consecrate it all to the honor of thy life, and with my whole heart I beg thy Son Jesus, the God of life and love, to grant by His great goodness that my whole life may pay continual and eternal homage to His most holy life and to thine.

3. O Jesus, God of my life and of my heart, Thou hast a very great desire to dwell in me, and to make me live in Thee an entirely holy and heavenly life. Forgive me for all the ways I have obstructed the fulfilment of Thy desire by my sins and infidelities. Eradicate the corrupt and depraved life of the old Adam. in me, and in its place establish Thy holy and perfect life. Dwell in all Thy fulness in my spirit, heart and soul, and therein accomplish all the works Thou dost desire for Thy glory. Love Thyself in me, and in me glorify Thyself in every way that Thou mayest desire. O Mother of Jesus, if it please thee, obtain from Thy Son the accomplishment of these things in me.



## **X. EIGHTH MEDITATION---SECOND MEDITATION FOR SUNDAY.**

### **Christ's Life of Glory in Heaven, after His Resurrection and Ascension**

1. O Jesus, having considered and adored Thee in Thy mortal life, in the agony of the Cross, in the shadow of death and in the chill of the Sepulchre, let me now adore and contemplate Thee in the exaltation, brightness and delights of the life of glory and blessedness Thou

206 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

didst enter by Thy Resurrection, which Thou hast enjoyed in heaven in the bosom of the Father since Thy Ascension. O immortal and glorious life of my Jesus! O life entirely free from the sorrow and suffering of this earth! O life completely hidden and absorbed in God! O life of nothing but love, and of love most pure, since, in His heavenly life, Jesus has no other thought than to love His Father, and to love us for His Father, to love, bless and glorify His Father for us, to offer us to His Father and to intercede for us with Him! O most holy life, most pure and most divine! O life replete with unutterable joy and exultation! O life that enjoys the fulness of glory, greatness and bliss which is God! O my Dear Jesus, what joy for my heart to behold Thee living such a life! May Thy most amiable Father be blessed forever for having brought Thee into heaven.

2. O Jesus, most worthy of love, not only art Thou in Thyself living a life of glory and blessedness, but so also are all the angels and saints who are with Thee in heaven. Thou livest in them, Thou dost communicate to them Thy glorious and immortal life, Thou art glorious and blessed in them, as St. Paul testifies in the words: omnia in omnibus (1 Cor. 12, 6). It is Thou who dost adore, praise, and love Thy Eternal Father in them and by them. Blessed be Thou for all these things, O Good Jesus. I refer and offer to Thee the glorified and blessed life of all the citizens of heaven, together with all the love and praise they give Thee now and shall give Thee forever, in homage to the life of bliss and glory which Thou hast in Thyself. I beg all Thy angels and saints to love and glorify Thee for me, and to associate me with all the love and glory they give Thee and shall give Thee forever.

3. O Jesus, Thou object of all desire, I know that Thou dost bear me an infinite love, and by Thy extreme zeal for Thy glory, dost most ardently desire to be perfectly loved and glorified in me, and also that Thou hast an infinite desire to draw me to Thee in heaven, that Thou mayest live perfectly in me and fully establish in me the kingdom of Thy glory and Thy love. Thou wilt not live and reign perfectly in me so long as I am on earth. Therefore, O my Saviour, I no longer desire to live on earth except to long without ceasing after heaven. Heaven! O heaven! How desirable art thou; how thou dost

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

207 -

call to our love! O God of heaven, when will the time come for me to see Thy holy face? When wilt Thou live fully in me and when will I love Thee perfectly? O earthly life, how hard, how unbearable art thou! O God of my life and of my heart, how long and cruel is this life in which Thou art so little loved and so much offended! But what consoles me, Lord, is that the great apostle, St. Paul, tells me that Thy Father has given us life and raised us from the dead, and caused us to sit down with Thee and in Thee in heaven: Convivificavit nos in Christo, et conresuscitavit; et consedere fecit in coelestibus in Christo Jesu (Eph. 2, 5). Hence I live with Thee in heaven, O Jesus, and there I share in all the love, glory and praises Thou dost give to the All-glorious Father, whether by Thyself or through the angels and saints. Indeed, if I am united to Thee by grace, I can say that I am uninterruptedly loving and praising and glorifying the Eternal Father most perfectly, in Thee and with Thee, with the same love, praise and glory with which Thou dost glorify and love Him. Because I am one with Thee, as the member is one with the head, I can say with St. Augustine: wherever my head is, I am, and I live by His life, and all that is His is mine, and I share in all that He does,

all His acts and activities belong to me, and in Him and with Him I do everything that He does.

Consequently, O my dear Jesus, I am even now in heaven with Thy Blessed Mother, with all Thy angels and saints, and especially in company with those to whom I am particularly united. I participate in all their praise and love of Thee, and indeed I can say with truth that I ceaselessly love and glorify Thy Father and Thee in them and with them; for both they and I are members of one identical Head and one identical body and are, therefore, all one: consequently, all that is theirs is mine. I share, therefore, all they do; indeed I do in them and with them all that they do. What a consolation it is for me to know that I am already in heaven, and that I there love and glorify God without ceasing! Lord Jesus, how can I possibly love Thee or thank Thee enough for having united me in so close and so holy a union with Thee and with all Thy saints, and for having given me, by this union, such great and profitable means of praising and loving Thee perpetually in heaven and on earth? O my Saviour,

208- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

let me praise Thee and love Thee on earth as in heaven! May I live on earth a life in conformity with the life I lead in Thee and in Thy saints in heaven! May I do on earth what I do with Thee and with Thy saints in heaven, that is, may I be ever engaged, without interruption, in loving and praising Thee! May I begin my heaven in this world, seeking all my joy and satisfaction in blessing and loving Thee and in doing all Thy holy will, in striving courageously and faithfully to complete the work of grace Thou dost desire to accomplish in me, so that once this work is finished and perfected, Thou mayest come and take me with Thee into the kingdom of Thy eternal love, that I may there love and magnify Thee perfectly, without ceasing, and forever!

#### **XI. PRAYER TO JESUS ON ALL THE PHASES AND MYSTERIES OF His LIFE, AND A CONSECRATION OF Every PHASE AND DETAIL OF YOUR LIFE To Him.**

O Jesus my Lord, I cast myself down and annihilate myself at Thy feet; I surrender myself to the might of Thy divine spirit and Thy holy love, in their immense power and greatness; I adore, glorify and love Thee in Thyself and in all the mysteries and phases of Thy life. I adore Thee in Thy temporal life on earth for thirty-four years. I adore Thee in the first moment of that life, in Thy holy Childhood, in Thy hidden life of labor, in Thy public ministry among men, both when Thou wast living and walking on earth for all to see, and now that Thou art still among us in the Blessed Eucharist. I adore Thee in all Thy sufferings, whether interior Or exterior, and in the last moment of Thy passable life. I adore Thee in Thy life of glory and bliss in heaven ever since the Ascension. I adore Thee in Thy life in the most Blessed Virgin and in all the angels and saints, whether in heaven or on earth. And, in general, I adore, love and glorify Thee in all the other mysteries and wonders that are embraced in the measureless expanse of Thy life, divine, temporal, and glorified. I bless Thee and give Thee infinite thanks for all the glory Thou didst ever and ever shalt give to the Father in all the phases of Thy life.

I offer Thee all the love and honor Thou ever didst or shalt

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

209 -

receive forever, in all Thy mysteries and states, from all the angels and all the saints, begging them most humbly to love and glorify Thee, for me, in every way possible and proper to Thy glory.

O Jesus, I give myself to Thee and beg Thee with my whole heart to enter into me, there to destroy all that is not Thee, and to imprint, a perfect image of Thyself, the states and mysteries of Thy life, Thy qualities and Thy virtues. Come, Lord Jesus, enter into me to destroy all that is not Thee and establish Thyself perfectly, there to be all and do all, that thus my being and my life, in all its aspects and ramifications, may be totally dedicated to the honor of Thy life and Thy sovereign being. May my birth in

nature and in grace, my childhood, adolescence and my years of activity as a mature man, my agony, death and burial, together with all the other phases of my temporal and eternal life, be consecrated to the honor of each successive part of Thy life, Thy birth, childhood, adolescence, Thy maturity, Thy Passion, death and burial, and all the other states of Thy temporal and eternal life. May all my thoughts, words and actions give honor to Thee. May every step I take, all my works and sufferings give honor to every step Thou didst take on earth and all Thy works and sufferings. May all the powers of my soul and all the senses of my body be dedicated to the honor of Thy holy soul and senses of Thy deified body. Finally, may everything that ever was, is, and shall be in me be transformed into ceaseless and eternal adoration, praise and love for Thee. Come Lord Jesus, enter into me; live and reign over me perfectly, and there love and glorify Thyself as befits Thee, to carry out the designs of Thy goodness in my being, to accomplish the work of Thy grace and to establish forever in my heart the kingdom of Thy glory and Thy pure love. Veni, Domine Jesu, veni in plenitudine virtutis tuae, in sanctitate Spiritus tui, in perfectione mysteriorum tuorum, et in puritate viarum tuarum. Veni, Domine Jesu.

Come, Lord Jesus, enter into me in the fulness of Thy virtue, to destroy all that displeases Thee and execute all that Thou dost desire for Thy glory. Come in the sanctity of Thy spirit to detach me entirely from all that is not Thyself, to unite me perfectly with Thee and to lead me in the path of sanctity in all my actions. Come in the

210 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

perfection of Thy mysteries, that is, to perfect in me what Thou dost deign to operate by Thy mysteries. Come in the purity of Thy ways, to accomplish in me, no matter at what price, and without sparing me in any way, all the designs of Thy pure love, and lead me in the straight path of that same pure love without permitting me to turn aside, without yielding anything to the inclinations and feelings of corrupt nature and self-love. Come, Lord Jesus!

211 -

## **PART FIVE**

**Devotional Exercises to Be Done Each Month to  
Live a Christian and Saintly Life and to  
Make Jesus Reign in Your Soul**

**Part Five**

**DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES TO BE DONE EACH  
MONTH TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN AND  
SAINTLY LIFE AND TO MAKE  
JESUS REIGN IN YOUR SOUL**

**1. EXERCISE FOR THE FIRST AND LAST DAYS OF THE MONTH.**

The first and last day of each month ought to assume great importance for you. You should treat the first day as a new beginning of your life, and excite a fresh desire and resolution to serve and love God perfectly, and to spend that month well in His love and glory, looking upon it as though it were to be the last month of your life. But especially should you consider and make use of the last day of the month as you would wish to spend the last day of your life. The first and last day of each month should be dedicated in honor of the first and last day of the life of Our Lord, just as you consecrated the first and last day of each year. Thus you will begin and end each month as well as each year in union with Our Lord. The spiritual exercises to be proposed in 'Part Six' for the beginning and ending of the year may be adapted for each month.

**11. THE MONTHLY RETREAT.**

In addition to your annual retreat, it is beneficial to set aside one day in each month, for example, the first Thursday or any other special day, to renew and stimulate the good desires and resolutions adopted in the yearly retreat; to make reparation for your failures in God's service and love during the month. You should apply yourself particularly to God on that day, performing all your ordinary actions with more than ordinary attention and perfection, giving yourself with special care and fervor to exercises of praise and love of Jesus. That is why I insert here various exercises and rosaries of praise, glory, and love for Jesus, which you may use on this day of

214- **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

retreat, selecting now one, now another, according to the graces God may give you.

But, first, I must tell you that, in order to stir you up and enkindle you with a greater desire to praise and love Jesus, it would be a good thing for you to set apart some time that same day for the attentive consideration of the thoughts I shall set forth in the following meditation.

**111. MEDITATION TO STIR YOU UP TO PRAISE AND GLORIFY JESUS.**

1. Consider that Jesus is infinitely worthy of all praise, glory and blessing, for every reason in the universe. He deserves infinite praise for all that He is and all that He does for His Eternal Father, glorifying and loving Him infinitely and continually from all eternity and to all eternity; likewise for all that He is in Himself, in His divinity, in all His divine perfections, in His Divine Person, in His sacred humanity, in His body, in His soul, the very least elements of which deserve infinite praise; in all His states and mysteries; in all His qualities and offices; in all His words, thoughts, deeds, and sufferings; in all His virtues, and in everything that subsists in Him, the very least of which is so deserving of praise that, even if all the angels and saints were to be occupied for all eternity in glorifying and praising it with all their might, they would never be able to render it the glory deserved.

Furthermore, He deserves undying praise for everything that He is and everything that He has

accomplished with respect to His holy spirit, His Blessed Mother, all His angels, all His saints, all men, all Christians, and all creatures on earth and even in hell. He deserves no less praise for the effects of His justice than for those of His mercy, since all His divine attributes are equally holy and worthy of adoration. Many are the reasons to bless and glorify Jesus, who so commands your adoration and love! But always remember that you should be much more ready to praise and love Him for what He is and what He does with respect to His Father, Himself, and His Holy Spirit, than for what He is and does for you and for other creatures, because the interests of God ought to be infinitely more dear to you than your own.

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

215 -

2. Consider that the only reason for your existence on earth is to love Jesus and give Him glory. To this you are bound by an infinite number of special reasons, because of the countless graces He has given you. Hence, it should be your chief, nay, your only care and business to make your active life a ceaseless offering of love and glory to Jesus. All your thoughts, words, deeds, and affections should have only this one object in view, to which should be directed the employment of all your time and all the powers of your body and soul. And you see how, instead of loving and glorifying Him, you have done practically nothing else, in your whole life, but offend Him in your thoughts, words, and actions, and in all the functions of your body and soul. Humble yourself profoundly before Him; ask His forgiveness, and cultivate a fervent desire to make up for all these faults, and to exert yourself from now on to love and glorify Him perfectly.

3. Look back on your whole life and examine it, together with your actions and your behavior, and consider what it is in you that most obstructs the love and glory of Jesus. Then firmly resolve to fight, overcome and destroy this defect at all costs, giving yourself withal to your Loving Jesus and imploring Him to eradicate your predominant fault by the power of His grace and His divine love.

After that, exert all the powers of your soul to praise and glorify your divine Saviour in the following manner, or in any other way He may inspire you, whether it be vocal, or only in your heart in the form of a meditation.

### 1V. EXERCISE TO PRAISE AND GLORIFY JESUS.

O Jesus, most worthy of honor and glory, since Thou art so full of grandeur and perfections that command praises without end and since I am in this world only to give Thee glory, I now desire to exert all the powers of my soul and body in blessing and magnifying Thee. I implore Thy Eternal Father, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother, Thy angels, and saints, and all the creatures in heaven and on earth, to join with me in blessing Thee, for all that Thou art to Thy Eternal Father, to Thyself, to Thy Holy Spirit, to Thy Blessed Mother, to all Thy angels, all Thy saints, to all men, to all Christians, to myself in particular, and to all created things.

216 -

### THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

O Kind Jesus, with all my heart I beg Thee to forgive me for having hitherto, instead of praising and glorifying Thee, done hardly anything but dishonor and offend Thee. To satisfy for this, I offer Thee all the praises that ever have been, and ever shall be rendered to Thee in heaven and on earth.

O my Dear Jesus, I give myself all to Thee. Destroy all in me that militates against Thy glory; transform every thought and function of my body and soul into praises and blessings of Thee. O Jesus, Thou art worthy of praise without end; may I be all praise for Thee! If I possessed all the strength of all the creatures in heaven and on earth, I should be obliged to exert all of it in praising Thee. How great, then, is my obligation to exert what small powers I have. So then, let everything in me be employed and consumed in blessing and magnifying Thee. *Benedic, anima mea, Domino et omnia quae intra me sunt, nomini sancto ejus* (PS. 102, 1).

O Jesus, so worthy to be admired, I hear Thy holy word commanding me to bless Thee from all eternity to all eternity: Benedicite Domino Deo vestro ab aeterno usque in aeternum (11 Esd. 9, 5). For this purpose I offer Thee all the blessings that have ever been or ever shall be accorded Thee, from all eternity, by Thy Eternal Father, by Thyself and Thy Holy Spirit, uniting myself with all these blessings, and imploring Thee, in Thy great bounty, to unite my humble praise to the endless voice of all who bless Thee forever.

O Great Jesus, Thou art omnipresent. By Thy divinity, Thou dost fill up heaven, earth, and even hell with the immense greatness of Thy divine majesty; Thou art most worthy to be loved and glorified in every place. SO, too, art Thou loved and glorified beyond all measure in heaven, on earth and even in hell, by Thy Father and Thy Holy Spirit, who are everywhere with Thee, and everywhere love and glorify Thee without ceasing.

Thus heaven, earth, and even hell are filled with Thy love, Thy glory and praise: Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua (Isa. 6, 3). I say even hell, because it is filled with the love, glory, and praise there given Thee by the infinite justice of The Father and The Holy Spirit. O Dearest Jesus, what pleasure and joy for me to behold how the whole world is filled with Thy glory!

#### DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

217 -

Indeed, my Saviour, since Thou art thus in every place, and dost everywhere deserve to be praised, I also desire to praise Thee wherever Thou art. To that end I unite myself with all the glory that is given Thee now in heaven, On earth and in hell, and shall be given Thee forever.

Furthermore, I desire now to descend in spirit into hell and there, in the midst of Thine enemies, in spite of all their hatred and fury against Thee, to unite myself with the exceeding great love borne for Thee by Thy Father and Holy Spirit in that place. I adore and love and bless Thee with my whole heart, O Jesus, my Lord, for all that Thou art in Thyself and in all things, and even for all the effects of justice which Thou dost visit upon the demons and the damned.

O Jesus, exceedingly to be adored, would that I had in myself all the powers and all the capacity to praise and glorify Thee that were once in the possession of these miserable souls which, by their malice, they have lost, so that I might now exert them in praising and loving Thee!- These traitors now surrender themselves with all their might, with never a pause. Would that I could show at least as much fervor and concentration in praising Thee as they show fury and concentration in blaspheming Thee! Would that I could make some slight reparation for the insults and curses they heap upon my Saviour!

O Good Jesus, these unhappy souls received from Thee the priceless gifts of being, life and natural perfections, and should use them all for Thy glory; yet they are doing just the contrary. But I must, and I will, give what they fail to give, and in their stead to the things they ought to be doing. For the being, the life and natural perfections of demons and of all reprobates belong to Thee, O my God, because they emanate from Thee. Consequently they belong to me, since all things are mine, according to the Holy Apostle: Omnia vestra sunt (1 Cor. 3, 22), because, in giving Thyself to me, Thou didst give me all that was Thine. Thus, it necessarily follows that I can, and must exercise on behalf of Thy glory the being, life and natural perfections of the demons and the damned, because I am bound to exert all the power that belongs to me to give Thee glory and praise. Hence, I offer and refer these things to Thee, O my Jesus, as my own possessions and I render Thee homage for them; I cast

#### 218- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

them at Thy feet and sacrifice them entirely and forever to Thy praise and Thy glory. Such is the use and employment to which I desire to put the faculties of the damned so that in spite of themselves they may give

glory to Thy Holy Name.

O my God, I desire to descend again in spirit into hell, and put myself in the place that Thou knowest I have deserved by sins, where I should indeed be, if Thou hadst not delivered me by Thy mercy. There I desire to adore and love Thee, O my sovereign judge, and to glorify Thee in all the effects of the terrible justice Thou wouldst have inflicted upon me for all eternity, if Thy mercy had not taken pity on my wretchedness.

O Most Kind Jesus, I have exceeding great confidence that, in Thy infinite goodness, Thou wilt give me grace to become one of the elect who shall bless Thee forever. But none the less, supposing I were to be so unhappy as to resist the designs of Thy goodness, and by my sins cause myself to become a victim of Thy justice, I should desire at this present moment, O great God, voluntarily and through love to do what I should do then, through necessity and compulsion. I mean that I should desire to adore, love and bless, with my whole heart and all my strength, Thy most equitable judgment against me, and all its effects as Thy prophet has said: *Justus es, Domine, et rectum judicium tuum*: "Thou art just, O Lord: and thy judgment is right" (Ps. 118, 137). And yet, O Dearest Jesus, whom I so desire, I recover again my unshakable confidence that in Thy immense mercy Thou wilt deliver me from so great a disaster. For, alas! *Non mortui laudabunt te, Domine, neque omnes qui descendunt in infernum*. The dead, that is, those who have died the eternal death, shall not praise Thee, O Lord, nor shall all those who go down into hell (Ps. 113, 17). *Hic ure, hic seca, modo in aeternum parcas*. "Burn, tear, and cut me to pieces, provided only Thou dost pardon me in eternity" (St. Augustine), and provided that I may be numbered among those who shall praise and love Thee forever.

## **V. CONTINUATION OF THE FOREGOING EXERCISE.**

Once I have thus adored and blessed Thee in hell, O Jesus exceedingly worthy of love, I desire to proceed in spirit to purgatory, there

### **DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES**

219 -

to adore, love and glorify Thee similarly, in all the works wrought by Thy justice there, and even in the punishment Thou wilt one day visit upon me, when I shall be in purgatory. So, too, I desire to go there to unite myself with all the love and glory that ever was, is and ever shall be given Thee in that blessed place of purification.

From purgatory I come to the visible world of creation, where I behold three different orders of being, in which I desire to bless and magnify Thee, O Jesus, Sovereign Lord of the World.

The first is the order of irrational and inanimate creatures, concerning which Sacred Scripture teaches me that they praise and magnify Thee without ceasing, to the full extent of their being and natural power, and their existence is entirely one of confession, that is, praise and magnificence of Thee. *Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus* (Ps. 110, 3). O my divine Creator, how I rejoice to behold Thee incessantly glorified by all Thy creatures, and to see that all Thy works are filled with Thy glory, according to the divine testimony: *Gloria Domini plenum est opus ejus* (Eccli. 42, 16), and to hear that the whole universe resounds with Thy praise! How guilty I am, and what a source of confusion it is to me to understand that I have to learn, from insensible creatures, the lesson of the glory I must render to Thy divine majesty. O Lord, permit me to unite myself with all the blessings accorded Thee without ceasing by all creatures. O you beloved creatures of my God, bless Him, praise Him, exalt Him for me through all the ages: *Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domina, laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula* (Dan. 3, 57). Divine Creator, do not allow me to live on earth except to join all Thy creatures in ceaselessly blessing Thee.

The second order in the world is the state of the wicked, that is, those who are devoid of all

knowledge or love of Thee, O most kind Jesus, and who begin to do on earth what the damned do in hell that is, to dishonor and offend Thee continually. Let me, O my Jesus, with the help of Thy grace, make up for all they fall to give Thee. Let me love and bless Thee for them, and for all the favors Thou hast given them, of which they make not the slightest acknowledgment to Thy bounty. Let me refer and sacrifice to Thy glory the being, life and natural perfections Thou hast given them, just as I

## 220- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

have referred and sacrificed to Thy glory the being, life and natural perfections of those who are in hell.

The third order which I behold in the world, O Jesus, is the good, which embraces the vast number of holy souls living in the world and in many religious communities, who are employed without ceasing in Thy praise, with such affection and discipline that not a single hour or minute of the day or night goes by without Thy receiving great glory and praise from them. For this do I rejoice beyond measure, O my God, and I desire to unite myself, if it please Thee, with all the benedictions that ever have been, or are now, or ever shall be given Thee on earth by all the precious souls that belong to Thee.

From earth my thoughts ascend to heaven, where I behold the Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother, together with so many millions of Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, Angels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Priests, Confessors, Virgins, Widows, Innocents and other saints, who are forever engaged in loving and glorifying Thee with all their might, with radiant love and concentration. My Dear Jesus, how glad I am to behold Thee so loved and magnified! I offer up to Thee all this glory and all this praise. O Father of Jesus, Holy Spirit of Jesus, Mother of Jesus, and His angels and saints, with all the blessings that you give to Jesus my Lord, include, I pray you, my own also, and allow me to share in the love, attention, purity and sanctity with which you incessantly praise Him, so that I may praise Him with you forever and thus commence here below what I hope and desire to do eternally with you in heaven.

O Most Divine Jesus, I rejoice beyond all measure that Thou art so full of greatness and perfection, and consequently so deserving of glory and praise that all the creatures on earth and in heaven together are unable to praise Thee according to Thy worth. Thy dignity and worthiness of praise infinitely surpass the whole capacity of heaven and earth to praise Thee, as the Prophet David said: *Confessio ejus super coelum et terram* (PS. 148, 14). Only the Father and Holy Spirit give Thee praise worthy of Thy infinite greatness. All the

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

221 -

other praises rendered on earth or in heaven are unworthy of Thee, for they are finite, while Thou art deserving of praise that is infinite.

O Father of Jesus, Holy Spirit of Jesus, what shall I do for You? How shall I repay You for the glory You give to Jesus Christ my Lord? Yes, even though (to imagine the impossible) I had never received nor ever should receive any favor from You, I should none the less desire to love and serve You eternally for the love and the glory that You give to Him who is my all, whom I love more than myself.

O Father of Jesus, O Holy Spirit of Jesus, I implore You with my whole heart, by Your very great love for my Lord, and by Your most ardent zeal for His glory, to atone for all my neglect in pleasing Him, and to make Him a hundredfold return for all the glory I ought to have rendered Him all my life. O Good Jesus, I give myself to Thee, to praise and glorify Thee in every way that shall please Thee. Grant that my life may henceforth be a continual sacrifice of praise and benediction for Thee, but do Thou render infinite blessing to Thyself on my behalf: *Benedicite omnes virtutes Domini Domino*. Let all the virtues, that is, all the might and powers of Thy divinity and humanity, Lord Jesus, be employed in blessing Thee for me, and



in exalting and magnifying Thee incessantly and forever (Dan. 3, 61).

## **VI. ROSARY OF THE ETERNAL FATHER.**

On this monthly day of recollection devoted to a more particular love and praise Of Jesus, you may, if you like, say a rosary which I call the Rosary of the Father of Jesus, because it is addressed to the Eternal Father, and beg Him to praise and glorify His Son Jesus in you and for you.

This rosary is made up of thirty-four small beads, in honor of the thirty-four years of Our Lord's life on earth.

First, repeat three times Veni Pater Jesu, "Come, Father of Jesus," to invoke and draw down to you the Father of Jesus, and to give yourself to Him that He may destroy all in you that is contrary to the glory of His Son, and glorify Him in you according to His holy will.

Then on each small bead say: Pater clarifica Filium Tuum, ut

222 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

Filius Tuus clarificet Te: "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee" (John 17, 1).

This is the prayer which the Son of God addressed to His Eternal Father on the eve of His death. Therefore, no prayer can be said by you that is more pleasing to Him than this invocation, nor can you ask Him anything that would please Him more than what you request of Him in this perfect prayer.

But when you recite this invocation, remember that it came forth from the heart and lips of Jesus. Unite yourself with the humility, the purity, the love, and all the holy dispositions and intentions with which Jesus Christ uttered it, begging the Eternal Father to glorify His Divine Son throughout the whole world, and to destroy in you and in all mankind everything that is contrary to His glory. Implore Him to implant in your soul all the graces and virtues required for His perfect glorification, and to exert the power of His own zeal and love for His Son to glorify Him there, according to, His holy will.

On the large beads say: Gloria tibi, Domine Jesu, qui natus es de Virgine, "Glory to, Thee, Lord Jesus, who wast born of the Virgin Mary." When you say this, offer to Jesus Christ all the glory that ever has been, is now and ever shall be rendered to Him forever in heaven and on earth.

## **VII. EXERCISE OF LOVE FOR JESUS.**

Of all the duties and functions of a truly Christian soul, the most noble, most holy, most elevated that God asks of you before all others, is to exercise yourself in divine love. For this reason you must make a point of affirming to Jesus Christ our Lord, in all your pious practices and other actions, that you desire to perform them, not for fear of hell, nor for the reward of heaven, nor for the merit attached, nor for your own satisfaction and consolation, but only for the love of God Himself, for His satisfaction, His glory and His pure love.

So, too, you ought frequently to exercise yourself by contemplation and acts of this divine love.

I have already indicated many such acts in the preceding exercises. But in addition, here are thirty-four more, in honor of the thirty

four years of Our Lord's life on earth, a life that was all love. Added to these are one or two others which may be used at any time, but chiefly for the monthly day of recollection or any other day in the month set aside expressly for your conscientious application to this divine contemplation, which is the greatest, the holiest, and most noble occupation of the angels and saints, and of God Himself, in which He always has been, is now, and ever shall be engaged throughout all the infinite extent of eternity.

### **VIII. THIRTY-FOUR ACTS OF LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST IN HONOR OF THE THIRTY-FOUR YEARS OF HIS LIFE ON EARTH.**

1. O Jesus, my Saviour, Thou art all lovable, infinitely lovable and infinitely worthy of love. O my God, I need no other knowledge but this. What concern have I with so many studies and ideas and considerations? It suffices me to know that my Jesus is all lovable, and that there is nothing in Him that is not worthy of being loved beyond measure. Let my mind then be satisfied with this knowledge; but may the hunger of my heart to love Him Who can never be loved enough, never be sated.

2. Alas! My Saviour, I know that this poor, insignificant, imperfect heart of mine is not worthy to love Thee. But Thou art exceeding worthy to be loved, and Thou didst create this poor heart only that it might love Thee. Thou dost command it to love Thee under pain of death, eternal death. God of my heart, Thou hast no need to command. To love Thee is what I want, what I desire, what my heart sighs after. Yes, my Jesus, I no longer want any other desire. Farewell all other thoughts, all other inclinations, all other wishes. I wish to have but one increasing purpose here on earth; I desire nothing, only to love Jesus, who is the love and delight of heaven and earth. Ah, Jesus! Ah, My Dear Jesus! What do I desire on earth? Nothing, O my all, but only to love Thee.

3. O Jesus, worthy of all desire, indeed I long to love Thee, not only with all the power of my too feeble will, but to the full extent and with all the might of Thy divine will, which is mine since Thou hast given me all. Add to that the will of all men and angels. They also are mine, since in giving Thyself to me Thou hast given me

### 224 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

everything. O sweetest Lord, would that I were entirely transformed into desires, aching, yearning, and longing to love Thee ever more and more!

4. O Thou desire of my soul, grant me the favor I implore; hearken to the cry of my heart. Thou knowest, Lord, what I ask of Thee; my heart has so often told Thee. I ask nothing but the perfection of Thy holy love. I desire only to love Thee and ever to grow progressively in that desire. O Thou object of all my desires, increase in me the desire to love Thee, which Thou hast given me. Increase it so much and make it so burning and strong that I may henceforth incessantly with the desire of Thy love.

5. O Jesus, worthy of all love, crown of all desire, enkindle in my soul so burning a thirst and so extreme a hunger for Thy holy love that it may be to me a ceaseless martyrdom not to love Thee enough, and let nothing more in this world be able to cause me sorrow, except that I love Thee too little.

6. O Good Jesus! Who is there who would not wish to love Thee? Who would not desire to love ever more and more such lovable goodness? My God, my life and my all, I cannot be content to tell Thee that I desire to love Thee as perfectly as possible, and that I desire it so much that, if it were possible, I should will my whole spirit to be transformed into wishing, my whole soul into desire, my heart into yearning, my life into longing.

7. O King of my heart, take pity on my misery. Thou knowest that I want to love Thee. But alas! Thou seest how much there is in me that goes against Thy love. Thou seest the innumerable multitude of my sins, my self-will, my self-love, my pride and all the other vices and imperfections which keep me from loving Thee perfectly. I detest and abhor all these defects which so obstruct my desire to love Thee! What must I do to destroy them? I stand ready to do and suffer all that pleases Thee for that end. Exert the strength of Thy powerful arm to exterminate in my soul all the enemies of Thy love.

8. O Jesus, everything in Thee is love, and all love for me. And although I ought to be all love for Thee, there is in me nothing of myself, whether in body or in soul, that is not opposed to Thy love. Oh, what pain! Oh!, what anguish! How can I tolerate my own self? Where art Thou, divine love? Where is Thy power? Where the

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

225 -

force of Thy mighty arm? O consuming and devouring fire, where are Thy heavenly flames? Why dost Thou not totally annihilate this wicked and sinful life of mine, and establish Thy life, divine and holy ?

9. O all-powerful love, I surrender myself entirely to Thy holy might. Come, I beseech Thee, into my soul, there to destroy all that displeases Thee, and to establish Thy heavenly kingdom. If suffering is all that is required to effect this change, I offer myself with my whole heart to Thee, that I may suffer all the martyrdom and torments that ever have been and ever shall be suffered in the world. Spare me not, love! Nothing matters except that I be set free from all that displeases my Saviour and of all attachments that keep me from loving Him. I long to love my Jesus and I will to love Him perfectly, no matter what the cost, no matter what the sacrifice.

10. O God of love, Thou art all lovable, all loving, all love and all love for me. Why am I not also all love for Thee? Why are not heaven and earth transformed into a pure flame of love for Thee?

11. My sweet love, who shall henceforth prevent me from loving Thee, now that I realize Thy immense goodness? Shall my body? I will grind it to dust first! Shall my past sins? O Jesus, I plunge them deep into the sea of Thy Precious Blood. Take my body and my soul and make me suffer all that pleases Thee, to purge them utterly, so that they may no longer prevent me from loving Thee. Shall the world, or creatures stop me? No. With all my might I renounce all affections of sense and all created things. I consecrate my whole heart and all my affections to Jesus, my Creator and my God. And as for you, O world, excommunicated from Jesus, since He and His disciples are not of this world, and since He said that He prayed not for the world, know once and for all that I give you up forever. I fly from you as from an excommunicate; it is my will to consider you as an antichrist, the enemy of my Lord Jesus Christ. I will set no more store by your praises and censures, your pleasures and ambitions, or by all that you most highly value and cherish than I would by a dream or a puff of smoke that vanishes away. I will hold in abhorrence your spirit, your code of behavior, your opinions and your accursed maxims. Finally, I will hate and persecute your malice just as

## 226 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

much as you hate and persecute the goodness of my Lord Jesus Christ.

Farewell then, world, and once again farewell to all that is not God. Jesus shall henceforth be my world, my fame, my fortune, my delight and my all. I no longer desire to see anything but Jesus Christ. Eyes, close yourselves up against all else, for He alone is a worthy Object of vision. I no longer want to please anyone but Jesus. I no longer want to have any love or affection save for Him. I no longer want to rejoice except in His love and in performing His most amiable will. Nor do I any longer wish to grieve except for what offends Him and is contrary to His divine love. O love! O love! Let me love or let me die:

may, rather let me both die and love! Die to all that is not Jesus, and then love Him alone to perfection.

12. O King of my love, Thou hast placed me on earth only that I may love Thee. Oh, how noble, how holy and how lofty is the end for which Thou hast created me! O what a favor, O my heart! What an honor was given Thee, when Thou wast created for the same purpose as the God who made Thee, and to employ thyself in the same divine activity which is His ceaseless concern! This great God exists only to contemplate and love Himself eternally and continually. My soul is created only to love the God who made it, and to be forever employed in loving and blessing Him. May He be forever loved and blessed, the King of all hearts, who has given to me a heart, capable of loving Him!

God of my heart, since Thou hast created me only to love Thee, do not allow me to live except in love of Thee, ever growing in Thy love. Death or love! Give me more life, my God, only that I may love Thee more. Better a thousand deaths than the loss of Thy love.

13. O divine love, be the life of my life, soul of my soul, heart of my heart. Let me live no more save in Thee and by Thee. Let me no more subsist save by Thee and for Thee.

14. Thou sole object of my heart, Thou alone art worthy to be loved. All that is not Thee is mere nothingness and deserves not even one passing glance. It is Thee alone that I desire, Thee alone that I seek, Thee alone I long to love. Thou art my all; the rest is nothing

#### DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

227 -

to me now and I no longer want to regard anything or love anything, save Thee in all things.

O Dearest Jesus, Thou art my greatest friend; indeed Thou art my one and only friend. To me Thou art Father, Brother, Spouse and Head. Thou art all mine. I desire to be all Thine forever.

15. O Jesus, who alone art worthy to be loved, who alone dost love and alone art loved by the Eternal Father and by all the elect who love in heaven, grant that I may love Thee above all things, alone in all things, and that if I love any created thing, I may love it only in Thee and for Thee.

16. O Thou only love of my heart! O Thou sole object of my love! Nothing in heaven or on earth is worthy of love save Thee. When, therefore, shall it be ordained that men will see nothing and love nothing in heaven and on earth save Thee?

17. O Jesus, O my one and only love, detach me altogether from myself and from all things. Draw me inescapably close to Thee. Possess me so fully and so absolutely that nothing but Thee may ever retain any part of my mind or my heart.

18. O Dearest Jesus! How lovable Thou art, and yet how little loved! The world thinks not of Thee, nor of loving Thee. It thinks only of offending Thee and of persecuting those who desire to love Thee. Let me then think of Thy love instead of the world and concentrate all my thoughts on loving Thee! Grant that I may love Thee as much as the world ought to love Thee.

19. O Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, Thou art all lovable, all loving, and all love. From all eternity Thou didst begin, without beginning, to love me forever. If I had existed from all eternity, I should have been bound to love Thee always. As I have only existed in time I should at least have loved Thee from the first moment I obtained the use of reason. Alas! I have begun to love Thee late indeed, nor do I even dare to say that I have even now begun to love Thee as I should. O Eternal God, Thou hast never passed a moment without loving me, through all the extent of Thy eternity, and yet I hardly know if I have ever spent a single moment of my life in loving Thee as I ought. On the contrary, I know only too well that I have never

spent a day without offending Thee. What pain, what heart

## 228 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

break for my soul, O Lord; I can not tolerate myself when I think of this. Break with grief, O my heart. Dissolve into tears, O eyes! Why am I not dissolved into a sea of tears of penance and of blood, to lament and wipe out my prodigious ingratitude towards such great kindness! O love, no more offenses, no more sin, no more infidelity, no longer anything but love!

20. O eternal love, Thou art loved from all eternity by the Eternal Father and by the Holy Spirit. Boundless is my joy at this; I unite myself with this love, and I lose myself in the ceaseless love of the Father and the Holy Spirit for Thee from all eternity.

21. O everlasting beauty! O eternal goodness! If I had an eternity on earth, I should be bound to employ it all in Thy love. How great, then, is my obligation to use what little life and time remain for me to love Thee! O dearest Lord, I consecrate it all to Thy holy love. Grant that I may no longer live save to love Thee, and that no moment of my life may pass without being employed in Thy divine love! But above all, grant me to love Thee for all eternity. Whatever happens, I unite myself now with all the love that shall be Thine throughout eternity.

O eternity of love! My Dearest Jesus, consume me with thy divine Fire; dismember me, reduce me to dust and make me suffer every thing Thou dost please in this world, provided only that I may love Thee eternally.

22. O King of Ages, Thou hast bought, at the price of Thy blood, every minute of my time and of my life so that I might use them in loving Thee. Too much, too much, alas, have I wasted on self-love, on love of the world and on attachment to created things. Too much time have I lost, time that has cost Thee so dearly, which ought to be so precious to me, since it could be employed in such great and important work as the infinite concerns of Thy divine love. It is indeed time, O Jesus, high time, that I begin seriously to practise the holy exercises of Thy sacred love. Let me have no more days and hours, except to love Thee. Let me so dispose my life that there may remain for me in all the world only myself and Thee. May I have nothing to do but think Of Thee and converse with Thee, heart to heart, spirit to spirit. And may nothing, of all the things that happen in the world,

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

229 -

touch me or pertain to me, save only the one care and the one desire to love Thee. O Jesus, increase in me this desire, and make it become so burning and so urgent that it may grow from a simple desire, into continual longing. May I aspire to Thee incessantly; may I tend towards Thee perpetually; may I yearn for Thee night and day without ceasing. O Sweetest Jesus, Thou only love of my desires, when will the time come when I shall be utterly transformed into a pure flame of love for Thee?

23. O immense love, God of the Universe, Thou dost fill heaven and earth; Thou art everywhere and in all things. Everywhere dost Thou infinitely love the Father and the Holy Spirit, and art infinitely loved by Them. So, too, Thou dost love me infinitely in all places and in all things. Let me love Thee also in all places and all things, and let me love all things in Thee and for Thee. To that end, I unite myself to Thy divine immensity, and in its fathomless power, I direct my mind and my will everywhere and into all places in the world. There, in all the power and immensity of Thy spirit and Thy love, I love Thee, glorify Thee and adore Thee infinitely. I also unite myself to the all-embracing love of Thy Father and Thy Holy Spirit for Thee, manifested everywhere and in all things that are in heaven, on earth and even in hell.

24. O infinite goodness, an infinite love would be necessary to love Thee as Thou dost deserve. What

joy for my soul, what satisfaction for my heart, to know Thou art so good, so perfect, and so lovable that even if all creatures on earth and in heaven were to exert all their strength, throughout eternity, they would never be able to love Thee enough. There is none but Thyself, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, capable of loving Thee worthily.

25. O infinite goodness, if I had every single heart and the total capacity for love possessed by all men and angels, I should be bound to exert them all in the love of Him who is infinitely lovable, and directs all the sources of His wisdom, power and goodness to loving me and working so many wonders for my love. How great, then, is my obligation to exert my little strength in loving His goodness! Henceforth, O my Dear Jesus, I desire to pour forth all the powers of my body and soul in loving Thee. But that is not enough. I desire

## 230 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

also to gather unto myself all the might of heaven and earth, which belong to me by Thy gift of Thyself, and exert them all in loving Thee. I desire to employ likewise all the powers of Thy divinity and humanity, which are also mine, since Thou hast Thyself given Thyself to me.

I love Thee, then, O Jesus, I love Thee with all my might, with all the strength of my body and my soul, all the capacity of every creature in heaven and on earth, and all the powers of Thy divinity and humanity.

26. But what am I saying, O my God? I am not worthy to love Thee. To Thee alone belongs so holy and divine a function. Therefore I annihilate myself at Thy feet, plunging into the deepest abyss of my nothingness. I give myself all to Thee. Do Thou Thyself destroy me by the power of that most mighty love, which reduced Thee even to our nothingness, and establish Thyself in me in order to love Thyself there with a love worthy of Thee. Let me love Thee, henceforth, no longer by myself nor by the powers of my own mind and my own love, but by Thee and by Thy mighty spirit and Thy flaming love.

27. O Most Lovable Jesus, Thou dost assure us in Holy Writ that the Father loves us even as He loves Thee, that is, with the same affection and the same love with which He loves Thee. Thou dost command us to love Thee as Thou dost love the Heavenly Father and to remain ever in Thy love, even as Thou dost ever dwell in the love of the Father. But, Lord, Thou knowest my powerlessness to love Thee by myself. Grant me the grace to perform what Thou dost command of me; then command me as Thou wilt. Destroy my own heart and my self-love. Implant within me Thy Heart and Thy love, so that I may henceforth love Thee as Thou lovest the Father and as the Father loves Thee. May I always remain in Thy love, as Thou dost remain always in the love of Thy Father; and may I do everything by the power and under the guidance of that love. Yes, my Jesus, it is in that eternal, infinite and immense love of the Father for Thee, and of Thee for the Father for all eternity, that I desire to love Thee from now on, consecrating to that love my every thought, word and deed for Thee. It is Thy infinite love, Thy immense Heart all filled with

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

231 -

treasures of sublime love, that I offer to Thee as my own heart and love, since Thou gavest it to me in giving me Thyself, together with the beloved heart of Thy peerless Mother, the most lovable, the most loved, and the most loving of all human hearts. To these I add the hearts of all the saints and holy persons in heaven and on earth, and I offer them as my own, since Thy holy apostle, St. Paul, teaches us that the Almighty Father, in giving Thee to us, gave us all things together with Thee (Rom. 8, 32).

28. O Jesus, Thou art purity itself and Thou dost love me with an exceedingly pure love. I desire also to love Thee with the purest love possible. Hence, I wish to love Thee in Thyself, in Thy own love; I desire to love nothing but Thee for Thyself alone, and solely for Thy good pleasure. I love Thee, O my

Dearest Jesus, I love Thee with that exceeding pure love Thou hast for Thyself. I love thee also in the most pure love of the Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy most pure Mother, Thy angels and Thy saints. O Father of Jesus, angels of Jesus and His saints, O all creatures, come to my aid. Help me to love your Creator and mine. Come, let us love Him, our most lovable Lord, let us employ and expend all our being and all our powers in loving Him who created us only that we might love Him.

29. O Thou my heart's dear Friend and Thou dear Heart of my love! How desolate it is, and how much to be lamented with tears of blood, to see Thee loved so little even by those who claim to love Thee.

And this is strange because there is no one so worthy of love as Thou; yet it seems there is nothing in the world less loved than Thou art. There are many souls who love the thought of heaven and the sweetness of Thy grace and the consolations of Thy love, but out of a thousand good men scarcely one will be found to love Thee purely for love of Thyself alone. O most pure love, my dearest Saviour, Thee alone do I seek, Thee alone do I desire, Thee alone do I love. I desire to love Thee not for my own interest and satisfaction, not because it is sweet full of consolation, but because Thou art most worthy to be loved for Thyself alone.

30. When shall I love Thee so purely that I shall be able to say with truth: My Jesus is my all and everything else to me is nothing. He

## 232 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

alone sufficeth me, and I desire no other. I desire Him not for myself but for His own goodness. The joys of Paradise, the consolidation of heavenly love, are not my aim. I seek the Lord of Paradise and the divine Author of all consolations. And even if He were never to favor me with any consolations or reward (which would not be possible to His goodness), yet should I wish to love Him always, because He is most worthy of love, for love of Himself. I desire no other reward than to have the power to love Him for His own sake alone.

O Good Jesus, implant these loving dispositions in my heart and in the hearts of all mankind especially those to whom Thou knowest I am indebted and eager to remember in my prayers. O King of all hearts, behold I offer to Thee each poor human heart Thou hast created to love Thee, desiring now only to breathe Thy love. Destroy in those chosen hearts all that is contrary to Thy sacred affection; fill them with Thy divine love. O dearest Saviour, draw them to Thyself; unite them to Thy Sacred Heart; engulf them in Thy love and number them among the blessed of whom it is said: *vivent corda eorum in saeculum saeculi*: "Their hearts shall live for ever and ever" (PS. 21, 27), that is, they shall live with the life of divine love, in order to love forever the God of love and of life! How blessed are the hearts consecrated for all eternity to adore, praise and love the most adorable and exceedingly lovable Heart of Jesus! Blessed be He who has created these cherished hearts that He might be glorified and loved by them forever!

31. O God of my life and of my heart, Thou dost ever love me. Thou dost employ all Thy powers and all creation in heaven and on earth, to testify to me of Thy love. I learn from one of Thy dearest saints: "Heaven and earth and all creation never cease to tell me that I should love the Lord my God" (St. Augustine., *Manuale*, c.24). Everything that I hear, everything I see, taste, touch and smell, everything that can be known or desired by my memory, understanding and will, all things visible and invisible that are contained in the order of nature, grace and glory, all the temporal and eternal graces I have received from Thee, all the angels and saints, all the encouraging examples they have given me by their virtues and their holy lives, all the wonders Thou hast worked on behalf of Thy most holy Mother,

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

233 -

all the perfections inherent in the essence of Thy Divine Person, all the mysteries of Thy divinity and humanity, all Thy divine attributes and virtues, all Thy thoughts, words, deeds and sufferings, every step

Thou didst take on earth, every drop of Thy Precious Blood, all the wounds of Thy sacred body, in a word, all things that are or ever were, in created or uncreated being, in time and in eternity, constitute so many tongues, by which Thou dost continually proclaim to me Thy goodness and Thy love. All these things incessantly testify that Thou dost love me and dost urge me to love Thee in return. All are so many voices by which Thou dost say constantly to me: *Amo te, amo te: dilige me quia ipse prior dilexi te. Dilige Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, ex tota anima tua, et ex totis viribus tuis.* I love thee, I love thee; love Me for I have loved thee first. Love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and thy whole strength." Finally, all these things are so many preachers, so many voices crying out to me without ceasing: Love, love for Jesus, who is all love for you, who employs all that He is, all that He has, all that He knows, all that He does and all that depends on Him, in heaven and on earth, to make you realize the love He bears you, and to win your heart and compel you to love Him.

My Lord and my God, how surpassingly great is Thy bounty and how wonderful Thy love for me! Thou dost love, desire and seek me with intensity and fervor, as if I were of great concern to Thee, as if I were indeed truly necessary to Thee. Thou dost desire to possess me and dost fear to lose me as if I were a precious treasure. Thou dost pursue my friendship with as much insistence as if Thy happiness depended upon it. Would there be anything more Thou couldst do for me, O Lord, even if Thy whole happiness and glory did depend upon my love? O profound kindness, I lose myself in Thy fathomless depths. O priceless kindness, how can it be Thou art so little valued, so little loved, and so much offended and persecuted by those whom Thou lovest so? O hearts of men, how hardened you must be not to be softened by so many persuasive and loving voices! How frozen, not to be melted by so many sacred fires and flames! How can I resist so many powerful attractions of Thy infinite kindness? What dost Thou desire or expect of me, O my Saviour, except

#### 234 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

that I reply to Thee with St. Peter, the Prince of the apostles: *Amo te, amo te, I love Thee, I love Thee*" (John 21, 15-17).

But instead of replying to Thee thus, I have cried out against Thee with the cruel Jews, by the voice of my sins: *Tolle, tolle; crucifige eum* (John 19, 15). O what anguish and heart rending sorrow! All my sins, my ingratitude, my perverse inclinations, my self-love, my self-will, my pride, all my other vices, all my evil thoughts, words and actions, all the misuse of my bodily senses, of spiritual faculties, all are so many voices worthy of hell that clamor against Thee unceasingly with the Jews: *Tolle, tolle; crucifige eum.* O detestable traitor! Is this how you love Him who is all love for you? Is this your answer to Him who calls you with such sweet persuasion to His love? Is this how you repay His unbounded kindness for all the blessings you have received from Him? Forgive me, O most generous Lord, I beseech Thee, forgive me. May all Thy kindness and mercies (if I be permitted to say it thus) ask forgiveness for me. May Thy holy Mother, with all the angels and saints, cast themselves down at Thy feet to win this pardon from Thy clemency. May all the creatures by which Thou dost cry out to me, *I love you,* be so many suppliants on my behalf before the throne of Thy benignity, crying with all the humility, repentance and contrition that ever was or ever shall be: "Forgive, forgive, have mercy on this poor sinner!"

O most merciful Saviour, may it please Thee to accept and approve by Thy great mercy the promises I am about to make for the future. O my Most Lovable Jesus, since Thou dost constantly love me, and since Thou dost employ all that is within and without Thyself in loving me, I, too, desire to be ever concerned in loving Thee, employing all that is within and without me in Thy holy love. And even if, to imagine the impossible, I were to be in no way under obligation to love Thee, I should, nevertheless, desire to love Thee with my whole heart and all my strength.

To that end, if it please Thee, I desire to dedicate all my thoughts, words and deeds, all the functions and senses of my body and faculties of my soul, my every breath and heartbeat, every pulse of my veins,



every instant of my life, all things that have been, are, and shall be in me, even my sins, so far as it is possible, to Thy wisdom,

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

235 -

which well knows how to make all things cooperate for the good of those who love Thee. I desire that all these things may turn into so many voices, by which I may continue ceaselessly and eternally telling Thee, with all the love in heaven and on earth: *Amo te, amo te, etiam Domine Jesu, amo te. I love Thee, I love Thee, yes, my Lord Jesus, I love Thee.*" And if any element of my Soul or part of my body says the contrary, I desire that it may be ground into powder and cast to the winds.

32. I also desire that all things that ever were, are and shall be in the orders of nature, grace and glory, in heaven or on earth and even in hell, may be as many voices proclaiming without ceasing forever, on my behalf: *Amo te, amo te, Domine Jesu, I love Thee, I love Thee, Lord Jesus.*" This is the spiritual use I am bound and freely desire to make of all things, in so far as they belong to me and have been given to me by Thee to employ in Thy love.

33. I also desire further, O my Jesus, that all the powers and perfections of Thy divinity and humanity, all Thy states, mysteries, attributes, virtues, thoughts, words, acts and sufferings, all Thy sacred wounds, every drop of Thy Precious Blood, every moment of Thy eternity, if such an expression be permissible, all things that are or ever existed in Thy body, soul and divinity, may be so many voices proclaiming to Thee forever for me: *Amo te, amantissime Jesu, amo te bonitas infinita; amo te ex toto corde meo, ex tota anima mea, et ex totis viribus meis, et magis atque magis amare volo. I love Thee, O Most Loving Jesus; I love Thee, O infinite goodness; I love Thee, with my whole heart, with my whole soul, and all my might, and I desire to love Thee ever more and more.*"

Finally, my Saviour, I desire, if it please Thee, that there may no longer be anything in existence, in my body or in my soul, in my life and my eternity, which is not transformed into love for Thee.

In order to implement my desires and wishes effectively, I desire and will all this, not with my human and natural will, which is too weak and unworthy to be employed in willing such great and holy things, but with Thy divine will, O Jesus, which is all powerful and belongs to me, since Thou art all mine.

O my Lord, if my powers were as great as my desires, I should in

## 236- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

deed make everything achieve its perfect fulfilment for Thy glory and love. But it is for me to desire and for Thee to effect-Thou dost do all things and dost the will of them that fear Thee. Grant, then, these my cherished and deepest desires, O Most Beloved Jesus. I beg this of Thee by all that Thou art, by Thy infinite goodness and mercy, by everything Thou dost love, and by all who love Thee in heaven and on earth for Thy most pure love and satisfaction. Thy love is mine and since I will what I have said in the power of Thy divine will, my confidence is firm that, in Thy infinite goodness, all these things shall be effected as Thy eternal wisdom deems most fitting to the glory of Thy divine greatness.

34. Good Jesus, when will the time come when there will no longer remain anything in me to prevent me from loving Thee? Too well I know that this shall never be on earth, but only in heaven. O beautiful heaven! How you appeal to my desires! O blessed city where Jesus is perfectly loved and His glorious love fully reigns, where no hearts dwell that are not completely transformed in this divine love! O earth, O world, O body, dark prison of my soul, how unbearable you are! Wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Do I still have long to remain in this miserable exile, in this strange land, in this place of sin and accursedness? Will not that day soon come, that desirable hour for

which I have so often longed, in which I shall begin to love most perfectly my most lovable Lord?

My Dearest Jesus, shall I then never love Thee as I desire? God of mercy, wilt Thou not take pity upon my sorrow? Wilt Thou refuse to hear my supplication? Wilt Thou not grant what I implore with such pitiful cries? O my Lord, to Thee do I cry, Thee do I desire, for Thee do I long. Well Thou knowest that I desire nothing on heaven or earth, in life or in death, except Thy pure love.

Mother of Christ, angels and saints of Christ and all His creatures, take pity on my sorrow; speak on my behalf to the Beloved of my soul; tell Him that I pine away with love of Him. Tell Him that I desire nothing in time or eternity but His pure love; I desire neither heaven, nor the glory of heaven, nor the great joys of paradise, nor the delights of His grace, but only His most pure love. Tell Him that I can no longer live without that pure love. I implore Him to

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

237 -

make haste, to fulfil in me the designs and work of His grace and to consume me utterly in His divine love, in order to take me soon into His eternal kingdom. Amen. Veni, Domine Jesu! "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Apoc. 22, 20). Come, my life and my light, come, my love, my all, come unto me and eradicate everything that works against Thy love. Come to me to transform me wholly into love for Thee. Come to draw me to Thee, and to establish me soon in that abode of love where true and perfect love reigns, where all is love, pure and continual, changeless and everlasting. Come, O Dearest Jesus, Thou sole love of my heart.

### **1X. ACTS OF LOVE FOR JESUS, PRISONER IN THE SACRED WOMB OF His MOST BLESSED MOTHER.**

O Jesus, my love, I behold Thee a prisoner in the most pure womb of Thy Blessed Mother, but more imprisoned in the sacred bonds of Thy divine love. Let me love Thee, O Good Jesus, in the infinite love that binds Thee and make me with Thee a prisoner of divine love.

O love that holds Jesus captive in Mary and Mary in Jesus, take my heart, my mind, my thoughts, desires and affections prisoner and establish Jesus in me, in order that I may be completely filled with Him, and that He may live and reign perfectly in me.

O Jesus, my sweet love, I love Thee with all the love with which Thou wast loved, during Thy nine months' imprisonment, by Thy Eternal Father, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, and all the angels and saints who took some special part in this mystery of love.

O abyss of love, when I behold Thee in the sacred womb of Thy most holy Mother, I see Thee as it were divinely lost and annihilated in the ocean of Thy divine love. Let me lose myself, and be destroyed with Thee in this same love!

### **X. ACTS OF LOVE IN HONOR OF THE BIRTH AND HOLY CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.**

O Jesus, Thou art infinite love in all the moments, states and mysteries of Thy life, but, above all, Thou art pure love and sweetness, at the moment of Thy birth and during Thy most Holy Childhood

## 238- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

Let me love Thee at this precious moment, in this hidden state. May heaven and earth join with me and may the whole world be transformed into love for its Creator and God, Who is completely transformed into gentleness and love for the world.

O most amiable Child, Thou art born by love, in love and for love. At the moment of Thy birth, Thou dost love Thy Eternal Father more than all angels and men together could do in all eternity. So, too, the Heavenly Father loves Thee more at this moment than He ever did or will love all men and angels together. O Jesus, I offer Thee all the love concentrated on Thee at birth by Thy Eternal Father, by Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, St. Gabriel and all the angels and saints who participated so intimately in this most lovable mystery.

O love of Jesus, that dost triumph over Him in all His mysteries, but particularly in His sublime Childhood and the consummation of His Cross, O love that in these two mysteries, dost transform His Omnipotence into helplessness, His plenitude into poverty, His sovereignty into dependence, His eternal wisdom into infancy, His joy and bliss into sufferings, and His life into death, conquer my selflove, my own will and my passions, and put me in a state of powerlessness, indigence, dependence, holy and divine childhood, and death to the world and to myself, which state may adore and glorify the powerlessness, the dependence, Childhood and death to which Thou Aids to reduce my Jesus in the mysteries of His Nativity and of His Cross.

These acts of love upon the Nativity and Childhood of Jesus will suffice to show how to make similar acts in honor of the other mysteries of the life of our Most Lovable Jesus.

## **XI. ACTS OF LOVE FOR JESUS CRUCIFIED.**

Here are ten acts of love for Jesus Crucified, which may be made when you kiss the crucifix, which it would be well to do each day, in the evening, after your examination of conscience, so that you may end your day in the love of your divine Redeemer and obtain from Him the grace to end your life in acts of love of Him. This is how you proceed:

I. Kiss the foot of the cross, saying:

### **DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES      239 -**

"O Jesus, in honor of and in union with the love with which Thou didst kiss, embrace and love the Cross presented to Thee on the day of Thy holy Passion, but actually embraced from the moment of Thy Incarnation, with all my heart I love and embrace all the crosses, bodily or spiritual, it may please Thee to send me in my whole life, uniting them to Thine, and begging Thee to grant me a share of that great love with which Thou didst bear them."

2. Kiss the wounds in the holy feet of Jesus with the following desire:

"O Jesus, if it please Thee, I desire to kiss Thy holy feet with love like that of St. Mary Magdalen when she kissed those blessed feet in the Pharisee's house, when she won the reward of hearing these sweet words from Thy holy lips, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

3. Again kiss the feet of Jesus with this desire:

"O Jesus, I desire to kiss Thy holy feet with all the love of all the just souls on earth, offering Thee all their love in satisfaction for all the times in my life when I have let myself fall away from Thy love."

4. Kiss the wound in the left hand with this intention:

"O Jesus, I desire, if it please Thee, to kiss this sacred wound in union with the love of Thy archangel Gabriel, all the Seraphim and all the angels, especially my guardian angel, offering Thee all this

love in satisfaction for the many times I have been guilty of falling away from Thy holy love."

5. Kiss the wound in the right hand with this elevation of the soul to Jesus:

"O Jesus, I desire to kiss this holy wound in union with all the love which all the saints in heaven have for Thee, offering Thee their immense love in satisfaction for all the sins I have committed against Thy divine love."

6. Kiss the sacred wound in the side of Jesus, in union with the love of the Blessed Virgin; or rather, consider yourself unworthy to kiss this holy wound, and ask the most Blessed Virgin to kiss it for you:

"O Mother of Jesus, I implore thee to kiss the holy wound in the side of Thy Son for me, and by this holy kiss make Him a hundred

240- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

fold return for all the love I should have given Him in my whole life."

And instead of kissing the wound in His side, kiss the wound in the feet, with the following desire:

"O Jesus, if it please Thee, I desire to kiss Thy holy feet in union with all Thy holy Mother's love for Thee, offering Thee all this love in reparation for the faults I have committed against Thy love."

7. Kiss the holy wounds of the sacred head crowned with thorns; or rather, considering yourself too unworthy for this, address yourself to the Eternal Father, and say to Him:

"O Father of Jesus, if it please Thee, imprint a most holy kiss on the sacred brow of Thy Well-Beloved Son, and by this kiss render to Him a thousand times the love I should have given Him in my whole life!"

And instead of kissing the wounds of the sacred head, once more kiss the feet of the Crucified Saviour saying:

"O Jesus, let me kiss Thy holy feet with all the love Thy Eternal Father bears Thee, and let me offer Thee this infinite love in reparation for my failures to love Thee."

8. Also kiss the holy feet of Jesus in union with the love of the Holy Spirit:

"O Jesus, let me kiss Thy holy feet in union with all the love of Thy Holy Spirit for Thee, offering Thee that burning love in satisfaction for the faults I have committed against Thy divine love."

9. Once again kiss the sacred feet in union with the divine love of Christ for His own person, saying to Him in your heart and with your lips also, if you wish:

"O Jesus, once again I kiss Thy sacred feet, with all the love Thou hast for Thyself. I offer Thee all this love to satisfy for my failings, imploring Thee to recompense Thyself a hundred thousand times for all the love I ought to have given Thee since I came into the world."

10. Finally, kiss these divine feet once more with all the holy love in earth and heaven together, saying:

"O Jesus, let me once more kiss Thy divine feet with all the love that ever was, is now and ever

shall be accorded Thee from all eternity to all eternity, in heaven and on earth, by all the divine and

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

241 -

holy persons who love Thee. Let me offer Thee this matchless love in satisfaction for all my sins and infidelities, for all the failures to love Thee of which I have ever been guilty in my whole life."

Note that, when you make these acts of love, there is no necessity to pronounce the words with your lips, nor even to have actually present in your mind the thoughts I have set down. It is quite enough to kiss the crucifix ten times, with the above intentions. Each of these acts may be performed in an instant. It is nevertheless a good thing, at the beginning, to apply your mind to these thoughts and intentions. Later on, when you have been following this exercise for some time, the whole veneration of the cross may be performed with great facility in a very short time.

These ten acts may also be made without a crucifix, if you say ten times the holy words: O Jesus! and each time will to say them with the above intentions.

## XII. ROSARY OF THE HOLY LOVE OF JESUS.

This rosary consists of three decades and four beads, a total of thirty four small beads, in honor of the thirty-four years of the life of Our Lord on earth, a life all of love.

To start with, you say: Veni sancte Spiritus, reple tuorum corda fidelium, et tui amoris in eis ignem accende: "Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love." This invocation draws down upon you the holy love of Jesus, which is His holy spirit, and gives you to Him, that He may destroy everything in you that opposes Him, and perfect the love of the Holy Ghost for the Son of God. -

On each small bead, you say the following words, taken partly from the Gospel and partly from St. Augustine, who repeats St. Peter's triple repetition of Amo te to Our Lord after His resurrection, when asked whether he loved Him. Amo te, amantissime Jesu; amo te bonitas infinita, amo te ex toto corde meo, ex tota anima mea, et ex totis viribus meis, et magis atque magis amare volt. I love Thee, Most Amiable Jesus, I love Thee, O infinite goodness, I love Thee with my whole heart and with all my might, and I desire ever to love Thee more and more!

## 242 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

The first Amote, I love thee," should be said in union with all the love of the Eternal Father for His Son, the second should be said with the intention of sharing all the love of the Son of God for Himself. The third should be recited with all the love of the Holy Spirit for Jesus, bearing in mind that, in giving you His Son, the Eternal Father gave you everything with Him, as St. Paul says (Rom. 8, 32), and it follows that the love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost belongs to you, and that you are entitled to, employ it in order to love Jesus.

As you say ex toto corde meo, "with all my heart," you must understand by this the Heart of Jesus, the Heart of Mary, the heart of each of the angels and saints in heaven, all comprising a tremendous Heart one with the most Sacred Heart of Jesus and of Mary, by virtue of the union existing between all hearts. And this is likewise your heart, for St. Paul assures you that all things, without exception, belong to you: omnia vestra sunt (1 Cor. 3, 22), and consequently in loving Jesus you can and must use this universal Heart as if it were your own.

The words ex tota anima mea, "with my whole soul," denote the holy soul of Jesus, that of the

Blessed Virgin, and all the holy souls in heaven which together form one single soul by virtue of the union wrought by charity. This soul is yours, and you must make use of it to love Him who gave it to you.

When you say, *ex totis viribus meis*, "with all my might," you ought to have the intention of employing all the powers of the divinity and humanity of Jesus and all the strength of all the creatures in heaven, on earth and even in hell, as your own power to love Jesus.

When you say the last words: *Et magis atque magis amare volo*, "and I desire to love Thee ever more and more," you should have the intention of employing all your will in desiring to love Jesus, and also of exerting the full extent and infinite capacity of the divine will in order to desire to love Jesus with a will that is infinite and worthy of Him, since your own natural will is not capable of loving Him as He deserves.

On the large beads of the rosary say these words of St. Augustine:

## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

243 -

0 ignis, qui semper ardes et numquam extinguerit, 0 amor! qui semper ferves et numquam tepescis, accende me, accende me totus, ut totus diligam te. "O fire, who art ever burning and never extinguished, O love, who art ever fervent and never growest cold, enkindle me, set me on fire, that I may be all aflame with love for Thee."

Or else, instead of this, you may say: *Veni Sancte Spiritus ... etc.*

I might also add at this point that it is sometimes very beneficial to recite the above words: *Amote, amantissime Jesu*, etc., after Holy Communion, for at that moment you possess within yourself most intimately the love of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, with the divine Heart and holy soul of Jesus, and all the powers of His divinity and humanity, and you are then more than ever entitled to direct all these infinite powers as your own in loving Jesus. Then you can indeed say to Him truly *amo te amantissime Jesu, amo te*, etc., with the intentions you have given above.

It is also a good thing to repeat, after Communion, this verse of the Psalmist: *Benedic anima mea Domino, et omnia quae intra me sunt, nomini sancto ejus*: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and let all that is within me bless his holy name" (Ps. 102, 1). By this you refer to Jesus, Who is at that time within your heart as the soul of your soul, to the Most Holy Trinity, and all the wonders of heaven and earth. For they are within you in the Holy Eucharist, which is a compendium of God's wonders. And you should desire that everything within you may be employed in blessing, glorifying and loving Jesus and the Most Holy Trinity, and all the plenitude of the divinity that dwells in Jesus Christ.

## XIII. PATRON SAINT FOR EACH MONTH.

The angels and saints are most pleased, most willingly hear and answer most gladly the prayer that they may love Jesus for you and help you to love Him. It is in this that they place all their happiness and so it should be your chief prayer to them. In addition to the saints to whom you should have special devotion all your life, it is a most holy practice to choose one particular saint every month, and ask him each day to love Our Lord for you and help you to love Him, to make use of you to love and glorify Him, to atone for the faults

### 244- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

you commit during the month against His love. You should love and glorify Our Lord in the saint of your choice, uniting yourself to the praises given Our Lord by him, and striving to imitate the works and virtues he practised for Christ's glory.

#### **XIV. THE MONTH OF MARCH.**

Of all the months of the year, the month of March deserves your particular consideration. It was in this month that the greatest works and the holiest mysteries of God were accomplished. The world was created in the time corresponding to March. Many learned doctors are of the opinion that during this month the waters of the deluge receded, the People of God were delivered from the captivity of Egypt, and passed dry-shod through the Red Sea. It was in this month that the Son of God was made flesh, suffered, was crucified, died, delivered the souls of the saints from Limbo and rose again from the dead. It was also in this month that the Most Holy Sacrament~ merit of the Altar was instituted, that the Blessed Virgin entered upon her dignity of Mother of God, and that the holy apostles were consecrated priests by the Son of God. Thus the month of March is, in a proper and particular way, Christ's own month, because it was in this month that Jesus began and ended His life on earth, and accomplished His greatest works. It is a special month in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, because during March she became Mother of God. It is the month of divine love, wherein the Son of God brought about the greatest mysteries of His love namely, the Incarnation, the Passion, and the divine Sacrament of His Body and Blood. It is also specially dedicated to St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus and Spouse of the Most Blessed Virgin, and includes his feast as well as that of St. Gabriel, the angel who ever waited upon Jesus, the guardian angel of the Mother of Jesus and the herald of the Annunciation.

Hence you should make this month the occasion of most special zeal, devotion, and renewal of fervor.

245 -

## **PART SIX**

### **Devotional Exercises for the Beginning and End, and During the Course of the Year, to Live a Christian and Saintly Life and to Make Jesus Reign in Your Soul**

247 -

## **Part Six**

### **DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES FOR THE BEGINNING AND END, AND DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN AND SAINTLY LIFE AND TO MAKE JESUS REIGN IN YOUR SOUL**

#### **SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR THE NEW YEAR**

##### **1. BEGINNING THE NEW YEAR WITH JESUS.**

The great Apostle St. Paul tells us that, «Christ died for all, that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto him Who died for them» (11 Cor. 5, 15), and that he "died for us; that, whether we watch or sleep, we may live together with him" (1 Thes. 5, 10). Jesus Himself assures us that His "delights were to be always with the children of men" (Prov. 8, 31). Therefore, if you are not to deprive Him of His delight, nor of the efficacy of His most holy death, you must seek all your delight in His society, and exercise your ingenuity in piously contriving to be ever with Him, never losing sight of Him, and having Him as your object in all things; you must wake and sleep, live and die with Him, begin and end all your years, months, and days with Him. I shall now set before you the way to begin and end each year well and how to spend it with Jesus. You shall see in 'Part Seven' how to begin and end your lives with Jesus.

To begin each year of your life in union with Jesus, you should begin it as He began His earthly life. For that purpose, at the beginning of every year, you should take a little time to cast yourself at the feet of Jesus, in order to pay Him your tribute and homage by means of the practices which I am about to set before you.

##### **11. TRIBUTE TO JESUS CHRIST FOR THE NEW YEAR.**

O Jesus, my Lord, I adore, bless and love Thee with all the powers of my soul, in the first moment of Thy life of suffering on earth.

248- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

I adore all the holy thoughts, sentiments and dispositions of Thy divine soul, and all that took place within Thee in that first moment.

O Admirable Jesus, from the very first moment of Thy mortal life, Thou didst turn towards the Eternal Father to adore, love and glorify Him, to refer to Him Thy being, Thy life and all its consequences. Thou didst give Thyself to Him to do and suffer everything He pleased, for His glory and for love of us. I behold that, at the same instant, Thou didst turn Thy spirit and heart towards me, to think of me, to love me, to make great plans for my soul and to prepare very special graces for me.



Blessed be Thou, O Good Jesus, and may all the creatures of heaven and earth, and all the powers of Thy divinity and Thy humanity eternally bless Thee for all these things.

O Jesus, I give myself to Thee, to commence this year as Thou didst begin Thy life on earth, and to enter with Thee into Thy holy dispositions. I beg Thee, by Thy great mercy, to implant these dispositions in my heart.

O Most Adorable Jesus, in honor of and in union with the humility, love and other holy dispositions with which Thou didst adore and love Thy Eternal Father, giving Thyself to Him at the first moment of Thy life, I adore, love and glorify Thee, as my God and my Saviour, as the Creator of time, the King of years and of centuries, and as the divine Redeemer who purchased for me, at the cost of Thy own blood, all the time which is given to me on earth.

O Jesus, I consecrate to Thee all my minutes, hours, days and years, my being and my life, and all that goes with it. I desire to employ everything for Thy pure glory alone. I desire all my thoughts and acts, every beat of my heart, every breath I draw, and all else that shall take place in me this year, and in my whole life, to become so many acts of praise and love for Thee. May it please Thee, my dear Jesus, to grant that this may be so, through Thy most great power and goodness.

I also offer Thee, O Jesus, all the love and glory that shall be given to Thy majesty. I unite myself with all the honor and praises that shall be given Thee this year and forever, by Thy Eternal Father,

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR THE NEW YEAR

249 -

Thy Holy Spirit, Thy holy Mother, Thy angels, saints and all Thy creatures.

O Most Amiable Jesus, I adore all the designs Thou dost deign to shape for me during this year. Do not permit me to put obstacles in their way. I give myself to Thee to do and suffer everything Thou dost please, for the accomplishment of these eternal designs. In honor of, and in union with the same love with which Thou didst accept, at the first moment of Thy Incarnation, all the sufferings Thou hadst to bear in life, I now accept and embrace, for Thy love, all the sufferings of body and spirit I shall have to undergo this year and during my whole life.

O my Saviour, a year will come that will be the last in my life. Perhaps this very year now unfolding is to be my last. If I knew with certainty that this was to be so, with what care and fervor would I spend it in Thy service! However that may be, I wish to spend this year as if I had no more time to love and glorify Thee in this world, and to make up for the occasions in the past, when I have fallen away from my love of Thee. Please grant me, O Good Jesus, all the graces that I need for this.

### III. PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR.

O Blessed Virgin, Mother of my God and Saviour, I honor and reverence thee in the first moment of thy life. I honor and reverence all the dispositions of thy holy soul, and all that took place in thee at that time.

Thou didst begin immediately, O holy Virgin, to love and glorify God most perfectly, and from that first moment to the last of thy life, thou didst ever love and glorify Him more and more. And as for me, in spite of all the years I have been in this world, I have not yet begun to love and serve Him as I should.

O Mother of mercy, beg thy Divine Son to have mercy on me. Atone for my failings, offering Him on my behalf all the love and glory thou didst ever give Him, to satisfy for my neglect in loving and glorifying Him. Grant that I may share in thy surpassing love for Him, and in the fidelity of that great maternal love. Pray for me, that He may give me the grace to begin, at least now, to love Him

perfectly, and that all that shall take place during this year, and all my life, may be consecrated to His glory and thy honor.

Ye angels of Jesus and His saints, pray for me, that our loving Saviour may give me new grace and new love for Him, to devote this year and my whole life, purely and solely, to the service of His glory and love.

### **DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

#### **IV. EACH YEAR YOU MUST HONOR WITH SPECIAL DEVOTION ALL THE STATES AND MYSTERIES OF OUR Lord's LIFE.**

So many and so binding are your obligations to honor and love Jesus Christ in Himself and in all the circumstances and mysteries of His life, that anyone who might wish to undertake the enumeration of them would be attempting the impossible. I shall, however, call attention here to one or two. To begin with, I shall show that, since your duty is to continue and fulfil in yourselves the life, virtues and actions of Jesus Christ on earth, so must you also prolong and fulfil, in yourself, the states and mysteries of Jesus, and frequently implore Jesus Himself to consummate and accomplish them in you and in His whole Church.

You cannot too often realize and reflect on the truth that the mysteries of the life of Christ have not yet reached their full perfection and completeness. Although they are perfect and complete in Christ's own Person, they are not yet completed in you who are His members, nor in Holy Mother Church, which is His Mystical Body. It is the plan of the Son of God that His whole Church should participate in and actually be, as it were, the continuation and extension of the mystery of His Incarnation, birth, Childhood, hidden life, public life of teaching and of labor, His Passion and His death, by the graces He desires to impart to you, and by the effects He wishes to accomplish in you through these same mysteries. By this means, He desires to fulfil His mysteries in you.

Therefore, St. Paul says that Jesus Christ is fulfilled in His Church (Eph. 1, 22-23) and that we all come together in His perfection and His maturity (Eph. 4, 13), which means, as I have said, His mystical Body, which is the Church—a maturity which will not be complete until the Day of Judgment. And St. Paul again speaks elsewhere of the same fulness of God which is accomplished in you, and of the

growth and increase of God in you (Eph. 3, 19). And in another place he says that He fills up in His body the Passion of Jesus Christ (COL. 1, 24). Now what he says of the fulfilment of the mystery of the Passion may also be said of the other mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ.

So the Son of God plans to perfect and complete in you all His states and mysteries. He intends to fulfil in you the divine life which has been His for all eternity in the bosom of His Father, imparting a participation in that life, and making you live, with Him, a life entirely pure and holy.

It is His design to complete in you the mystery of His Incarnation, birth and hidden life, by taking flesh in you and being born in your souls, as it were, through the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Blessed Eucharist, causing you to live by a spiritual and inward life, a life hidden with Him in God.

It is His design to perfect in you the mystery of His Passion, death and Resurrection, by causing you to suffer, to die and to rise again with Him and in Him. It is His design to fulfil His glorious immortal life in heaven, by causing you to live, in Him and with Him, a glorious and immortal life after death. He likewise intends to perfect and accomplish in you and in His Church all the other mysteries of His life by the communication and participation granted to you by His holy Will, through the continuation and extension of these mysteries operating in you.

This universal plan of the Son of God will not be completed until the Day of Judgment. The ranks of the saints will not be filled up until the consummation of the time God has allotted to men for their sanctification. Therefore, the mysteries of Jesus will not be complete until the end of the time determined by Jesus Christ Himself for their consummation in you and in His Church, that is, until the end of the world.

Now the life you have here on earth was given to you only for the accomplishment of the infinite designs of Jesus Christ for mankind. Hence, you should employ all your time, your days, your years, in cooperating with Jesus Christ in the divine task of consummating His mysteries in yourself. You must cooperate in this by good works

#### DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

253 -

and prayer, by frequent application of mind and heart to the contemplation, adoration and veneration of the sacred mysteries of His life according to the different seasons of the year, so that, by these very mysteries, He may work in you all He desires to accomplish for His pure glory. This is the first reason why you must have a special devotion to all the infinitely precious details and aspects of the life of Jesus.

#### V. ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR HONORING THE MYSTERIES OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

Although you have every reason to cultivate particular devotion to the mysteries of His life, I shall present four special obligations.

1. You are obliged to imitate the Heavenly Father, according to the teaching of St. Paul: *Estote imitatores Dei sicut filii/ii charissimi* (Eph. 5, 1). Now the Divine Father is continually absorbed in contemplating, glorifying and loving His Son, Jesus Christ, and in causing Him to be loved and glorified in Himself, and in all His states and mysteries.

2. You must love and honor especially all things through which God is given love and glory. Everything that exists in Jesus Christ gives infinite glory to God. So you should give particular and, were it possible, infinite honor to all the vast mysteries and the very smallest details that are found in the life of Christ. You are infinitely more obliged to honor them and to thank the Son of God for the glory He rendered to His Father by His mysteries, than you are to pay homage and thanks for the graces and salvation He has acquired for you, inasmuch as God's interests ought to be infinitely more dear to you than your own.

3. The Holy Ghost, speaking through Holy Mother Church, continually invites and urges you to adore and glorify the mysteries of Jesus. At the beginning, middle and end and in all the principal parts of Holy Mass, in the hymn *Gloria in Excelsis*, in the *Credo*, at the last Gospel, *In principio erat Verbum*, and at several other places in the Holy Sacrifice, as well as in the daily recitation of the Creed, in daily prayers, and throughout the Divine Office, the Holy Ghost unceasingly recalls to your thoughts the blessed mysteries of the life of

254 -

#### THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

Jesus. Why is this so, if not in order that they may be the object of your contemplation and adoration and

the subject of all your pious exercises, and that thus they may be the daily bread and nourishment of your souls? For your souls should live by faith alone and by the attention and love which they must entertain for the mysteries of God and of Jesus Christ, according to St. Paul's statement: "But my just man liveth by faith" (Heb. 10, 38).

4. All greatness deserves honor and homage, but an infinite greatness deserves infinite honor and homage. This constitutes yet another special obligation. Jesus Christ is the greatest of the great. He is greatness itself, and is an infinite and incomprehensible greatness. Everything that is bound up in His divinity and humanity, all the mysteries of His existence and even the slightest things that took place in Him, all sustain an infinite greatness and dignity and embody an infinity of wonders. Therefore, they deserve infinite honor and glory.

And yet, great and noble and holy as these things are, how little known, how seldom considered, how poorly honored they are, even by the very ones who style themselves the children of Christ, who bear His Name and dwell on earth only to know and love Jesus, His life and His mysteries. They are so meagerly honored even by these who cannot possess any real life except in His love and knowledge, according to these great words of Truth Himself: "This is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17, 3).

The happiness of heaven consists in this alone, and in this alone consists true life on earth: to know, love and honor the life and mysteries of Christ. This will be the basis of the account you shall be required to give of yourself at the hour of death. One of the greatest reproaches that will be made against you in that hour, will be the scanty and poor attention and honor you have given to the life and mysteries of Jesus. This will be the purpose of the Son of God in holding His universal judgment at the consummation of time, namely, to exact, by the power of His justice, the honor and homage due to His mysteries by all creatures, and even by His own enemies, before the eyes of heaven and earth. This also is the reason for the existence of hell, that those who shall have failed to honor

## DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

255 -

Christ's mysteries on earth by love and free will, will render this necessary tribute in hell through constraint and force, by the operation of God's justice in them.

That is why, if you are to avoid being among the number of these miserable creatures, you must make it your chief care and devotion to consider and honor the mysteries of the Son of God. Preference should always be given to the feasts of Our Lord, as well as to those of His holy Mother, over all other feasts. And you should dispose your time and your devotional exercises in such manner as to honor the entire life of Jesus, and the orderly sequence of its mysteries during the course of each year.

## **VI. SEQUENCE TO BE OBSERVED THAT YOU MAY EACH YEAR HONOR ALL THE STATES AND MYSTERIES OF JESUS.**

Beginning with the first of all the states of Jesus, the divine life enjoyed by Him in the bosom of His Father for all eternity, it is recommended to honor it in the time immediately preceding Advent, so that you may adore Jesus in His life in the bosom of His Father for all eternity, before adoring Him in His life in the bosom of the Virgin, in the fulness of time. When I speak of the time before Advent, I mean the months of October and November.

I set aside, however, the last two weeks of November, as being appropriate for honoring the life led by Christ in the world before His Incarnation, for the space of five thousand years, from the creation of the world up to the Incarnation of the Creator of the World. For during this time Christ was living, in a certain

manner, in the minds and hearts of the angels of heaven, of the patriarchs, prophets, and just men on earth, who knew that He was to come and loved Him, desired Him, awaited Him and continually asked God for His coming. In the same way He lived in the souls of the patriarchs who were in Limbo. So also did He live in the Mosaic Law, which was promulgated only to prefigure and foretell Him, and to dispose the world to believe in Him and receive Him when He should come.

During Advent you should honor the mystery of the Incarnation, and the dwelling of Jesus within Mary for the space of nine months.

## 256 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

From Christmas to the Purification, honor the Holy Childhood of Jesus, and all the mysteries included in it, as the Church presents them for veneration, such as the mystery of His birth, of His dwelling in the cave at Bethlehem, of the Circumcision, the Epiphany, the Presentation, the Flight into Egypt, His life there up to the age of seven years, of the journeys to the Temple in Jerusalem in company with His holy Mother and St. Joseph, their loss of Him in the Temple, and His session in the midst of the Doctors at the age of twelve years.

From the Purification to Ash Wednesday, honor the infinitely precious and unknown hidden life which He spent working with His Mother and St. Joseph, up to the age of thirty years.

From Ash Wednesday to the First Sunday of Lent, you should honor the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan and His manifestation by the voice of the Father, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3, 17), by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him in the form of a dove, and by the testimony of St. John the Baptist.

During the first week of Lent, honor the solitary life of Jesus in the desert.

During the second week of Lent you should honor His public and active life among men, from the age of thirty to that of thirty-three years and three months, following closely the daily gospel of the liturgy of the Church for the holy season of Lent. One week is, however, too short to honor Christ's public life, and as you cannot devote any more time to it in Lent, you shall honor it again after the Feast of Corpus Christi.

The other four weeks of Lent will be dedicated to the honor of the penitential life of Christ, which is divided into four parts, namely, humiliations, privations, exterior and interior sufferings. In the first of these four weeks, honor all the humiliations which Jesus bore in His life, both interior and exterior. In the second, His interior and exterior privations. In the third, the exterior sufferings endured in His body. The fourth, the interior sufferings which He bore in His soul.

Holy Thursday, honor the institution of the most Holy Sacrament

## DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

257 -

of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, and the washing of the feet of the Apostles.

From Good Friday to Easter Sunday, adore Jesus in His agony. His suffering, His Cross, His death, the descent of His soul into Limbo, and the burial of His body.

Easter Sunday, Christ's Resurrection and His entry into the life of glory. This, too, you should venerate on all the Sundays of the year, which are especially consecrated to the honor of Christ's Resurrection.

From Easter to the Ascension, honor Christ's life in glory, and His stay upon earth after the Resurrection.

From the Ascension to Pentecost, you shall again honor Christ's glorified life, this time in Heaven after His Ascension. This glorified life should likewise be adored every Sunday of the year.

From Pentecost to the Feast of the Holy Trinity, you are to honor the mission of the holy spirit of Christ, and all the greatness, attributes and mysteries of that divine spirit.

On the Feast of the Holy Trinity, you shall adore the life of the Blessed Trinity in Jesus, and the life of Jesus in the Trinity, which you should also honor every Sunday of the year. The first day of each week is always dedicated to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the honor of the life of the Holy Trinity in Jesus, and of the life of Jesus in the Holy Trinity, and to the honor of the mystery of the Resurrection and the state of the glorified life of Christ.

The three days following the Feast of the Holy Trinity are dedicated to the Three Divine Persons: Monday, to the honor of the Father; Tuesday, to the honor of the Son; and Wednesday, to the honor of the Holy Spirit.

During the octave of Corpus Christi, as well as on the Thursdays of each week, you shall honor the perpetuation of the life of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist.

The time remaining between the octave of Corpus Christi and the month of August shall be divided into two equal parts. The first is dedicated to the honor of the public life of Jesus, for which there was not sufficient time during Lent.

The second part shall be devoted to the honor of the mystery of

## 258 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

the second coming of Jesus, and of the general and public judgment to take place at the consummation of time, which is one of the mysteries of the glorious life of Christ, and the first mystery which Holy Church proposes to our adoration in the Creed after the mystery of the ascension and the enthronement of Christ at the right hand of the Father.

During the month of August, honor the four principal attributes of Jesus Christ, as follows:

1. His divinity, or divine essence. This He possesses in common with the Father and Holy Ghost, making Him co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God infinite, incomprehensible, eternal, immortal, all-powerful, all-wise, all-good, resplendent with all the perfections that inhere in the divine essence.

2. His Divine Person. This is proper and peculiar to Him, in virtue of which He is the Son of God, the image and splendor of the Father, and the divine exemplar according to which the Father formed all things.

3. His holy soul, with all its faculties, memory, understanding, and Will.

4. His holy body, with all the members, sensations, and feelings, especially His Precious Blood and His divine Heart.

During the month of September, honor the seven kingdoms of Jesus Christ, which are:

1. Christ's kingdom in the natural world, made up of the four elements of earth, water, air and fire, and all natural things that exist in the world.

2. The kingdom of Christ in the spiritual and mystical world on earth. that is, the Church Militant.

3. The kingdom of Christ in death, in which are honored His sovereignty, His justice, His eternity, His death and His immortal life.

4. The kingdom of Christ in the particular judgment, which He daily and hourly exercises upon souls as they depart from this life, in which His justice, His equity, His truth, His power and divine majesty are greatly honored.

5. The kingdom of Christ in the Church Suffering, Purgatory,

DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

259 -

where continual glory is given to His divine will, His justice, His goodness and His sufferings.

6. The kingdom of Christ in hell, where all His divine perfections and all His mysteries are honored in a way that is superlatively terrifying and astounding.

7. The kingdom of Christ in the Church Triumphant, in heaven.

These are the seven kingdoms of Christ to be honored during the month of September. I call them kingdoms because Christ reigns and triumphs in all these states, and in all these things, and because these seven kingdoms are filled with the glory, the honor, the power, the presence and the majesty of Jesus Christ, as I shall show more fully in the proper place, if it may please God to give me the time and the grace to continue this book.

On the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, and on Saturdays, you shall honor the life of Jesus in His Virgin Mother and all the wonders and mysteries He worked in her.

On the feasts of angels and saints celebrated during the course of the year, you shall honor the life of Jesus as manifested in the angels and saints.

So, you must leave no mystery in Jesus Christ without special honor. You should see Him and honor Him in all places, all times and all things. During the course of the year, you must venerate each of His manifestations and all His mysteries. But to make it easier for you, while waiting for God in His good pleasure to give me time and grace to finish another book I have begun,(1) to give a more extensive treatment to all the kingdoms and mysteries of Christ, I shall here set down the chief aspects you must consider and honor in each mystery of the life of Jesus, and outline a method for their veneration.

First, I should like to point out that you are obliged to have particular devotion to certain angels and saints, to whom you should pay special honor during your lifetime. It is also a good thing to single out some order of saints and angels for special veneration during the

(1). St. John Eudes probably refers to All Jesus, or Exercises on the Mysteries of Jesus, a work which was never published. The manuscript is not extant. Cf. P. Costil, *Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus. et Marie*, 1, 644, and R. P. de Montigny, *Vie du P. Jean Eudes* (Paris, 1827), P. 438.

260- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

course of each year. But it is much more important for you to select some attribute or mystery of Jesus to honor throughout your lifetime, having first recommended your intention to God, invoked the Holy Ghost and consulted your spiritual directors. It is likewise an excellent practice to choose a special mystery each year, On the Feast of the Ascension of the Son of God, to be the object of particular veneration in the course

of that year. This should be done in the manner I shall propose below.

## **VII. EACH MYSTERY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST To BE VENERATED UNDER SEVEN ASPECTS.**

Among the infinite wonders contained in each mystery of the life of Jesus, there are seven main aspects which you should consider and honor in them, for knowledge of them will give you much light and scope, as well as facility in concentrating on His Mysteries.

The *first* is the external aspect of the mystery, that is, all its outward manifestations. For instance, the visible exterior elements in the mystery of the birth of Jesus are the nakedness, poverty, cold and weakness of the newborn Want, the little swaddling bands in which He was wrapped, His cradle in the crib and on the straw between the ox and the ass, His tears and baby cries, the tiny movements of His sacred feet and hands, the first gaze of His baby eyes, His slumber in the arms of His Blessed Mother, the nourishment He took from her most holy breasts, the sweet kisses He received from her and from St. Joseph, the visit of the shepherds, and all the Other touching incidents that took place outwardly in the stable of Bethlehem, On the night of the birth of the Son of God.

This is what I call the body and the exterior of the mystery of the birth of Jesus. Likewise, all that took place outwardly in the mystery of the Incarnation, of the Circumcision, the Presentation in the Temple, the flight into Egypt, the Passion and all the other mysteries. All that was said or done or suffered outwardly, either by the Son of God, or by the other human beings and the angels who were present at the unfolding of the mystery, comprises its body. Every detail deserves your consideration and honor, because there is nothing unimportant

DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

261 -

in the mysteries of Jesus, but, rather, each aspect is great, divine and worthy of adoration.

If the Son of God, therefore, takes the trouble to concentrate His divine spirit and Heart (which ought not, it seems, to be concerned about anything Other than divinity itself), on the consideration of every step you take, even numbering the hairs of your head, as He Himself asserts, and writing and treasuring in His Heart the slightest actions you perform for Him, so that He may do honor and glorify them for all eternity in heaven, how much more should you centre your mind and heart on the consideration, adoration and glorification of the smallest details Of the infinite mysteries of His life, seeing that there is not one thing about them which is not infinitely great and admirable, and deserving of infinite honor and adoration!

The *second* aspect to be considered and honored in each mystery of the Son of God is the interior spirit of the mystery, that is, the particular virtue, power and grace which inhere in the mystery and are peculiar to it, since each mystery has its own proper virtue and Spirit of grace. This includes the thoughts and intentions, the affections, sentiments, dispositions and interior activity accomplishing the mystery. In a word, it includes all that took place inwardly in the mind, Heart and holy soul of Christ, and in the minds and hearts of ,all those who participated directly in the mystery.

Take, for example, all the interior content of the Incarnation, the birth, Passion and other mysteries of the Son of God, such as the thoughts in His mind, the afflictions and sentiments of His Heart, His inward dispositions of humility, charity, love, submission, meekness, patience. Likewise the inward activity of all His mysteries and acts, with respect to His Eternal Father, Himself, His Holy Spirit, His Blessed Mother, His angels and His saints, mankind in general, and each one of us in particular. Add to this the power and virtue and spirit of grace which He exercised in His Incarnation, His birth, Passion and other mysteries. I call at this the spirit, the core and, as it were, the soul of the mystery.



This spiritual aspect ought to engage your principal attention and honor in the mysteries of the life of Our Lord; yet it actually receives the least attention and honor. Many Christians are satisfied to con

## 262 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

template the body and the externals, without passing on to the inward features of these tremendous mysteries. Yet it is the spirit and the core that are most important, constituting the foundation, the substance life and truth of the mystery, whereas the exterior is no more than a covering, an accessory, and the accidental being of the mystery. The exterior and body is passing and temporal, but the interior virtue and spirit of grace which dwell in each mystery are permanent and eternal.

Thus you may truly say that Christ's mysteries are not in the past, but are always present, according to the spirit, the interior, the truth and substance of the mysteries, not according to the body and exterior. It is true, however, that one may also say that even according to the body and externals, the mysteries remain ever present in a certain sense, before God, just as all things are always present to Him by virtue of His eternity, because there is nothing past or future in the sight of God.

The *third* aspect to be honored is the effect accomplished and continually renewed in each one of the mysteries of Jesus. In Sacred Scripture, the Son of God is called the "Lamb, which was slain from the beginning of the world" (Apoc. 13, 8), since from the beginning of the world He has by His death, Incarnation and all His other mysteries, brought about many wonderful effects in glory, felicity, light, grace, mercy, justice and terror, in heaven, on earth, in hell, upon men, angels, and all other creatures. This I shall show, God willing, more extensively further on.

The *fourth* aspect to be adored in all Christ's mysteries is the special intention present, for in each mystery Our Lord sought to carry out some particular intention, for instance, the intention to glorify His Father and Himself, to glorify the mystery itself and, in

certain special ways that are unknown to us, to sanctify souls and to accomplish all the untold effects of grace bound up in each inscrutable mystery.

The *fifth* aspect to be venerated is the association of the Blessed Virgin with each mystery of Christ. She has a special and extraordinary part in all the mysteries of the life of her Son. She has more share than all the angels and saints and the whole world put to

## DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

263 -

gether because in her the Son of God wrought greater wonders by each of His mysteries than He operated in all His angels and saints or in the entire universe. So also, the Blessed Virgin gave more honor by herself to all her Son's mysteries than all the angels and saints, and the whole world put together.

The *sixth* aspect is the participation of the angels and saints, who belong specially to each of the mysteries of Christ. Every mystery has its own angels and saints who are dedicated to it by special participation, concern and association.

For example, the angels and saints of the mystery of the Incarnation are St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, all the saints who have ever cultivated special devotion to this mystery and one particular order of angels-we know not which, although it seems likely that it is the Seraphim-who are dedicated to honor this mystery in a special way because it is a mystery of love.

The angels and saints of the mystery of the Nativity are St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, the watchful shepherds, the saints who have cultivated special devotion to this mystery, like St. Bernard, and many

others.

The angels and saints of the mystery of the Childhood of Christ are once again St. Joseph and St. Gabriel: for these, together with the most Blessed Virgin, have a part in all the mysteries of the Son of God. There is also St. John the Baptist, who was sanctified by the Child Jesus; then St. Zachary and St. Elizabeth; St. Simeon, the just man who received and held the child Jesus in his arms on the day of His Presentation; St. Anna, the prophetess, who was also in the Temple that day and likewise, as we may readily believe, received Him into her arms. Then the Three Wise Men, the Holy Innocents, and all the guardian angels of these saints, as well as many other saints and angels, unknown to us but dear to Our Lord.

The angels and saints of the hidden life of Our Lord are St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, St. John the Baptist, and all the saints with whom He was associated during His hidden life and all the saints who ever led a hidden and solitary life, and another order of angels, we know not which. For just as the order of Thrones is especially dedicated to honoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, as He Himself revealed to Blessed Angela of Foligno, so it is also very probable

#### 264- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

that each of the other mysteries has some particular order of angels assigned to its special Honor.

The angels and saints of Christ's public life and ministry include all the holy apostles and disciples, all the saints who were His companions in the course of His public life and ministry, and the guardian angels of all these saints.

The angels and saints of the mystery of His Passion, Cross and death are especially St. Gabriel, St. John the Evangelist, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Martha, Salome, the other holy women gathered at the foot of His Cross, all the holy martyrs, all the saints who, have had remarkable devotion to this mystery and another order of angels unknown to us.

The *seventh* aspect to be considered and revered is your own singular and special share in the mysteries of Jesus Christ. You have a very particular part in each mystery of the Son of God, inasmuch as He had some thought, some plan, some special love for each one of you, and the design to impart to you special graces and special favors, both on earth and in heaven by every mystery of His perfect life. This obliges you also to pay a particular honor to each of His mysteries.

### **VIII. SEVEN METHODS OF VENERATING THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD.**

The mysteries of Jesus are so admirable and worthy of honor that we are bound by many obligations to honor them; therefore we should omit nothing that may be done or suffered in their honor, but must glorify them in every possible way. Now here are seven methods by which you can and must honor them.

1. By thoughts, considerations, affections, dispositions and inward acts, applying your hearts and your minds to contemplate and reflect upon these mysteries to adore them and give them glory.

2. By your words, your speech and your conversations with your friends. All the conversation and communication which Christians hold one with another on earth should have no other subject but Jesus Christ and the virtues and mysteries of His life, just as they shall have no other topic in heaven.

3. By all your outward acts of devotion such as the celebration for bearing of Holy Mass, receiving Holy Communion, going to Confes

sion, or hearing Confessions, reciting the divine office and all the other customary exercises. You should also honor them by the external acts performed each day, referring and offering all these things to Jesus in veneration of the mystery you propose to honor. For example, if you intend to honor the mystery of the Incarnation, you should offer Our Lord the above acts in words like these:

"O Jesus, I offer Thee this Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, this Holy Communion, and all the other acts that I shall perform today, in honor of the most adorable mystery of the Incarnation."

4. By the practice of humiliation, mortification and penance, offering them to Jesus for this same end.

5. By imitation, when you strive to reproduce within yourself the mystery you would honor, in so far as it can be imitated. For instance, if you are to honor the mystery of the Childhood of Jesus, you should try to imitate Him in the simplicity, humility, meekness, obedience, purity and innocence of His holy Childhood, and thus to imprint upon yourself an image of the divine Childhood. This is one of the most perfect ways of honoring the mysteries of Jesus.

6. By your mental attitude, when you honor the mysteries of Jesus not only by a few passing exterior or interior acts, but when you are in a stable and permanent state of mind which of itself pays uninterrupted honor to some mystery of Jesus. For instance, if you live in interior or exterior poverty, and this state is borne with patience and submission to God, you honor by your very state the poverty of Christ, and thus your condition is the means of paying continuous honor to the state of poverty to which Jesus was voluntarily reduced while He was on earth.

If by some infirmity or illness you are reduced to a state of weakness so that you can scarcely move and take care of yourself, and you bear this condition with submission to the will of God, in honor of the helplessness to which Jesus was reduced in His Childhood, your state gives honor to the state of helplessness and feebleness of the Child Jesus.

If yours is a retired and solitary state of life, and you love your solitude for the love of God, you honor, by your state, the hidden and solitary life of Jesus.

## 266- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

If your condition is a cross to you, full of interior and exterior pain and suffering, which you bear with humility and love, in honor of the cross and afflictions of Jesus, you honor by your state the mystery of the Passion and sufferings of Jesus.

7. This method of honoring the mysteries and states of the Son of God is most excellent. They should be honored by a most humble and searching recognition of your unworthiness, incapacity and impotence to accord them the veneration they deserve, recognizing that there is nothing in you worthy to be employed in their honor, but rather that all in you of yourself is an obstacle to the glory you should give them, because Jesus is the only one worthy to honor Himself and His mysteries as they deserve. For this reason you should supplicate Him to glorify them Himself in you, in every way He desires.

## IX. SEVEN OTHER METHODS OF HONORING THE MYSTERIES OF JESUS.

I have said above that one of the methods to honor Jesus is by your dispositions and interior acts. Now here are seven of these, which you may use in order to converse inwardly with Jesus on the subject of His mysteries.

1. You must contemplate, adore, glorify and love Jesus in all that is contained, in general, by the complete mystery, in all its circumstances and all that goes with it. Then, if you wish to study the details of the mystery, you may contemplate, adore, love and glorify Him in all that He is (1) in the body and exterior of the mystery; (2) in the spirit and interior of the mystery; (3) in the effects He brought about by the mystery; (4) in His intentions in each mystery; (5) in the participation of the Blessed Virgin; (6) in the part taken by the angels and saints belonging to the mystery; (7) in your own part in it.

2. YOU should rejoice and behold Jesus so great, so admirable, so full of love, charity, sanctity and every sort of virtue and perfection, in each mystery. So, too, you ought to rejoice to see Him love and glorify His Father so highly and so fittingly in this mystery, and to contemplate Him so perfectly and so magnificently loved and glorified by His Father, by His Holy Spirit, by His Blessed Mother, by His angels and by His saints.

#### DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

267 -

3. You must bless and thank Jesus for all the love and glory He has given and will give forever to His Father and Himself, as well as for all the graces and favors He has imparted to you and to the whole world by each mystery. But you must thank Him far more for the glory rendered to His Father and Himself, than for the graces imparted to you by His mysteries, because God's interest ought to be dearer to you than your own. Indeed, it is quite enough for you to thank Him for the glory given by His mysteries to His Father and Himself, without particularly thanking Him for the graces acquired for you. If He has obtained and imparted to you any graces, by His mysteries, it was in order to glorify His Father and Himself in you. Thus, when you thank Him for the glory He has given His Father and Himself by His mysteries, you are also thanking Him for the graces He has given you in each mystery. You then express your profound thanks to Him in a most holy, most disinterested and singleminded manner, which makes you forget yourself and see only God in your inward acts.

4. You should humble yourself at the feet of Jesus and beg His forgiveness for your failure to honor Him, for dishonoring Him by your sins, for the obstacles, both in yourself and in others, which you have put in the way of the glory of this mystery and the accomplishment of its designs. You should beg Him to atone for your fault and to make to Himself a hundredfold return for all the honor you ought to have given Him in this mystery, and also implore the Eternal Father, the Holy Ghost, the Holy Virgin, and all the angels and saints to make reparation for your failings, and to make on your behalf a hundredfold recompense to your loving Saviour.

5. You should refer to Jesus all the effects of grace, glory and holiness He ever brought about, in heaven and on earth, by each mystery. You should offer Him all the glory, love and praise which ever were or ever shall be rendered to Him in each of His mysteries, by the Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Mother, the angels and saints, particularly by those who belong more intimately to each mystery, and by all the creatures that exist in heaven, on earth and in hell. I have already said that all the divine mysteries are honored even in hell by the power of His divine justice. You ought to unite yourself

268 -

#### THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

to all the honor which has been, is, and ever shall be given to the mysteries of Jesus in the whole universe and by all things. You should invoke the Eternal Father, the Holy Ghost, the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints, especially those that have a particular association with the mystery, to join your homage to the honor they give and ever shall give to the mysteries of Jesus.

6. You should surrender yourself to Jesus to honor this mystery, in every way He desires. After you have exerted all the strength and capacity it shall please Him to give you, you should then beseech Him to honor the mystery Himself, in you, with all the power and holy resourcefulness of His mind and love. You

should beg Him to annihilate in you all that is contrary to the glory of this mystery, and to produce in you, by this mystery, all the graces and effects He wills, so that He may rule you according to the spirit and the grace of the mystery, and consummate it in you, and, finally, accomplish in us all the designs He has, in this mystery, in your regard. Then you should give yourself to Him to do and suffer all that He wills, with that end in view.

7. You should ask Jesus to imprint on your heart and on the hearts of all Christians a very great zeal for the glory of His mysteries and to destroy everything that presents an obstacle to their glorification. You should implore Him to cause them to be known and glorified by all men as much as He desires and to consummate them in His Church, fulfilling all the designs which He cherishes in His mysteries. You should offer yourself yet again to Him to do and suffer, for this intention, anything He may will.

These are a few ways of honoring the mysteries of Jesus, and you may choose those which best suit your individuality, making your choice according to the grace Our Lord shall give you, and according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But, in order to facilitate the practice, I shall now condense these seven last ways into a prayer which I dedicate to the holy Childhood of Jesus, which you may apply in turn to each of His other mysteries individually.

DEVOTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

269 -

#### **X. PRAYER To HONOR THE HOLY CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.**

1. O Good Jesus, I adore, love and glorify Thee in all the thoughts, designs, sentiments, dispositions and interior occupations of Thy holy soul as a child, with regard to Thy Father, Thyself, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Mother, Thy angels and saints and in particular to me.

2. I rejoice, O Good Jesus, to contemplate Thee in the state of Thy Childhood, and to behold Thee love and glorify the Eternal Father so ardently, and so filled with virtues, excellences, and greatness even as a child.

3. I give Thee infinite thanks for all the love and glory Thou hast rendered to the Father and Thyself in the divine mystery whereby Thou didst grow from infancy to manhood.

4. I beg Thee to forgive me, O my Saviour, for my failure to venerate Thy blessed Childhood, and for all the obstacles I have put in the way of the graces Thou didst plan to effect in me by this mystery. Atone, I beg Thee, for my defects and give Thyself for me a hundredfold return to pay my debt. O Father of Jesus, Holy Spirit of Jesus, angels of Jesus and His saints, glorify my Saviour for me in this mystery.

5. O Jesus, I refer to Thee all the effects of grace and glory Thou didst accomplish in heaven and on earth through Thy holy Childhood. I offer all the love, and glory that ever has been or shall be given to Thee in this mystery forever, on earth or in heaven, by the Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Mother, and all the angels and saints, begging Thee to unite me with their continual praises given forever to Thee in this mystery.

6. O divine Child Jesus, I give myself to Thee to honor the mystery of Thy Childhood in all the ways Thou dost please. Destroy in me everything that opposes the glory of this mystery. Grant me a share in the simplicity, humility, sweetness, purity, innocence, obedience and other virtues of Thy holy Childhood. Place me, by this means, in a state of holy and sacred Childhood and filial devotion which shall be a constant imitation and praise of Thy divine Childhood.

7. O Most lovable Jesus, implant in the hearts of all Christians a most ardent zeal for the glory of this divine mystery. Destroy in them

270- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

all that stands in the way of that glory. Cause it to be glorified by all men in the manner Thou dost desire, and accomplish all Thy cherished designs in this mystery. I give myself to Thee to do and suffer all Thou dost please, for this intention.

271 -

## **DEVOTION TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

### **XI. MANNER OF HONORING JESUS IN MARY, AND MARY IN JESUS.**

Devotion to the most Blessed Virgin, Mother of God is so pleasing to her Son, and is so dear and commendable to all true Christians, that it is not necessary to recommend it to those who desire to lead a Christian life.

I shall only tell you that you must never separate what God has so perfectly united. So closely are Jesus and Mary bound up with each other that whoever beholds Jesus sees Mary; whoever loves Jesus, loves Mary; whoever has devotion to Jesus, has devotion to Mary. Jesus and Mary are the two first foundations of the Christian religion, the two living springs of all our blessings, the two centres of all our devotion, and the two objectives you should keep in view in all your acts and works. A man is no true Christian if he has no devotion to the Mother of Jesus Christ and of all Christians. St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure assure us that it is impossible for persons who are not loved by the Mother of Christ to have any part with Him. Conversely, it is impossible for anyone to perish upon whom she looks with favor.

As you must continue the virtues of Jesus and keep with you His sentiments, so you must also continue and maintain in your hearts the love, tenderness and devotion that Jesus cherished for His Blessed Mother. He loved her most perfectly and accorded her the very highest honor in choosing her to be His Mother, giving Himself to her as Her Most Beloved Son, taking from her a new being and life, becoming subject to her, following her guidance in outward things during His Childhood and hidden life, afterwards crowning her Queen of heaven and earth, glorifying her and causing her to be glorified by the whole world.

To continue on earth this love and devotion of Jesus towards His most Blessed Mother, you should have a most especial devotion and veneration for her. Now, to honor her as God requires of you, and as she desires, there are three things for you to do:

272- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

1. You must see and adore her Son in her, and see and adore Him alone. It is thus that she wishes to be honored, because of herself and by herself she is nothing, but her Son Jesus is everything in her, her being, her life, her sanctity, her glory, her power and her greatness. You should thank Our Lord for the glory He has given to Himself through His admirable Mother. You must offer yourself to Him and ask Him to give you to her, causing all your life and all your acts to be consecrated to the honor of her life and her actions. You must pray that He will make you participate in her admirable love for Him and in her other virtues. You must ask Him to employ your life in her honor, or rather to honor Himself in her, in whatever way He pleases.

2. You must recognize and honor her first as the Mother of God, then as your own Mother and Queen. You must thank her for all the love, glory and perfect service she rendered to Her Son Jesus Christ our

Lord. You must refer to her, after God, your being and your life, subjecting yourself entirely to her as her slave, imploring her to direct you in all your affairs and to assume full power over you, as over something belonging entirely to her, and to dispose of you as she pleases, for the greater glory of her Divine Son. You must beg her to employ all your actions to honor the infinite works of her Son, and to associate you with all the love and praises which she ever gave Him and ever shall give Him throughout eternity.

It is a good thing to make these acts of devotion every day, every every week or at least every month.

To that end, you might use a prayer to the Blessed Virgin contained in 'Part Two' and another prayer that follows presently.

3. You can and should honor the most holy Virgin Mary by thoughts, meditating on the holiness of her life and the perfection of her virtues; by words, taking pleasure in speaking of her perfections and in hearing them discussed; by actions, offering them to her in honor of and in union with her own; by imitation, striving to imitate our admirable Mother, especially in her charity, her pure love, her detachment from all things and her most divine purity, the thought of which ought to arouse in you a powerful desire to shun and fear more than death the least fault against purity, whether in thought, word or act.

#### DEVOTION TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

273 -

Finally, you may honor the Blessed Virgin by special prayers or works of devotion, such as the Rosary, which ought to be in common use among all Christians, and the Office of Our Lady, which you should recite in union with the love and devotion of her Son Jesus for her, in honor of both their perfect lives and of their sublime virtues.

Let me also add one word more. Each year, you should honor a special mystery of Jesus, as has been said above. It is also good each year, on the day of the Blessed Virgin's Assumption, to choose one of the mysteries of her life for particular veneration during the year. For that reason I have set down the chief of these mysteries.

#### **XII. MYSTERIES OF THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.**

The chief states and mysteries of the life of the Most Blessed Virgin are: her Conception; her abiding in the blessed bosom of her mother, St. Anne; her Nativity; the day on which she received the holy name of Mary, eight days after her birth; her Presentation in the Temple; her childhood up to the age of twelve years; her life and service in the Temple until the age of fifteen years; her holy marriage to St. Joseph, the feast of which is kept in some churches on the fifteenth of January; the Incarnation of Jesus and the Annunciation of her dignity of mother of God; her Visitation and three months' stay with her cousin, St. Elizabeth; her journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem; the birth of her divine Child; the flight into Egypt and her sojourn there with the Child Jesus and St. Joseph; her return from Egypt and hidden life in Nazareth with her Son Jesus, until he attained the age of thirty years; all the journeys she shared with her Son Jesus, following Him everywhere throughout His public ministry; her martyrdom at the foot of the Cross; her joy in the Resurrection and Ascension of her Son; the close of her life on earth, from the Ascension until her own Assumption; the holy Communion she received during that time; her most happy death; her Assumption in triumph; her glorious enthronement at the right hand of her Son, her coronation as Queen of heaven and earth; and her most blessed life in heaven since the Assumption.

274- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

#### **XIII. PRAYER HONORING JESUS CHRIST IN His BLESSED MOTHER.**

O Jesus, Only Son of God, Only Son of Mary, I adore Thee in one general act of adoration in all Thou art and in all that Thou hast ever brought about in Thy most holy Mother. And I adore Thee particularly and love and glorify Thee in all that Thou art and all that Thou hast brought about in her Conception, Nativity, Presentation, and the other mysteries of her life.

O my Jesus, I take infinite joy in contemplating Thee so great, so admirable, so glorified, and so loved in Thy Blessed Mother.

With my whole heart I thank Thee for all the glory Thou hast ever given and ever shalt give Thyself in her perpetually.

I beg Thee to forgive me, O my Saviour, for all the failings of which I have been guilty with respect to the honor due to Thy most honorable Mother, and for everything I have ever done in my life that was displeasing to her. May it please Thee to atone for my defects, and render to her on my behalf all the honor I should have given her during my whole life.

O Jesus, I refer to Thee all the effects of sanctity and love which Thou hast ever produced in Thy lovable Mother, and I offer Thee all the glory and love that was ever given Thee in her and by her.

O Good Jesus, I give myself all to Thee. Destroy in me everything that is displeasing to Thy holy Mother. Give me entirely to her. Grant that all my life and actions may be consecrated to the honor of her admirable life. Grant me to share in Thy love and zeal for her glory, or rather for Thy glory through her, as well as in her most pure and shining love for Thee, her burning zeal for Thy glory, her humility and her other virtues. Finally, deign to make use of me, O Jesus my Lord, to glorify Thee, and cause Thee to be glorified in her, in every way that shall please Thy holy will.

#### **XIV. PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN, APPLICABLE TO ANY MYSTERY OF HER LIFE.**

O Holy Virgin, with all the powers of my being, I adore and honor thy Son Jesus in thee. I honor and reverence thee according to what thou art in Him and by Him, particularly in the mystery of thy Im

DEVOTION TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

275 -

maculate Conception, Nativity, etc. I honor all the sentiments and dispositions of thy holy soul, and all that took place in thee in this mystery.

Blessed be thou, O Holy Virgin, for all the glory Thou hast given God in this most precious mystery and in thy whole life.

I beg thee to forgive me, O Mother of Mercy, for all the lapses and sins I have committed against thee and thy Dear Son. To satisfy for these I offer thee all the honor and praises that have ever been accorded thee in heaven and on earth.

O Mother of Jesus, I give myself all to thee, imploring thy sweet mercy to give me to thy Son and to destroy in me by thy merits and prayers all that displeases Him. Grant me to share in thy most pure love, thy humility and all thy myriad, resplendent virtues.

Grant that my whole life and each of my acts may be consecrated to the honor of the life and actions of thy Dear Son. Unite me to all the ardent love and perfect glory thou dost and wilt give Him forever. Take my being, my life and all that is in me, and employ me as a creature that is entirely thine, in order to glorify Him in every way thou mayest wish.



## DEVOTION TO THE SAINTS

### XV. MANNER OF HONORING JESUS IN THE SAINTS AND THE SAINTS IN JESUS.

You ought to cultivate devotion to all the saints and angels, especially to your guardian angel and your patron saint, to the saints who knew Our Lord on earth, to the order of angels and saints with whom you are to be associated in heaven, and to the angels and saints who are charged to watch over the places where you live or travel, and protect your circle of friends.

You should honor them because Jesus Christ loves and honors them: *Quicumque glorificaverit me, glorificabo eum*. "Whosoever shall glorify me, him will I glorify" (1 Kings 2, 30). And He adds that the Eternal Father honors those who serve His Son: "If any man minister to me," says the Son of God, "him will my Father honor" (John 12, 26). Likewise because they love and honor Jesus, they are His friends, His servants, His children, His members, and, as it were, part of Himself. Finally, to honor them is to honor Him because He is everything in them.

Therefore, you ought to venerate the relics of the saints as a portion of Jesus and part of His members. You should carry relics upon your person in union with the love with which He preserves all the saints, from all eternity, in His Sacred Heart, in order to unite yourself with the love and praises of each of the saints, whose relics you carry with you or honor at their shrines.

To honor the saints in a fitting manner:

1. You should adore Jesus in them, for in them He is everything: *omnia in omnibus* (Eph. 1, 23). He is their being, their life, their sanctity, their joy and their glory. You should thank Him for the praise and glory rendered to Himself in them and by them, and thank Him more for this than for the graces He imparted to them, or imparted to you through them, because God's interests should be dearer to you than your own. You ought to offer Him all the honor and love

## DEVOTION TO THE SAINTS

277 -

that His saints ever rendered to Him, asking His infinite bounty to make you participate in their ardent love and all their other eminent virtues.

Thus, when you go on a pilgrimage, or receive Holy Communion, or celebrate Holy Mass, or perform any devout action in honor of any saint, you should offer it to Jesus, for the above intentions, in the following manner:

"O Jesus, I offer Thee this journey, this Communion, this Mass, or this act, in honor of all that Thou art in this saint; in thanksgiving for all the glory that Thou hast given to Thyself in him and by him; for the increase of his glory, or rather the increase of Thy glory in him; for the accomplishment of all the designs which Thou hast in regard to him, and that Thou mayest grant me through his prayers and intercession, Thy holy love and all the other graces necessary for me to serve Thee perfectly."

2. When you have recourse to the saints, you ought to be humble, considering yourself most unworthy even to think of them, or to be thought of by them. You should thank the saints for the service and glory they have given to Our Lord and offer yourself to them, asking them to offer you to Jesus, to beg Him to destroy in you everything that displeases Him and to cause you to share in the wealth of graces imparted to them. You should further implore them to honor and love Him for you, and to render to Him a hundred times over all the love and glory you should have given Him. Offer yourself to the saints to be used to honor and glorify Him in any way they see fit.

3. Every city, town and village has its heavenly guardians, so when you are travelling or reach a destination where you intend to spend a little time, you should greet the angels and saints who watch over that place. You should beg your good angel to salute them on your behalf, and you should ask their permission, as lords of that place, to pass through or stop over. Remember that they might in all justice forbid you to enter or pass through, because you are sinners, unworthy to walk on the face of the earth, and because your sins might perhaps draw down some just punishment of God upon the places where you dwell, or through which you pass. All these considerations give you good reason to imitate St. Dominic, who, when he entered any town,

## 278- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

begged God not to annihilate it on account of his sins. So it is good to pray to the angels and saints who protect the places we live in or visit, to glorify and love Our Lord for you, and to make up for the faults you may commit while you are in these places.

When you enter upon any kind of transaction with other people, you should always invoke their guardian angels and patron saints, praying that they may dispose them to do whatever tends more to the glory of God in the business you are transacting with them.

It is also an excellent practice to select a special order of saints on All Saints' day, and a particular choir of angels on St. Michael's day, choosing to honor them, or rather Jesus in them, in a more particular manner during that year, as has been explained. A practical application will be given below.

The choirs of angels are as follows:

The Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues of Heaven, Powers, Principalities, Seraphim, and Cherubim.

The orders of Saints are:

The Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Priests, Confessors, Virgins, Widows and the Holy Innocents.

Now in order to render it a simple matter for you to honor Jesus in the saints and the saints in Jesus, I shall put it in practical form in the two following prayers. I shall apply them to St. John the Evangelist, and you may address similar prayers to any saint in particular.

## **XVI. PRAYER TO OUR LORD, HONORING Him IN ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.**

O Jesus, I adore Thee in all that Thou art and all that Thou hast ever accomplished in all Thy saints, especially in the blessed Apostle and Evangelist St. John. O Great Jesus, Thou art in all things, and I desire to see and to honor Thee only in all things, especially in the saints, and in Thy beloved disciple St. John. Thou art everything in Him; Thou art his being, his sanctity, his joy, and his glory. How admirable art Thou, my Jesus, in all Thy saints and particularly St. John! How beloved and glorified art Thou in him! How I rejoice, my Saviour, and how I bless Thee for all the glory Thou dost give to Thyself through this great apostle!

## DEVOTION TO THE SAINTS

279-

O Good Jesus, I offer Thee all the honor and love ever accorded Thee by this divine evangelist. I give myself all to Thee; annihilate in me everything that displeases Thee and grant me a share in the graces Thou hast given to the great St. John, especially his humility, his specially tender love for Thee, his boundless

charity towards his neighbor, and all his other virtues.

## **XVII. PRAYER TO ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.**

O blessed Apostle and Evangelist St. John, I adore and honor Jesus in thee. and I honor and venerate thee in Jesus with all the powers of my soul. I thank thee with my whole heart for the ardent love and faithful service thou didst render to my Saviour. I offer myself to thee; give me forever to Jesus. By thy prayers and merits destroy in me all that is contrary to His glory. Use me, if it please thee, as a creature completely at thy disposal, to glorify and love Him as thou dost see fit. Grant that I may share in thy most pure love for Him and in all thy remarkable virtues. Love Him and glorify Him for me. Make up for all the failings Of which I have been guilty and may yet be guilty, in His love and His service, and give Him a hundredfold return for all the love and honor I ought to give Him. Include my love in all the loving praises thou hast ever given and shalt give to Him forever. Pray to Him for me, that I may no longer live except to love Him, that I might die a thousand times, were it possible, rather than offend Him, and obtain for me the favor that everything in me, past, present and future, may be transformed into praise and love for Him. Finally, obtain for me the grace to die in the practice of His most pure love.

280 -

### **ANNUAL RETREATS AND SOME OTHER SPIRITUAL EXERCISES**

## **XVIII. EXCELLENCE AND PRACTICE OF ANNUAL RETREATS.**

It is a most holy and most important thing, the usefulness of which cannot be perfectly known except to those who try it out, to devote a little time each year entirely to God, and to give oneself to spiritual exercises and prayer with exceptional care. just as people in the world occasionally have banquets, over and above their daily meals, and enjoy themselves heartily at these festive gatherings, so, too, it is very appropriate for all Christians, who profess to live a holy life, to add to their ordinary exercises of devotion some exceptional feasting and rejoicing of the spirit, by applying themselves to God and busying themselves with loving and glorifying Him with more affection and fervor than usual. It is indeed in this that perfect joy and true delight consist, namely, in association and conversation with God by means Of holy prayer.

To this St. Paul exhorts not only the religious, but all Christians, married or unmarried, advising them to depart, for a certain space, from the mutual practices and obligations of their state, and devote themselves exclusively to prayer.

This custom has been practised in the Church of God down through the ages. We read of many saints and prelates of the Church who, putting aside the cares of their normal activities and domestic affairs, frequently withdrew for a few days into solitary places, to concentrate on the contemplation, love, and glory of God.

This is what I call an annual retreat, as it takes place every year in all religious communities. It is also practised by many people in the world, who each year set aside three or four days in which they bid farewell entirely to all cares for earthly things, and withdraw into a religious house to devote themselves to exercises of piety and divine love.

You should not fail to give yourself to the practice of prayer and

ANNUAL RETREATS AND OTHER SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

281 -

the love of God with more care and fervor during days of retreat in the way prescribed for you by your spiritual directors.

Your retreat ought to be made with these chief ends in view:

1. To continue and honor the various retreats of Jesus, for example, His retreat from all eternity in the bosom of His Father; His retreat for nine months in the bosom of His Mother; His retreat in the stable at Bethlehem for forty days; in Egypt for seven years; at Nazareth for the whole extent of His hidden life, which lasted until He was thirty years old; for forty days in the desert; in heaven and in the glory of the Father, ever since the Ascension; and in the Blessed Sacrament, where He is, as it were, always in retreat, in the hidden Eucharistic life, and so shall be until the end of time. Also offer it in honor of the retreats made by the Blessed Virgin, and her part in the retreats of her Son. So, the first aim, the first and foremost intention of your retreat ought to be to love and glorify Jesus and His most holy Mother, and to unite yourself always more and more to both Mother and Son.

2. To atone, during the time of the retreat, for the negligences and faults you have committed during the year, against the love and glory of Jesus and Mary.

3. To renew your desires and your strength, to dispose yourself for the reception of fresh graces, in order to walk more courageously in the ways of divine love, and destroy more completely all the obstacles encountered as we advance along the road to Paradise, our eternal retreat.

You ought to regard your annual retreat as a foretaste of heaven, and the time thus spent as a small portion of eternity. You should strive during this time to reproduce what is accomplished in heaven and in eternity, beginning here below the life and activities that are to be your everlasting occupation in heaven, to contemplate, love and glorify God as He is contemplated, loved and glorified without interruption in heaven. You should also employ the time spent in retreat as if you had no more time remaining to love and glorify Jesus, and atone for the faults you have committed against His glory and love. You should above all affirm before Him that you desire to devote yourself to these holy exercises, not for your own particular consolation,

282- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

merit and interest, but only for His pleasure and for His pure glory.

As members of religious communities customarily renew their vows at the time of their retreat, I shall here set down a prayer to Jesus to foster the proper dispositions for this important renewal.

#### **XIX. PRAYER TO JESUS FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE THREE VOWS OF RELIGION.**

O Jesus, my Lord, I adore, love and glorify Thee in Thy holy poverty, Thy divine purity and Thy most perfect obedience. I adore and glorify Thee in the eternal design Thou hast for all the souls who ever have made or shall make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience; and especially Thy holy design for my own soul.

I give Thee infinite thanks, O Good Jesus, for all the glory Thou hast rendered to the Almighty Father and Thyself by Thy poverty, chastity and obedience, as well as by the poverty, chastity and obedience of Thy Blessed Mother and all holy religious souls. I most humbly beg Thee to make up for my faults, and to restore unto Thyself a full measure of all the honor I ought to have given Thee by my three vows. I offer myself to Thee to do and suffer anything that may please Thee.

O Dearest Jesus, once again I offer to Thee the three vows I have made, of poverty, chastity and obedience and I protest before heaven and earth that I desire to keep them perfectly right up to my last breath, in homage to Thy divine poverty, chastity and obedience, in honor of the vows of Thy holy Mother.

I give myself to Thee, O Jesus; may it please Thee to destroy in me all that is contrary to these three virtues and give me grace to keep these three vows with all the perfection Thou dost ask of me.

O Mother of Jesus, angels and saints of Jesus, implore Him to annihilate in me all that displeases Him and to establish in me a participation and image of His poverty, chastity and obedience, that I may ever advance in the continual imitation and adoration of His poor, chaste and obedient life on earth.

#### ANNUAL RETREATS AND OTHER SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

283 -

### XX. EXERCISE OF REPARATION.

The Son of God employs every resource of His divine wisdom to devise with holy ingenuity new ways of giving Himself to you, and of demonstrating His unfailing love for you; therefore, you ought also to seek out with holy ingenuity new ways to consecrate and devote the span of your life to His glory and love.

Inasmuch as you have been His enemies in the first few months of your life and since then have often been unfaithful to Him, you ought surely to make use of every kind of means of reparation for your infidelities and faults, to the full extent of your ability aided by His grace.

To make reparation, the following practice is recommended. Every year, set aside one day for each year of your life on earth; then, having profoundly humbled yourself before Our Lord, in view of the sins and ingratitude of your past life, having begged His forgiveness and implored Him to obliterate your sins in His Precious Blood and consume them in the fire of His divine love, take a firm stand in the unshakable resolution to enter upon a new life, and to begin to love and honor Jesus as though you were only now starting to live.

Stir up a strong desire to use these precious days of recollection as if they were the first days of your life, or as though they were to be the last you would ever have, to love and glorify Jesus on earth. Strive to do all you should have done in each year of your life. Strive to make such holy use of this time and to conduct yourself so perfectly in all your doings and activities, that you may to some extent make reparation for the failings of your past life.

Here is your plan of action for each day.

Devote the first day to reparation for the deficiencies of the first year of your life. This should be done in the following manner:

1. Adore Jesus in the sublime events of the first year of His life. Accuse yourself before Him, and beg His forgiveness for all the dishonor you gave Him by the state of original sin in which you were for a part of the first year of your life. To make satisfaction for this, offer to the Eternal Father all the honor His Son Jesus gave Him in the first year of His life on earth, and offer to Jesus all the honor

#### 284 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

given Him by His Blessed Mother in the first year of his earthly life.

2. Offer to the Eternal Father everything that occurred in the first year of your life, and implore Him, by His most burning love and exceeding great zeal for the glory of His Divine Son, to transform all that you suffered, and all that occurred both outwardly and inwardly in you during your first year of life, into praise, glory and love for His Son, and for all the events, both outward and inward, of the first year of His life in this world.

Repeat to Jesus the prayer just offered to the Eternal Father and beg to consecrate all that you suffered, in body and soul, every use you made of the limbs, senses and faculties of your body and soul during that first year of your life, to the honor of His sufferings in body and soul, in union with the operations Of His limbs, senses, and faculties of body and soul during the first year of His divine Infancy.

Say this prayer also to the Holy Ghost, similarly to the Blessed Virgin and to the angels and saints, that by their merits and glory they may now transform the first year of your life into eternal homage and glory to the mysteries of the first year of the life of Jesus Christ.

3. Offer to Jesus all the acts to be performed on the first day of your retreat and the love, praise and acts of adoration you shall give Him in union with the love, glory, and praises that were accorded Him in the first year of His life by His Eternal Father, by Himself, by the Holy Spirit, by His Blessed Mother, His angels and all His saints, to make Him a hundredfold return for all the glory and love you should have given Him in the first year of your life, if you had enjoyed the use of reason.

On the second day, corresponding to your second year, and on each of the other days, corresponding to each of the years of your life, you shall practise the same exercises as on the first day. Make exception, of course, for the fact that on the days corresponding to your childhood years, in which you remained in the state of baptismal grace, it will not be necessary to ask pardon for sins committed, since during that time you were incapable of sin. But you will indeed have to humble yourself greatly for having gone so long a time without really knowing God, and for having carried about within you, all that time, the

#### ANNUAL RETREATS AND OTHER SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

285 -

principal and source of all sin, namely, the remains of the corruption of original sin, which corruption is the source of all sin.

If your years outnumber those of the temporal life of Jesus, you might carry on the same exercises with reference to the years of the glorious life of Jesus in heaven. Although it is true that the duration of this glorious and eternal life of Jesus is not counted by years in heaven, because there is no passage of time nor years in eternity, nevertheless, on earth, and with respect to us, that life may be measured by years. At present you may calculate the glorious life of Jesus, since His Resurrection, at about nineteen hundred years.

Consequently, if you are over thirty-four, you shall, on the thirty-fourth day of this pious exercise, adore Jesus in the first year of His glorified life in heaven. The next day, take the second year, and so on, performing the same exercise with respect to the years of the glorious life of Jesus as were proposed for the years of His temporal life.

You may perform this exercise not only on your own account, but also on behalf of other souls with whom you have some special bond, or to whom you are in any way obligated, uniting the years of their lives with your own, and performing the exercise for them as well as for yourself. Yet do all of this not for yourself nor for them, but for Jesus, for His glory and for His most pure love.

You might wish, during this exercise, to recite the Rosary of Jesus in glory-as follows:

#### **XXI. ROSARY OF THE GLORY OF JESUS.**

This rosary is made up of three decades and four beads, a total of thirty-four small beads, in honor of the thirty-four years of Christ's life on earth.

First, you repeat three times Veni Domine Jesu, "Come Lord Jesus" (Apoc. 22,20), the inviting

words with which St. John ends his Apocalypse, and you say them to invoke Jesus and draw Him into your soul, your mind and your heart, imploring Him to enter into you and annihilate everything in you that displeases Him, and to fill you with His grace, His spirit and His pure love. It is also a good thing to recite these same words with the same intention at the beginning of your other prayers and acts.

## 286- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

On each small bead say: Gloria tibi, Domine Jesu, qui natus es de Virgine, cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu in sempiterna saecula.

As you repeat this invocation you should offer to Jesus all the glory given to Him in each year of His life by His Father, His Holy Spirit and His Blessed Mother, and all His angels and saints, by way of satisfaction for your faults against Him in each year of your life, imploring Him to consecrate all that ever occurred in your life to the honor of all that took place in each year of His own.

For example, at the first bead, as you say Gloria tibi Domine Jesu, etc...., you should offer to Jesus all the glory of the first year of His life in satisfaction for your deficiencies in honoring Him during the first year of your life. So too you should offer Him your first year, imploring Him to cause all that occurred in it to be consecrated to the honor of all that occurred in the first year of His life.

At the second bead, you should offer Him all the glory given Him in the second year of His life by His Father, etc., while also offering Him the second year of your own life, imploring Him, etc. And so on, with the other beads.

On the large beads, you say the Gloria Patri, and as you do so, offer to the Holy Trinity all the glory that Jesus ever gave or ever shall give to the Three Divine Persons, by way of satisfaction for your faults against the Blessed Trinity.

## XXII. ADDITIONAL SPIRITUAL EXERCISES TO BE PERFORMED EACH YEAR.

It is also a very holy practice to set aside a little time each year to acquit yourself before God of the duties you should have been obliged to pay Him at the hour of your birth and baptism, if you had possessed the use of reason. You should do the same with regard to your future obligations towards Him at the hour of death, thus using this means to prepare yourself for death. I shall, however, reserve the exercises appropriate to such matters for the last part of this book.

## XXIII. PREPARATION TO GAIN INDULGENCES

At frequent intervals during the course of the year, rich opportunities for gaining indulgences are available; yet most Christians are satisfied to seek nothing more on such Occasions than exemption from

## ANNUAL RETREATS AND OTHER SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

287 -

die punishment due to their sins, having practically no other end in view but their own interest. This very fact prevents many from gaining the desired indulgences, and robs God of the glory which constitutes the purpose for which He offered them to you. It will consequently be very much to the point if I give you some idea of the intentions and dispositions you ought to have, if you are to gain indulgences worthily for the pure glory of God. Hence, when you wish to gain an indulgence, prepare yourself accordingly.

1. Adore the very great love which prompts God to grant you these indulgences. His burning love for you gives Him a very great desire to behold you soon united with Him; and as He well knows that the punishments you have deserved by your sins will defer the fulfillment of His desires, by detaining you in

purgatory, unless wiped out in this world, He wills to give you indulgences, which are the shortest and easiest way of wiping out your deserved punishment. Give yourself to Him, in order to gain a wealth of precious indulgences not so much out of consideration for your own interests, as to fulfill His constant desire to bring you nearer to Him. Carry out everything prescribed for gaining the indulgences, in honor of and in union with the most pure love that prompts God to give them to you.

2. Adore the exceeding great love of Jesus, by which He acquired these indulgences. You must see them as fruits of the Cross and Passion of Christ, as graces which cost Him dearly indeed, since He purchased them at the price of His blood and death. Hence, you should desire to gain indulgences so that the Son of God may not be cheated of the fruits and effects of His Cross, and in order that what cost Him so dearly may not be lost, nor become vain and fruitless so far as you are concerned.

3. Adore God's justice, before which you are accountable for the penalties due to your sins, and cultivate an active desire to gain indulgences, not to escape those penalties, but to satisfy and glorify God's justice.

4. It is also good to adore God's universal design for your souls from all eternity. For from all eternity God designs to establish you in a high degree of grace on earth and of glory in heaven. But by your sins, you have put many Obstacles in the way of the fulfillment of His

## 288- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

eternal plan. Even though the guilt of your sins may have been forgiven by a good confession, you have, nevertheless, made yourself unworthy to receive many of the graces God designed to give you, if you had not prevented Him by your sins. Now, He desires by indulgences to wipe out these iniquities and remove from your heart the obstacles raised by sin against the fulfillment of His plans. He wishes to make you capable and worthy to receive the graces planned for you in accomplishment of His infinite designs. Desire, therefore, again these indulgences not to escape the sufferings; of purgatory, but that God may avoid being disappointed in the designs He deigns to entertain in your regard.

5. Desire to gain indulgences so that your souls may be perfectly cleansed of many evil effects left by sin, which prevent you from loving God perfectly, thus you may become able to love Him with a more pure and ardent love. To do this, each time some opportunity of gaining an indulgence arises, address the Son of God as follows:

"O Jesus, I give myself to Thee to do all that Thou dost desire me to do in order to gain this indulgence, in honor of and in union with the very great love with which Thou didst acquire it for me with Thy Precious Blood, in homage to Thy divine justice, to bring about the fulfillment of Thy designs in my regard, so that I may love and glorify Thee ever more perfectly."

## XXIV. ANNUAL CONFESSION.

Once you have made a good general confession, you should no longer think of your past sins, that is, not consider and examine them in detail any more, but be satisfied to detest them in general and humble yourself before God for them. It is, however, a very profitable thing, and a most important one, to make an annual confession, to review the chief faults you have committed during each year. For it is much to be feared that you may have frequently been remiss in your ordinary confessions, by having failed to approach the tribunal with the necessary preparation, contrition and other dispositions demanded by the sacrament of Penance. You cannot be too careful or diligent in a matter so important as the salvation of a soul created to love and glorify God forever.



Yearly confession has become a frequent practice among all Christians who desire to please God and to guarantee their salvation for the glory of God. There are many, indeed, who review their confessions every six months, and still others at even shorter intervals.

Adopt this holy practice at least at the end of each year, so that you may to some extent repair your failings during the year, and dispose yourself to serve and love God more perfectly the next year. If you do not do this at the end of the year, make your review of your confessions at some other time, according to the advice of your confessor, but in any case, perform it with an unusual amount of preparation, self-abasement and contrition.

And above all, make a point of protesting to Our Lord that you do not wish to make this exercise for the unburdening and satisfaction of your soul, nor for your own merit or interest, but solely for His pleasure and pure glory.

## **XXV. ENDING THE YEAR WITH JESUS.**

To end each year of your life with Jesus, you ought to close it just as Jesus ended His mortal, human life on earth. You ought to set aside a little time at the end of each year to acquit yourself of your obligations and offer fitting homage to Jesus as the following prayer suggests.

## **XXVI. PRAYER OF PRAISE AND GRATITUDE FOR THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.**

O Jesus, my Lord, I adore, love and glorify Thee in the last day, the last hour and last minute of Thy mortal life on earth. I adore all that happened both inwardly and outwardly on that last day, I mean, Thy last thoughts, acts, words and sufferings, Thy final use of the senses of Thy sacred body, and the last dispositions of Thy holy soul, to which I desire to unite myself now, with a view to die closing moment of my own life.

O Divine Jesus, by the light of faith I behold Thee on that last day of Thy life, adoring and loving Thy Father infinitely. Thou dost give Him fitting thanks for all the graces imparted to Thee and, through Thee, to the whole world during the time of Thy sojourn on earth. Thou dost ask His pardon for all the sins of men, offering Thyself to Him to suffer the penance due to them. Thou dost think of me with

## **290- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

love exceeding great, with a most ardent desire to draw me to Thyself. Finally Thou dost sacrifice Thy Precious Blood and Thy most noble life, for the glory of the Heavenly Father and for love of us. Blessed be Thou infinitely for all these inestimable graces.

O Good Jesus, in honor of and in union with the love, humility, and other holy dispositions with which Thou didst perform all the last actions of Thy life, I give Thee infinite thanks for all the glory Thou didst give the Eternal Father during Thy life on earth, for all the graces Thou hast bestowed upon me and all men this year and always, as well as for the graces Thou wouldst have lavished on me, if I had not stood in Thy way.

I most humbly beg Thy forgiveness for all the outrages and indignities Thou didst suffer on earth because of me, and for all the offenses I have committed against Thee this year. In satisfaction, I offer Thee all the honor and glory rendered to Thee, during Thy time on earth and during the past year, by Thy Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy holy Mother, and by all the angels and saints. So, too, I offer myself to Thee to bear all the penance Thou mayest ordain for me in this world and in the next.

O Jesus, most worthy of love, I adore Thy infinite thoughts and designs for me on the last day of Thy most precious life; and I give myself to Thee to do and suffer all Thou dost desire of me, for the fulfilment of these unfathomable designs. Grant that I may die a thousand times rather than hinder the operation of Thy loving Providence.

O Good Jesus, I offer to Thee the last day, the last hour and the last moment of my life and everything that may happen to me outwardly and inwardly then. I mean, my last thoughts, words, actions and sufferings, as well as the last use of my bodily senses and of the powers of my soul.

May it please Thee to grant that all these things may be consecrated to the honor of the last day, the last hour and last moment of Thy life. May I die loving Thee with Thy holy love. May my being and my life be sacrificed and consumed for Thy glory, and may my last breath be an act of pure love of Thee. This is my intention, my desire, my expectation. O my Dear Jesus, relying as I do upon the excess

ANNUAL RETREATS AND OTHER SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

291 -

of Thy infinite love, may it please Thee to grant, by Thy great mercy that this may be so.

## **XXVII. PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN, AT THE END OF THE YEAR.**

O Mother of Jesus, Mother of the Eternal and Immortal God made Man, I honor and venerate thee in the last hour and moment of thy life. I honor thy last thoughts, words and acts, and the last use made of the senses of thy immaculate body and of the powers of thy glorious soul. Especially I wish to honor the last act of love made by thy mother's heart for thy Most Beloved Son.

With all my heart I bless and thank thee, O holy Virgin, for all the glory thou didst render to God during thy spotless life, and for all the graces thou didst ever obtain from His bounty for me and for all men, especially during this year.

I beg thy forgiveness, O Mother of Mercy, for all the offenses thou didst suffer on earth, as well as for those I have committed this year against thee. To make satisfaction for these, I offer thee all the honor that has ever been accorded thee in heaven and on earth.

O Mother of Fair Love, I offer thee the last day, the last hour and moment of my life, and all that shall take place in me at that last moment, in honor of the last Moment, hour and day of thy life, and of all that occurred in thee on that day. Unite me, if it please thee, with all the holy and divine dispositions of thy maternal heart and thy pure soul. Grant that, by thy merits and prayers, my last thoughts, words, acts and breaths may be consecrated to the honor of the last thought, words, acts and breaths, both of thy Son and of thyself. Grant that I may die loving Him with His holy love, and that I may be utterly consumed and sacrificed to His glory, and that my life may end with a last act of most pure love for Him.

O Angels and Saints of Christ, pray that He may consummate all this in me, by His exceeding great mercy and for love of Him.

**PART SEVEN**

**Devotional Exercises for the Anniversary  
of Your Birth and of Your Baptism and  
for the Preparation of Your Soul for  
a Holy and Christian Death**

**Part Seven**

**DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES FOR THE ANNIVERSARY  
OF YOUR BIRTH AND OF YOUR BAPTISM AND  
FOR THE PREPARATION OF YOUR SOUL  
FOR A HOLY AND CHRISTIAN DEATH**

**DEVOTIONS FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BIRTH**

**I. CONCERNING THE RIGHTFUL HOMAGE YOU OUGHT TO HAVE RENDERED TO GOD AT THE  
MOMENT OF YOUR BIRTH IF YOU HAD THE USE OF REASON.**

I can never tell you enough, nor should you grow tired of hearing and considering (so important is it) that Jesus Christ, who is your Head and whose members you are, passed through all the stages of human life, through which you are passing. He did almost all the things that you do, and performed not only His outward acts but also all His interior actions for Himself and for you. Therefore, Christian sanctity and perfection consist in ceaselessly uniting yourself to Him as His members, and in continuing to do what He did, as He did it, to the best of your ability, uniting yourself with His dispositions and intentions. It likewise consists in consenting and adhering to what He did for you in the presence of His Father and in ratifying it. So, too, it consists in performing all your inward actions not only for yourself, but also for the whole world, in imitation of the Son of God, and especially for those with whom you have some special connection with respect to God. This Christian devotion inspires similar acts of union and imitation proportionately, towards the Blessed Virgin, never separating the Mother from the Son. But you

296- **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS**

will gain a clearer idea of this from reflecting upon the devotion you should have paid Him from the very first moment of your life and at the instant of your birth on earth, if you had enjoyed the use of reason.

**11. PRAYER TO JESUS FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BIRTH.**

1. O Jesus, I adore Thee in Thy eternal birth and Thy divine dwelling for all eternity in the bosom of Thy Father. I also adore Thee in Thy temporal conception, and in Thy presence in the sacred womb of Thy most pure Mother, for the space of nine months, and in Thy birth into this world at the end of that time. I adore and revere the great and admirable occurrence of all these mysteries. I adore and honor the holy dispositions of Thy Divine Person and Thy holy soul in these mysteries. With my whole heart I adore, love and bless all the acts of adoration, love, oblation Thou didst render to the Eternal Father, and all the other divine acts and practices offered Him in these mysteries.

2. Again I adore and glorify Thee, O Good Jesus, as performing all these things for Thyself, for me and for everyone in the world. On this anniversary of my birth I give myself to Thee, O my Dear Jesus, that I may now repeat the acts Thou didst perfect while dwelling from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, and for nine months in the bosom of Thy Mother. I unite myself to Thee to perform this duty as Thou didst

perform it, in union with the love, humility, purity, and other holy dispositions of Thy adorable soul. Since Thou didst perform this act for Thyself and for me and for all men in the world, I also desire to exercise this present devotion, not only for myself, but for all the men in the world.

I now desire, O my Saviour, to render unto Thee as far as I can, with the help of Thy grace, all the rightful homage I should have paid Thee if I had been gifted with the use of reason, from the first moment of my life. So, too, I desire to pay Thee all the due need of adoration, praise, and love, which should have been given to Thee at that same time by all my friends, and by all people who ever were, are, or shall be in the world; and even that which should have been rendered to Thee by the evil angels at the moment of their creation.

#### DEVOTIONS FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BIRTH

297 -

I give myself again to Thee, my Lord Jesus. Enter into me, and unite me to Thyself in order that in and by Thee I may fulfil these desires for Thy pure glory and satisfaction.

3. In union, therefore, with the devotion, love, humility, purity and sanctity, and all the other sublime dispositions with which Thou didst honor, bless, love and glorify the Eternal Father in Thy eternal and temporal birth, and in Thy dwelling from all eternity in the bosom of Thy Father, and during nine months in the bosom of Thy Mother: I acclaim Thee; I adore, love, bless, and glorify Thee together with the Father and the Holy Spirit as my God, my Creator, and Sovereign Lord. I adore, love, and glorify Thee also on behalf of all creatures-angels, men, animals, plants and inanimate things. I wish I could possess in myself the totality of their being, all their strength and all their actual or potential capacity to glorify and love Thee, that I might now use it all in paying Thee this homage for myself and for them, especially those for whom, before Thee, I have both the obligation and desire to pray with special zeal.

4. I give Thee infinite thanks, O my God, on behalf of myself, all creatures, and especially my particular friends, for the gift of life, and the capacity to know and love Thee. I thank Thee for having preserved our existence and allowed us to be born alive to receive Holy Baptism. If we had died before being delivered from original sin by the grace of Holy Baptism, which has been the misfortune of many souls, we should never have seen Thy divine face, and we should have been deprived forever Of Thy holy love. May all the angels and saints bless Thee forever for this most special favor Thou hast accorded us.

5. Omnipotent Creator, Thou didst give me being and life solely that I might employ them in Thy love and service. Therefore, I offer my life to Thee. I consecrate and sacrifice it altogether to Thee, together with the being and life of all the angels, all men and all creatures, in testimony that I desire no longer to, live save to serve Thee with all the perfection Thou dost ask of me.

6. O my God, what a source of humiliation and pain it is for me to think that, during the first months of my life, I was Thy enemy and under the power of Satan, in a continual state of sin that infinitely

#### 298 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

displeased and dishonored Thee! For this I most humbly beg Thy forgiveness, O my Lord, and in satisfaction for the dishonor I gave Thee while I remained in the state of original sin, I offer Thee, O Father of Jesus, all the glory given Thee by Thy immaculate Mother during the time she dwelt in the blessed womb of St. Anne, her mother.

7. O my Jesus, in honor of and in union with the love with which Thou didst accept and bear all the crosses and sufferings that were permitted by the Heavenly Father to attend Thy temporal birth, I offer Thee all the trials and afflictions I have suffered since my birth, and those remaining for me to suffer until the end of my life, accepting and loving them for love of Thee, and begging Thee to consecrate them to the

homage of Thy own sufferings.

8. O Most Kind Jesus, I offer Thee all the circumstances of my birth, and I implore Thee by Thy very great mercy to wipe out all that displeases Thee in the first part of my life. Deign to make up for my faults, giving to Thy Father and to Thyself all the honor I ought to have given Thee at that time, if I had been capable of honoring Thee; and mayest Thou grant that the earliest phase of my life may render an undying homage and glory to the divine state of Thy dwelling in the bosom of Thy Father and in the womb of Thy Mother, and to Thy eternal and temporal birth.

9. Such, O my Lord, is the rightful homage I ought to have rendered to Thee, had I been able, at the moment Of my birth, and indeed from the first moment of my life, that I now endeavor to render to Thee, although very tardily and imperfectly. But what gives me infinite consolation, O my Dear Jesus, is that I know Thou didst atone for my deficiencies by Thy temporal birth. Then Thou didst render all this just homage to God the Father, performing in a most holy and divine manner all these acts and devotions for Thyself and for me. Thou didst refer and consecrate to His glory all Thy being and Thy entire life, present and to come, and together with it all my being and every state of my life, and of all creatures that ever were, are, or shall be, all the past, present, and future state of created things being just as vividly present to Thee then as now. Thou didst look upon every life as Thine own, as something given to Thee by

#### DEVOTIONS FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BIRTH

299 -

the Father, according to Thy blessed words: Omnia mihi tradita sunt a Patre meo (Matt. 11, 27). Thou wast consequently obliged, by thy profound love for Him and Thy zeal for His honor, to refer and give and sacrifice everything to Him. And this Thou didst do most excellently.

Thou didst also offer to Thy Father the holy and divine state of Thy dwelling in the sacred womb of the Virgin, all filled with glory and love for Him, in satisfaction for the dishonor that was to be rendered to Him by myself in the state of original sin. And at the same moment when Thou didst accept and offer to Thy Father all the crosses and sufferings of Thy whole life, Thou didst offer Him also all the past, present, and future trials and afflictions of all Thy members: for it is the function of the head to act for himself and on behalf of all his members, because the head and the members are but one, and also because all that pertains to the members belongs to the head, and conversely all the attributes of the head belong to the members.

And so, O divine Head, Thou hast turned my whole being and the whole condition of my life to meritorious purpose. In Thy temporal birth, Thou didst render for me to Thy Father all the rightful homage I should have rendered Him at my own birth, and Thou didst then practise all the acts and exercises of devotion that I should have practised. Be Thou blessed for ever! How willingly I consent and adhere to all that Thou didst do at that time for me! Indeed I ratify it with my whole will, and would gladly sign that ratification with the last drop of my blood. I also endorse all Thou didst do for me in all the other phases or actions of Thy life, to compensate for the faults Thou didst know I was going to commit.

In imitation of Thee, O my Jesus, in honor of and in union with the same love which led Thee thus to accomplish all things for Thyself and for all Thy brothers, members, and children, and for all creatures, I henceforth desire in all my functions and activities to render to Thee all the honor and glory I can, for myself and for all Christians, who are my brothers, and members of the same Head and Body. I desire to honor Thee on behalf of all men and all other creatures that are, unworly or incapable of loving Thee, as I all

#### 300 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

of them put together had entrusted me with their duties and obligations towards Thee, and had charged me to love and honor Thee on their behalf.

### **III. PRAYER TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN.**

O Mother of Jesus, I honor thee, as far as I am able, in the moment of thy holy conception, and in the instant of thy birth into the world. I honor all the love, all the adoration, praise, oblations, and blessings thou didst offer to God at that time. In union with thy love, purity, and humility as thou didst adore, love and glorify Him, and didst refer thy being and thy life to Him, I adore, bless, and love my God, with thee, my Mother, with my whole heart. I consecrate and sacrifice to Him forever my life, my being, and my whole self.

So also, acclaiming thee, O Blessed Virgin, as Mother of God and consequently as my Sovereign Lady, I refer to thee, after God, the whole state of my being and my life. I implore thee most humbly to offer to God, for me, all the love, the glory, and rightful homage thou didst render to Him at thy birth, by way of satisfaction for my faults, and to cause, by thy prayers and merits, all the phases, actions, and sufferings of my life to pay undying homage to all the phases, actions, and sufferings of thy Son's life and thine own.

### **IV. PRAYER TO THE ANGELS AND SAINTS WHOM YOU WERE IN DUTY BOUND TO HONOR AT THE TIME OF YOUR BIRTH.**

Having acquitted yourself in the above manner of your rightful tribute of homage to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, you should offer your salutations and pay your respects to the holy guardian angel assigned to you by God when you were born; to the guardian angels of your father and mother, of the house, the place, and the diocese where you were born; to the order of angels with whom God plans to associate you in heaven; also to the saints of the day, the place, and the district where you were born. You should thank them for their helpful favors, offer yourself to their honor all your life long according to God's holy will. You should ask them to offer you to Our Lord, to use you as an instrument for His glory, and to render

DEVOTIONS FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BIRTH

301 -

to Him all the due tribute of homage you should have paid Him at your birth. Invoke these devoted guardians frequently to obtain by their prayers fresh grace and new strength for you to begin a new life, which may be totally consecrated to their glory and the glory of the God of angels and saints.

302 -

### **EXERCISE FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BAPTISM**

### **V. CONCERNING THE RIGHTFUL TRIBUTE THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE PAID TO GOD ON THE DAY OF YOUR BAPTISM.**

Holy Baptism is the beginning of your true life, that is, your life in Jesus Christ, and it is the origin of all happiness. Therefore, it is certain that you would have been obliged to render a very special tribute to your Heavenly Father on the occasion of your baptism. But you were incapable of fulfilling your obligation then because you did not have the use of reason. It is logical that you should each year set apart a little interval near the anniversary of your baptism, or else some other time, to devote yourself to prayer and thanksgiving for this priceless sacrament.

### **VI. OBLIGATIONS TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO INSTITUTED AND MERITED BAPTISM FOR YOU.**

The author of the holy Sacrament of Baptism is Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the source of all its graces, acquired and merited by His Incarnation, by His Baptism in the River Jordan, by His Passion and Death. He applied these infinite merits to you by virtue of His Resurrection, out of His exceeding great love. All those invaluable blessings require you to pay Him the tribute of respect expressed in the following

prayer.

## **VII. PRAYER.**

O Jesus, I adore Thee as divine Author of the holy Sacrament of Baptism, which Thou didst institute for my salvation. Thou didst also acquire and merit the grace contained in that Sacrament, by Thy Incarnation, Thy Baptism in the River Jordan and by Thy holy death.

I adore the exceeding great love with which Thou didst merit and institute this same Sacrament.

I adore all the designs which Thou didst cherish in its institution, for the whole Church and for myself in particular.

### **EXERCISE FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BAPTISM**

303 -

I thank Thee countless times for all the glory Thou hast given to Thyself and for all the graces Thou hast transmitted to Thy Church, and to me in particular, by this Sacrament.

I offer Thee all that glory and all the graces Thou hast produced in Thy Holy Church by this means.

I beg Thee to forgive me for neglecting to take advantage of the grace Thou didst give me in holy Baptism, and for having made it valueless by my cowardice and infidelities in Thy service, and for having even destroyed it entirely in my soul, by my sins.

I give myself to Thee, O Good Jesus; renew in me the treasure of baptismal grace, and accomplish in me, by Thy very great mercy, all the plans of Thy Providence on my behalf in the divine Sacrament of Baptism.

O Jesus, I adore Thee in the mystery of Thy Incarnation, Passion, and Death, as meriting the grace of the Sacrament of Baptism; but especially do I adore Thee in the mystery of Thy holy Baptism in the River Jordan. I adore all the dispositions of Thy divine soul in this mystery, and all the designs Thou didst then deign to have in my regard. How different was Thy Baptism, Lord, from ours! In Thy Baptism Thou didst take upon Thyself our sins, to make satisfaction and do penance for them before the Father of heaven, in the desert and on the Cross, while in our baptism Thou didst lift from us the burden of our sins, washing and effacing them in Thy Precious Blood. Baptize me with the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, even as Thy blessed precursor, St. John the Baptist, assures us Thou dost baptize, that is, consume all my sins in the fire of Thy holy love, and by the power of Thy divine spirit.

## **VIII. THE ETERNAL AND TEMPORAL BIRTH OF JESUS, AND His DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION ARE THE EXEMPLAR OF BAPTISM.**

All things outside of God have their idea, their exemplar, and their prototype in God; so also Sacramental Baptism has for prototype and exemplar four great mysteries, namely:

1. The mystery of His eternal birth, because His Father, by eternal generation, imparted to Him being, life and all the divine perfections, by reason of which He is the Son of God and the perfect image of

304- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

His Father. Likewise, by Baptism He imparted to you the celestial and divine life He received from His Father; He implanted in you a living image of Himself, and He made you children of His Own Heavenly Father.

2. The mystery of His temporal birth, because at the moment of His Incarnation and birth in the Virgin, He united our nature with His and His essence with our nature, and filled it with Himself and clad Himself in it as in a garment; similarly in the holy Sacrament of Baptism He united Himself with you and incorporated you with Him; He formed Himself and, as it were, took flesh in you. He clothed and filled you with Himself, according to these words of St. Paul: "As many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3, 27).

3. The mystery of His death and burial, for St. Paul also tells us that "All we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death" (Rom. 6, 3), and that "we are buried together with him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6, 4). This means precisely the same as the thought expressed by the same Apostle in other words: "You are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God" (COL. 3, 3), that is, you have entered by baptism into a state which obliges you to die to yourself and to the world, and to live no longer except with Jesus Christ, by a totally holy and divine life, hidden and absorbed in God, resembling the life of Jesus Christ.

4. The mystery of the Resurrection, because by His Resurrection the Son of God entered into a new life, totally heavenly and spiritual, entirely separated from the earth. And so St. Paul instructs the faithful: "We are buried together with him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6, 4).

For these reasons, then, we owe our Saviour a great tribute of homage and should lift up our minds and hearts to Him.

## **IX. PRAYER TO JESUS.**

O Jesus, Son of God and at the same time Son of man, I adore Thee in Thy temporal and eternal birth. I give Thee infinite thanks

### **EXERCISE FOR ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BAPTISM**

305 -

for all the glory Thou didst thus render to Thy Father. I adore the thoughts and designs Thou didst then deign to have for me, thinking of me from the very first, O Good Jesus: Thou didst love me and didst plan to make in me a living image of Thyself, of Thy birth and Thy life. Just as Thy Father communicates to Thee His divine and immortal life, and just as Thou art consequently His Son and His most perfect image, so also Thou didst plan to transmit to me by Baptism Thy holy and celestial life, and to make me a living image Of Thyself, and to transform me by grace into what Thou art by nature, that is, a child of God, and by participation and resemblance, God and another Jesus Christ. Who could ever thank Thee for such great favors! How culpable I am for having, by my sins, so often impeded the perfect fulfilment of Thy divine plan! Forgive me, my Saviour, with all my heart I beg Thee to forgive me, and I give myself to Thee so that Thou mayest make amends for my faults and renew in me that image of Thyself, of Thy birth and of Thy life. Separate me from myself and from all that is not Thee, in order to unite and incorporate me with Thee. Empty me of myself and of all things, destroy me utterly, in order to fill me with Thyself and to form and establish Thyself in me. Cause me henceforth to be a perfect image of Thyself, just as Thou art a most perfect image of Thy Father. Grant that I may share in Thy filial love for Him, since He is my Father as He is Thine; enable me to live by Thy life, that is, a holy and perfect life, truly worthy of God, since Thou hast made me God by participation; and, finally, invest me so fully with Thy qualities, perfections, virtues and dispositions, and so transform me into Thee that men may see only Jesus in me, only His life, His humility, His meekness, His charity, His love, His spirit, and His other virtues and qualities, since Thou dost will me to be Thy other self on earth.

O Jesus, I adore Thee in the mystery of Thy holy death, Thy burial and Resurrection. I give Thee thanks for the glory Thou didst give Thy Father in these mysteries, and for the thoughts and plans Thou



didst have in them for me. For Thou didst always think of me in all these mysteries, and at every moment of Thy life, and Thou didst always have a special plan for me. Thy special Providence was to imprint on my soul, by holy Baptism, an image of Thy death,

#### 306- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

burial and Resurrection, causing me to die to myself and to the world, hiding me in Thyself, and with Thee in the bosom of the Eternal Father, and raising me up again and causing me to live like Thee a new life, altogether celestial and divine. For this, be Thou blessed forever. Alas, by my sins I have destroyed in myself the great effects produced by Thy goodness, and for this I beg Thee, with all humility and contrition, to forgive me. I give myself to Thee, O Good Jesus, I surrender myself to the spirit and the power of the mystery of Thy death, burial and Resurrection, that Thou mayest cause me to die again to all things; that Thou mayest hide me in Thyself and with Thyself in the bosom of Thy Father; that Thou mayest dissolve my mind in Thy mind, my heart in Thy Heart, my soul in Thy soul my life in Thy life; and that Thou mayest establish in me the new life into which Thou didst enter by Thy Resurrection, so that I may no longer live, save in Thee, for Thee, and by Thee.

#### **X. JESUS CHRIST, IN THE PERSON OF THE PRIEST, BAPTIZES EACH CHRISTIAN.**

All the Holy Fathers teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, by the power of His holy spirit, confers all the Sacraments in the person of the priest, who represents Him and acts in His Name and by His authority. It is He who consecrates in Holy Mass and gives us absolution in the Sacrament of Penance; also He baptizes us with various symbolic ceremonies, inspired by His Spirit in Holy Mother Church and filled with mysteries that signify great graces that are conferred upon us in holy Baptism. We should, therefore, pay Him homage in this connection.

#### **XI. PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST WHO BAPTIZED YOU.**

O my Most Beloved Jesus, I adore and recognize Thee as the One who baptized me, in the person of the priest, whom Thou didst use as a living instrument to confer this grace upon me. Alas, Lord, I knew Thee not at that time: I did not think of Thee, I did not love Thee, nor did I appreciate the very great favor conferred upon me. Yet this did not deter Thee from loving me, and receiving me among the number of Thy children, and even of Thy members, by the

#### EXERCISE FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BAPTISM

307-

sanctifying grace of Baptism. O my adorable Saviour, I desire with all my heart to bring back that holy time, that happy moment in which Thou didst baptize me, in order that I may adore, bless, love and glorify Thee infinitely, imploring Thy Eternal Father, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother, all the angels and saints and all creatures to love, bless and thank Thee for me forever.

O Jesus, I adore Thee as the One who, by Thy Holy Spirit, didst institute and inspire in Thy Church all the ceremonies which accompany the solemn administration of Sacramental Baptism. I adore all Thy admirable designs in their institution. I give myself to Thee that Thou mayest effect them in my person, and that by Thy great mercy Thou mayest produce in me the great and holy effects signified by these symbolic ceremonies.

O Jesus, cast out the evil spirit from me forever and fill me with Thy Divine Spirit. Give me a lively and perfect faith. Fortify my bodily senses and my spiritual faculties against every kind of temptation by the virtue of Thy holy Cross and consecrate them to Thy glory. Fill my soul with Thy divine wisdom, that is, with Thyself; excite in me the most avid hunger, thirst and desire of Thee, the principal and only food of my soul, so that I may no longer find any savor or relish in anything save Thee alone. Keep

me safe in Thy Church, as in the bosom of a mother, apart from whom there is no life or salvation, and give me the grace to honor her in all her observances, as in customs taught and inspired by Thee. Give me the grace to obey all her laws and commandments, as those of a mother most worthy of honor who commands me nothing save in Thy Name. In all things and everywhere teach me to follow the maxims and guidance of her Spirit, which is entirely Thine own.

O Good Jesus, open my ears to Thy word and Thy voice, as Thou didst open the ears of man possessed by the deaf and dumb spirit, by the application of Thy sacred spittle, and close them altogether to the voice of the world and of Satan. Anoint me with the oil of Thy grace so that I may spread abroad, as it were, the divine odor of Thee in every place. Give me a firm and lasting peace with Thee and with every kind of creature. Clothe me in the white robe of Thy holy innocence and divine purity, both bodily and spiritual. Dispel the

#### 308- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

shadows of my darkness, filling me with Thy heavenly radiance. Set me on fire with Thy sacred love and cause me to be a shining and a burning light, to illumine and enkindle all my associates with the light of Thy knowledge and the fire of Thy love. Finally, if I was a source of joy to all the citizens of heaven, to the Blessed Virgin, the Eternal Father, Thyself, and the Holy Spirit, when by Baptism I was delivered from the power of Satan and admitted into the divine company of angels and saints, and even of the Three Divine and Eternal Persons, and if in token of this joy the church bells were rung after I was baptized, cause me now to live henceforth in such a way as to continue to be a source of joy and satisfaction to the court of heaven, the Queen of Angels and the Most Blessed Trinity. Grant also that I may find all my satisfaction and joy in serving and loving Thee.

#### **XII. SOLEMN PROFESSION MADE BY ALL CHRISTIANS AT BAPTISM.**

I have in another place explained the nature of the solemn and public profession made by all Christians at Baptism. For that reason I need not repeat what has already been said; but it would be worth your while to refer to it again in "Part One" of this book. I shall confine myself now to recommending a prayer to Jesus Christ in renewal of the profession made to Him at Baptism, and as a repetition in your own person of the Christian vows pronounced on your behalf then by your sponsors.

#### **XIII. RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS.**

O Jesus, my Lord and my God, I adore Thee as the mystical Head whom I must follow and imitate in all things, according to my solemn and public profession made at Baptism. I promised, through my sponsors, before heaven and earth, to renounce Satan utterly with all his works and his pomps, that is, sin and the world, and to adhere to Thee as my Head, and to give and consecrate myself altogether to Thee, to dwell in Thee forever. Great indeed are this promise and profession, which oblige me, as a Christian, to practise great perfection and sanctity. To profess to dwell in Thee and to adhere to Thee as my Head is to profess to be one with Thee, as the members are one with their head, it is to promise to have but one life, one mind,

#### EXERCISE FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BAPTISM

309-

one heart, one soul, one will and one thought, one devotion and disposition with Thee. It means to profess not merely poverty, chastity and obedience, but to profess Thy very self, that is, Thy life, spirit, humility, charity, purity, poverty, obedience and all other virtues. In a word, it is to make the very profession Thou didst make before the Eternal Father at the moment of the Incarnation, a profession perfectly fulfilled throughout Thy life. It means to make profession never to follow one's own will, but to seek all happiness in doing everything willed by God, to remain in a state of perpetual subjection to God, and submissive to men

for the love of God. It means existing always as a host and victim continually sacrificed to the pure glory of God.

Such is the vow I made at Baptism, O Jesus my Lord. How holy and divine is that profession! How far is my life from this sanctity and perfection! How often have I failed in every respect to live up to so sacred a promise! Forgive me, most merciful Lord, forgive me. O divine Redeemer, I implore Thee to repair all my failings, and in satisfaction for them, to offer to Thy Father the inestimable honor Thou didst accord Him all Thy life long, by carrying out perfectly the profession made to Him at the Incarnation.

O my Jesus, in honor of and in union with the very great love and holy dispositions of Thy profession, I now desire to enact in my own person what I promised through others at my baptism, that is, I will to renew the profession then made by my godparents. Therefore, in the virtue and might of Thy Spirit and Thy love, I forever renounce Satan, sin, the world and myself. I give myself to Thee, O Jesus, to adhere to Thee, to remain in Thee, to be but one with Thee in heart, mind, spirit and life. I offer myself to Thee, never to do my own will, but to seek all my happiness in doing everything commanded by Thy holy will. I sacrifice myself to Thee as a host and victim to be immolated to Thy pure glory in any way that may be pleasing to Thee. O Most Compassionate Jesus, I implore Thee by Thy great mercy, grant me the grace to carry out this holy profession perfectly. Do Thou fulfil it Thyself in me and for me, or rather for Thyself and for Thy own good pleasure, in all the perfection Thou dost desire; for I offer myself to Thee to do and suffer whatever pleases Thee for this intention.

310- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

#### **XIV. BAPTISMAL TRIBUTE TO THE HOLY TRINITY.**

As has been said, it is our Lord Jesus Christ who baptizes the faithful; but each soul is baptized in the Name and by the power of the Most Holy Trinity. The Three Divine Persons are present at holy Baptism in a particular manner. The Father is present generating His Son in the soul and imparting to it a new being and new life in His Son. The Son is present, being born and receiving life in the soul, transmitting His divine sonship, by which the neophyte becomes a child of God, just as He is Son of God. The Holy Spirit is present, forming Jesus in each soul even as He was formed in the bosom of The Virgin. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are present, separating the new-born Christian from all things, taking possession of him and consecrating him specially to Themselves, imprinting Their divine character and image on his soul and establishing in his being (as in Their living temple, Their sacred tabernacle, or Their holy throne and heaven) the dwelling-place Of the Blessed Trinity, Their glory, kingdom and life. And consequently, if only sin did not stand in the way, the Three Eternal Persons would dwell always in each Christian heart in a particular and ineffable manner; They would most wonderfully glorify one another by living in the soul a most holy and divine life. So, too, it follows that we belong to God as creatures entirely consecrated to Him and we must consequently pursue no other purpose in life save His glory and service. In this connection it would be well to pay the following tribute of praise to the Holy Trinity.

#### **XV. PRAYER TO THE BLESSED TRINITY.**

O Holy and Adorable Trinity, I adore Thy divine essence and Thy Three Eternal Persons; I adore Thee for having been present at my baptism; I adore all the designs of Thy Providence for me. I beg Thee to forgive me for impeding their fulfilment and in satisfaction I offer Thee the life, actions and sufferings of my Lord Jesus Christ and of His most holy Mother. I give myself to Thee, O Divine Trinity, for the accomplishment of those same designs. O Eternal Father, O Thou the Only Son of God, O Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son, enter into me; enter into my heart and my soul; separate me

from all that is not Thyself, draw me to Thyself, live and reign in me, destroy in me all that displeases Thee, and cause my being and my life to be completely consecrated to Thy pure glory.

## **XVI. ROSARY OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.**

During the time devoted to the commemoration of the day of your baptism in the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, it would be a good thing to pay particular honor to that great mystery by saying the Rosary of the most Holy Trinity, which is made up of three decades and three beads in honor of the Three Divine Persons.

First, say three times the words: Veni Sancta Trinitas "Come, Holy Trinity," to invoke in your memory, understanding and will the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to give yourself to Them, that They may glorify Themselves in you as They will.

On each small bead, say the Gloria Patri, offering to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost all the glory that has been rendered to Them from all eternity by Their own Divinity and all that shall be rendered to Them for all eternity in heaven and on earth, by way of satisfaction for the faults you have committed against Their honor.

On the large beads, say, with the same intention, the words: Tibi laus, tibi gloria, tibi amor, O beata Trinitas . , "Praise be to Thee, glory to Thee, love to Thee, O Blessed Trinity."

## **XVII. CONCLUSION.**

To conclude the exercise on holy Baptism, thank Our Lord for the graces He has imparted during this exercise, asking Him to forgive you for the faults you have committed in it. Offer yourself to the Blessed Virgin, to your guardian angel, to the holy angels who were present at your baptism, to the saint whose name you were given, and to all the other angels and saints. Ask them to offer you to Jesus, to thank Him for you, to pay Him on your behalf all the rightful tribute of homage you would have rendered Him at the time of your Baptism if you had had the use of reason. Invoke their generous intercession to obtain from Him the grace to carry out perfectly all the holy desires and resolutions Our Lord has inspired in your heart during this exercise.

312 -

## **EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH**

## **XVIII. PREPARATION FOR A HAPPY DEATH.**

Death is usually preceded by such violent throes or intense weakness that the dying person is unable to direct his thoughts to God and cannot pay Him the homage owed to His divine majesty at that crucial time. Therefore, it is extremely advisable to anticipate this disability by setting aside a few days each year to carry out now what one ought rightfully to render to God at the hour of death. St. Gertrude tells us that when she had once performed this exercise, Our Lord revealed that it was most pleasing to Him, and He promised to set aside her preparation and keep it for the day of her death. You should be confident that in His goodness He will give this grace to you also, if you make use of the same exercise. For this purpose it would be well to devote ten days to a series of ten meditations and spiritual exercises in preparation for a Christian and holy death. I now present them in due order, showing how they are to be carried out.

### **First Day**

## **XIX. MEDITATION ON SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.**

1. O my Lord Jesus, behold me prostrate at Thy feet, adoring my Judge and Sovereign, as Thou dost pronounce on me the sentence of death, pronounced to Adam and in his person to all sinners, by, Thy words: "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3, 19). In honor of Thy exceeding great love and most profound humility as, prostrate upon the ground at Pilate's feet, Thou didst hear and accept the sentence of death, spoken by the Roman Governor but willed by Thy Eternal Father, in honor of and in homage to His divine justice, I submit with my whole heart to the sentence of death Thou didst pass upon me even at the beginning of the world, recognizing that I have deserved it not only by original sin, but each time I have committed sin.

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

313 -

2. O my God, I recognize that even if I were guilty of no sin, whether original or actual nevertheless, by Thy absolute sovereignty and power over me Thou couldst in all holiness take away my life, annihilate me and do with me as Thou wilt.

And so in honor of the very great love and in union with the deep submission with which the Blessed Virgin, Thy Mother, accepted death even though she was not obliged to die, by reason of any sin, original or actual, I, too, accept death in homage to Thy sovereignty, abandoning myself entirely into Thy hands, that Thou mayest dispose of me in time and in eternity, according to Thy holy will, for Thy greater glory.

3. O Jesus, Thou art eternal and immortal; Thou art the source of all life, and yet Thou dost will to die on the Cross the most cruel and ignominious of all deaths in homage to the justice and sovereignty, the divine and eternal life of Thy Father, and to give me a token of Thy love. And so, my Saviour, even if I were not obliged to die on account of my sins, and even if (to suppose the impossible) I depended in no way upon Thy sovereignty, and even indeed if Thou hadst not died for me in particular, I ought not only to accept death, but even to desire to die, in order to honor Thy holy death, which is so exalted and worthy of honor that all living creatures ought to subject themselves to death voluntarily even if they were not already obliged to die, in homage to the death of their Creator made Man.

But even if Thou hadst not died, O my God, all living things ought most willingly to sacrifice their very existence to pay homage to Thy supreme and eternal being, and to bear witness by this sacrifice that Thou alone art worthy to live, and that no other being or life has any right to show itself, but should be annihilated in Thy presence as the stars of heaven are extinguished in the light of the sun.

Thy death is so worthy of honor and homage, Thy life is most worthy to be adored. With excessive love Thou didst will to die, not only to satisfy the justice of Thy Father and to honor His sovereignty, but also to sacrifice Thy human and temporal life for the glory of the divine and eternal life with Thy Father and Holy Spirit. By this sacrifice Thou didst bear witness before heaven and earth, that there is none but the divine life alone that is worthy of existence, and all

#### 314 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

other created life, however noble and excellent, should be extinguished in the sight and in the presence of this supreme and uncreated life. Therefore, in honor of Thy death, in homage to Thy life, in union with the infinite love with which Thou didst thus will to die, for such great and divine intentions, and also in honor of the burning love with which Thy Blessed Mother and all Thy saints, especially Thy holy martyrs, embraced death with a very ready will for the same intentions, I accept and embrace death with my whole heart, in whatever form it may please Thee to send it to me, that is, in the place, time, manner, and under all the circumstances it shall please Thee to decree.

And so if Thou dost order me to die a painful or even a shameful death, or that I be left desolate and abandoned by all human help, or if I am to be deprived of the use of my senses and reason, provided Thou art always with me, Thy holy will be done. I desire to accept and embrace all this in honor of Thy most

sorrowful and ignominious death, in honor of the unspeakable desolation Thou didst suffer on the Cross, abandoned even by the All-loving Father. I accept it in homage to the surrender of Thy senses Thou didst make in earliest childhood. I honor Thee in the humiliation Thou didst suffer, being treated as a madman by Thy own people, at the beginning of - the preaching of the Holy Gospel, and by Herod and his court during Thy Passion.

Finally, my Dear Jesus, I place myself entirely in Thy hands. I abandon myself so completely to Thy good pleasure that I no longer desire to have any other will or desire, save to let Thee will, desire and choose for me, in this and in everything else. Thou dost possess infinite wisdom and power and Thou hast a far greater knowledge and power and will to further Thy glory than I ever could have. One thing alone I beg of Thee, and it is that, since Thou didst die in love, by love and for love, if I am not worthy to die for Thy love or by that love, at least Thou mayest permit me to die in Thy dear love.

4. O my Jesus, I implore that, just as Thou didst perform all Thy actions and functions for Thyself and for all men, especially for Thy children and friends, I may be permitted, in honor of and in union with Thy love, to perform all these actions and render unto Thee all

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

315-

due homage not only for myself but for all men, especially for all those for whom Thou knowest that I am both bound and anxious to pray with particular fervor.

O Mother of Jesus, surely it would seem that thou shouldst not have died, since thou art the Mother of the Eternal and Immortal Son of God, who is life itself! Yet thou didst willingly submit to death, in homage to the most adorable death of thy Son. Thus, thy death is so exalted and worthy of honor that all creatures ought to subject themselves to death by their own free will, in order to honor the death of their Sovereign Lady, the Mother of their Creator. Therefore, O holy Virgin, even if I were not obliged to die, I should, nevertheless, wish to accept death freely, and offer it to thee together with the death of each one who is dear to me, and of all mankind, in homage to thy most holy death. I most humbly implore thee, O Mother of Life, to unite my death to thine in honor of the death of thy Son and to obtain from Him the grace to die in His favor and in His love.

#### Second Day

#### XX. THANKSGIVING FOR ALL THE BENEFITS OF YOUR WHOLE LIFE.

After you have made the solemn act of acceptance, you should prepare for a holy death, first by thanking Our Lord for all the favors you have received from Him in your whole lifetime. And it is very wise to devote a day to this exercise as follows:

1. O Jesus, I contemplate and adore Thee as the principle and source of all good things and all temporal and eternal graces, past, present and future, in heaven and on earth, especially those I have received from Thee. I refer all these graces to Thee, for Thou art their source and Thy glory is their destiny. O Good Jesus, who could ever describe all the favors Thou hast done me? They are numberless and I am utterly incapable of thanking Thee for them as Thou dost deserve. O dearest Lord, may all that ever was, is, or shall be in me, may all earthly and heavenly creatures, all the angels and saints, Thy Holy Mother, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Eternal Father, all the powers of Thy divinity and humanity, and all the graces and

316- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

mercies which emanated from Thee, may all these be employed in praising Thee forever. May they be entirely transformed into everlasting praise of Thee, of all that Thou art together with Thy Father, Thyself

and Thy Holy Spirit, and of all the graces Thou didst ever impart to Thy sacred humanity, Thy Blessed Mother, the angels and saints, and all creatures, and especially the graces Thou hast given me, or would have given me if I had not stood in Thy way.

0 Father of Jesus, Holy Spirit of Jesus, Mother of Jesus, angels of Jesus, Saints of Jesus, and all creatures of Jesus, bless and give thanks to Him for me forever. 0 Divine Jesus, do Thou glorify Thyself for me and return to Thyself a hundredfold all the thanks I ought to render to Thee.

2. 0 Good Jesus, Thou knowest how many favors and benefits I have received from Thy Blessed Mother, the angels and saints in heaven, and from many persons on earth. Thou knowest also how incapable I am of acknowledging them and giving thanks for them as I ought. And so I have recourse to Thee, imploring Thee most humbly to make up for my deficiencies and to give, on my behalf, to all those souls, both in heaven and on earth, all that I ought to render to them for the benefits I have received at their hands.

3. 0 Mother of Grace, Mother of my God, it is through thy intercession that I have received all the graces ever bestowed on me from heaven. May heaven and earth bless thee for them all, on behalf of myself and of all the thoughtless persons who have received favors from thee and give thee no thanks whatever.

### **Third Day**

#### **XX1 CONFESSION AND SATISFACTION.**

Having set aside one day to thank God for all the graces He has given you in your lifetime, it is most necessary that you devote another day to ask forgiveness for your sins and to make satisfaction to Him. To that end, you ought on this day to make a good confession, either an extraordinary confession or one marked by unusual contrition and self-abasement, with as much care and preparation as if it were

#### **EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH**

317 -

to be your last confession. The acts of contrition and other exercises for confession in «Part Two» will serve your purpose here also. Besides doing this, you would do well to set aside a little time during the day to meditate on this matter, in the presence of God, in the following way:

1. 0 Most Lovable Jesus, infinitely worthy of all service and love, to whom I owe debts without number, Thou didst create me only to love and serve Thee. Yet I have done scarcely anything but offend Thee by thought, word and deed, by all my bodily senses and spiritual faculties, by my misuse of Thy creatures, against all Thy commandments, in countless different ways. 0 what sins! What ingratitude! What betrayals! Lord Jesus, I cast all my offenses upon Thy divine love, into the abyss of Thy mercies. Grant that I may be utterly changed into sorrow and contrition, with tears of blood to detest and wipe out the sins I have committed against that immense Goodness, so deserving of love and honor! My God, what is there that I could ever do to make reparation for my sins? But even if I were to suffer all the torments and martyrdom in the world, I still could not of myself alone repair the insult given Thee by even the least of my faults.

2. 0 Good Jesus, I offer Thee instead all the glory, love and service given Thee by all the saints and Thy most Blessed Mother, by their holy thoughts, words and actions, by holy use of their bodily senses and their spiritual powers, by their eminent virtues and sufferings, in satisfaction for the failures of my lifetime. I offer Thee likewise all the honor given Thee forever by all the angels, by the Holy Spirit, by Thyself, and by the Eternal Father, in reparation for the dishonor I have given Thee all my life.

3. 0 Heavenly Father, 0 Holy Spirit, 0 ye angels and saints, offer up for me, to my Saviour, all the love and glory you ever gave Him, in satisfaction for the wrong I have done Him by my offenses.

4. Miserable sinner that I am, by offending my God I have offended all things. I have offended the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, the Mother of God, all the angels and saints, and all creation, for all are concerned and offended in offense to their Creator. How, O my God, how can I make reparation for so many offenses, make satisfaction

318- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

to so many persons and pay off so many debts? I know what I will do: I have my Jesus who is in Himself an infinite wealth of virtues, merits and good works. He has been given me to be my riches, my virtue, my sanctification, my redemption and reparation. I shall offer Him to the Eternal Father, to the Holy Ghost, to the Blessed Virgin, to all the angels and all the saints in reparation and satisfaction for all the faults I have committed. O Holy Father, O Divine Spirit, I offer all the love and honor that my Jesus gave you by all His divine thoughts, words and actions, by His divine employment of all the members of His body and of His soul, by all His glorious virtues and heroic sufferings, in satisfaction for all the offenses I have committed against you all my life long.

O holy Virgin, O holy angels, O blessed saints, I offer you my treasure and my all, my Saviour Jesus Christ. I conjure you to draw upon His infinite storehouse of merit whatever you require in payment and satisfaction for all the debts I owe you, by reason of my sins and negligences.

5. O my Jesus, my divine Redeemer, do Thou make reparation for all my faults, and by Thy very great mercy atone for all my sins committed against the Eternal Father, Thyself the Son, the Holy Spirit, Thy most Blessed Mother, the angels and saints and all persons I have offended. I give myself to Thee to do and suffer in atonement whatsoever may be pleasing to Thy holy will, accepting now all the sufferings of body or spirit that I may have to bear, whether in this world or in the next, in satisfaction for my sins.

6. O most holy Virgin, I have so many obligations to serve and venerate thee; yet I have so little honored and so greatly offended thee by offending thy Son! I beg thy forgiveness, O Mother of Mercy, and I offer Thee in satisfaction all the honor ever accorded thee in heaven and on earth. I implore all the angels and saints, the Holy host, thy Son, and the Eternal Father to supply for my deficiencies, and fill up the measure of glory I ought to have rendered to thee all my life long.

EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

319-

### **Fourth Day**

#### **XXII. HOLY COMMUNION.**

Holy Communion is the most precious and effective means given you by God to render to Him all the honor and service you owe to Him. To prepare for a holy death, you should make a point of taking one day of this exercise to dispose yourself for an exceptionally well-prepared Communion, marked by extraordinary devotion and approached with as much care and recollection as if it were to be your last. The exercise I drew up for Holy Communion, in Part Two of this book, will prove sufficient for this purpose, provided you use it profitably.

Let me merely tell you that you should offer this special Communion to Our Lord: 1. in honor of all that He is in Himself and towards You; 2. in thanksgiving for all the effects of His love for His Father and for all creatures, but especially for You; 3. in satisfaction for all the dishonor and pain given Him by all the sins of the world, especially by your own; and 4. for the fulfilment of the plans of His Divine Providence for all men, especially for you.

Offer yourself to the Eternal Father, begging Him to unite you with the surpassing love of His



paternal heart when He received His Son Jesus Christ into His bosom on the day of the Ascension. Give yourself to Jesus and beg Him to unite you with the most ardent love and profound humility with which He instituted the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, on the eve of His death. Offer yourself to the Blessed Virgin, to St. John the Evangelist, to St. Mary Magdalen and St. Mary of Egypt, and all the other saints, praying that they may cause you to participate in the love and fervor, the humility, purity and sanctity with which they received Holy Viaticum.

After you have received Communion and made the usual thanksgiving to Our Lord with unusual fervor, adore His divine plans from all eternity for you. Beg Him to forgive all the obstructions you have ever placed in the way of their operation. Fervently beg Him not to let you die until He has completed the plans of His goodness and the work of His grace in your soul. Give yourself to Him with a great.

320- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

desire and mighty resolution to work manfully to consummate His work in you, and to destroy in yourself everything that might stand in His way, so that you may be able to repeat to Him, on the last day of your life, His words to the Heavenly Father On Good Friday: *Opus consuminavi quod dedisti mihi ut faciam*, I have finished the work which thou gayest me to do" (John 17, 4).

### **Fifth Day**

#### **XX111. EXTREME UNCTION.**

You do not know whether you will be able to concentrate on God when you receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, (assuming that it may please Him to grant this grace). It would, therefore, be a good thing to devote the fifth day to acquit yourself of the obligations to Our Lord to this holy Sacrament and to prepare for a meritorious reception of Extreme Unction.

1. O Jesus, I adore Thee as the author of the Holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and as the source of its priceless graces, which Thou hast acquired and merited for us by the shedding of Thy Precious Blood. I refer to Thee all the graces Thou didst ever produce in souls through Extreme Unction. I bless Thee a thousand times for all the glory Thou hast given to Thyself by this last Sacrament. I adore the infinite design of Thy Providence in the institution of Extreme Unction and I surrender myself to the accomplishment of Thy divine Plan for me according to Thy holy will. I implore Thee most humbly to grant me the grace of receiving this Sacrament at the end of my life. And if I should not be able to receive it, I implore Thee to produce in MY soul, by Thy great mercy, the same graces I would acquire by its reception.

2. O Jesus, I adore Thee in the holy anointing of Thy sacred body in the last days of Thy life by St. Mary Magdalen, and at Thy burial by St. Nicodemus and St. Joseph of Arimathea. I offer Thee all the holy unctions ever performed, in this last Sacrament, upon the bodies of all Christians who have received it or ever shall do so, in honor of and homage to the divine anointing of Thy deified body.

#### **EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH**

321 -

3. O Good Jesus, I adore Thee as High Priest to whom, before all others, belongs the right of conferring all the Sacraments. I give myself to Thee as High Priest and implore Thee to inspire in my soul all the dispositions required for the fruitful reception of Extreme Unction and to produce in me all the graces represented by its consoling ceremonies.

In order to dispose myself for its reception, O my Saviour, behold I cast myself down at Thy feet, accusing myself before Thee and Thy heavenly court of all my sins, most humbly begging Thy forgiveness with all the humility and contrition I can muster, with my whole heart imploring Thee, together with Thy

Blessed Mother and all the angels and saints, to ask forgiveness from Thy Eternal Father, and to offer to Him in satisfaction for my sins the full measure of Thy infinite merits and sufferings.

O Good Jesus, come into my soul and into my heart. Come to bring me Thy holy peace and to destroy in me all that might disturb the peace and repose of my spirit. Come unto me, and with Thy Precious Blood purify me of the foulness of my sins. Come to grant me full and total absolution, indulgence and remission of all my sins.

O Most Kind Jesus, I offer Thee all the senses and members of my body and all the powers of my soul. Anoint me, I beg Thee, with the sacred oil that ever flows from Thy divine Heart, that is, with the oil of Thy grace and mercy and, by this heavenly anointing, cleanse me of the evil effects of my sins. O Dearest Jesus, I offer Thee the holy employment of bodily senses and spiritual powers ever made by Thy Divine Self, by Thy Blessed Mother and all the saints, in satisfaction for my abuse or misuse of the members and senses of my body and the faculties of my soul. May it please Thee to grant me the grace to employ them in future only for Thy pure glory.

Finally, O Most Amiable Jesus, may it please Thee to give me Thy holy blessing. Ask the Beneficent Father and the Holy Spirit to bless me with Thee, so that this divine and mighty benediction may destroy in me all that displeases Thee, and transform me utterly into eternal benediction and praise of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

322 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

### Sixth Day

## XXIV. CHRIST'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, AND THE WILL YOU SHOULD MAKE IN ITS HONOR.

On this day you should prepare to make a will, in imitation and honor of the final testament of Jesus Christ on earth. In the presence of God you should meditate on the infinitely adorable legacy left by Christ and consider how to make your own will in the same spirit with similar dispositions. This may be done in the following manner:

O Jesus, I adore Thee in the last days of Thy life. I adore every aspect and event of these last days, but especially Thy divine Testament pronounced in the Cenacle, on Mount Olivet and from the Cross. I adore, bless and glorify the supreme love for Thy Father, the most burning charity towards us and all the other holy dispositions of Thy last Testament to mankind.

In Thy last will there are five bequests:

The *first* bequest is to Thine enemies, for, O wonder of wonders, O immensity of goodness, Thy first word and first prayer on the Cross is for Thine enemies, begging the Father to pardon them, in the very hour when they were crucifying Thee.

The *second* bequest is to the Heavenly Father, the final gift of Thy holy soul with these words: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23, 46). These words were uttered not only with reference to Thy deified soul, but to my soul and to the souls of all who belong to Thee, which were all at that moment before Thy sight, and Thou didst look upon them as Thy own possession, forming all together but one soul with Thine, by virtue of their most intimate union. When Thou didst say to the Father: Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum, Thou didst speak for Thyself and for me; Thou didst commend my soul together with Thine into the hands of Thy Father, addressing this prayer to Him who is at once Thy Father and mine, in Thy Name and my own, against the hour when my soul shall leave my body. And Thou

didst make the offering of my soul with the same love with which Thou didst say Pater or Father in general, not My Father in particular, to show that Thou didst regard Him not

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

323 -

only as Thy own Special Father, but as the common and universal Father of all Thy brethren and members. Thou didst pray to Him not only for Thyself in particular, but also in general for all who belong to Thee, with filial confidence and love, as much for Thyself as for them, for which mayst Thou be loved and blessed forever.

The *third* bequest in Thy will concerns the Blessed Mother, to whom Thou didst give that which was most dear to Thee after herself, the beloved disciple, St. John the Evangelist. At the same time there were represented in the person of St. John all the other disciples and children, until the end of time. When Thou didst say to Mary the words, "Woman, behold thy son" (John 19, 26), Thou didst give her not 'only St. John, but all other Christians to be her children. Reciprocally, in saying to St. John the words "Behold thy Mother?" (John 19, 27), Thou didst give to him and also to all Christians, represented in his person, Thy most precious possession in the order of created beings, namely, Thy most Blessed Mother. Thou didst give her to them to be their Mother just as she was Thy Mother, imparting to them Thy precious relationship and character with her. That was the reason Thou didst call her no longer Thy Mother, but Mulier, "woman," to show the transfer to us of Thy relationship to her as Son, and the gift to us, as Mother, of her who was about to cease to be Thy Mother for a time by reason of her Son's death. And so, good Jesus, Thou didst bequeath me in Thy will to Thy Blessed Mother, not only as a servant and subject, but actually as a son: Mulier, ecce filius tuus. Thou didst give her to me not only as my Queen and Lady, but in the most honorable and lovable character there is—that of a Mother. O love! O excess of goodness! May the whole world be transformed into love for so great a goodness!

The *fourth* bequest in Thy will is particularly ours and concerns us so diversely that it seems to have been made for us alone.

1. During Thy last days on earth, O Jesus, Thou didst express a surpassing and extraordinary love, assuring us that Thy Father loves us as He loves Thee (John 17, 23), and that Thou lovest us as Thy Father loves Thee (John 15, 9). And Thou dost consequently urge us to love one another as Thou hast loved us (John 13, 34).

2. Thou didst likewise commend us with most particular affection

#### 324- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

to the most exalted and powerful persons most dear to Thee, by whom Thou art most loved in heaven and on earth—that is, Thy Eternal Father and Thy divine Mother. To the Father just before setting out on the road to Calvary, Thou didst address a beautiful prayer: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom Thou hast given me. Not for them only do I pray but for them who through their word shall believe in me" (John 17, 11-20). While hanging on the Cross, Thou didst place our souls in His hands together with Thine own, as has been said. Thou didst also commend us to Thy divine Mother.

3. We share in Thy will because in Thy last, solemn and public prayer, Thou didst obtain from the Heavenly Father the greatest favors that could have been asked of Him, or that He could have given us. Here are the prayers Thou didst address to Him for us: 'Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me' (John 17, 24), that is, that they should have their dwelling and take their rest with Me forever in Thy bosom and Thy Fatherly Heart. "Just Father, may the love wherewith Thou hast loved me, be in them" (John 17, 25-26), that is to say: love them as Thou lovest Me, love them with the greatest, the most burning and most divine love that could ever possibly exist. Look upon them as Thou dost

regard Me; love them with the very heart with which Thou lovest Me; treat them as Thou dost treat Me; give them all that Thou givest Me. "That they may be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us ... I in them, and thou in me: that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17, 21-23). O dearest Lord, what love! What more couldst Thou ask the Father for us?

4. We share in Thy will because Thou didst give us the most rare and precious gift, Thy Eternal Father to be our Father, praying Him to love us as He loves Thee, as His children with sublime paternal love. Thou didst give us Thy Blessed Mother to be our Mother. Thou didst give us Thy most Holy Body in the Eucharist, Thy holy soul on the Cross in death with the words: I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10, 15). Thou didst give Thy Precious Blood to the very last drop, Thy life, merits, sufferings, humanity and divinity, as

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

325 -

expressed in these words: "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them" (John 17, 22). Thou didst give up all without reserve. O dearest Lord, how admirable is Thy goodness, poured forth for us in the very hour when we were causing Thee to suffer so many evils! How can we love Thee so little and think so seldom of Thee? How can so great a love be held so cheap and be so despised by those whom Thou so lovest?

The filth and last bequest in Thy will was made on Mount Olivet when, departing from the apostles and ascending into heaven, Thou didst give them Thy holy blessing. We share in this bequest also, for in imparting Thy blessing to the holy apostles and disciples Thou didst bless all of us, each one in particular, for we were all just as much present in Thy sight then as we are now. May heaven and earth bless Thee, O Author of all gifts, and may all things in heaven and earth be transformed into eternal blessings of Thee.

Such, good Jesus, are the five clauses of Thy admirable will, in honor of which I desire, if it please Thee, to draw up my own testament as follows:

#### XXV. LAST SPIRITUAL WILL AND TESTAMENT.

1. O Most Kind Jesus, in honor of and in union with the love with which Thou didst shed Thy Blood and die for Thy enemies and pray to Thy Father to pardon those who crucified Thee, with my whole heart I fully forgive all those who have ever offended or injured me, and I implore Thee to grant them full pardon. I offer myself to Thee to do and suffer whatever may please Thee for their sake, even to shed my blood and die for them, if necessary. So, too, in all the humility I can muster, I beg all whom I have ever offended or displeased in my whole life to forgive me, and I give myself to Thee to make whatever satisfaction to them Thou mayest desire.

2. In honor of and in union with the exceeding great love, the most perfect confidence and all the other dispositions with which Thou didst commend Thy soul and all the souls that belong to Thee into the hands of Thy Father, I surrender my soul, with the souls of all those for whom I am bound to have special concern, into the gentle hands and the most loving heart of the Divine Father, who is my

326 -

#### THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

God, my Creator and my Most Lovable Father, that He may dispose of them according to His good pleasure. I trust that His infinite goodness will place them with Thy soul, good Jesus, in His Fatherly Bosom, there to love and bless Him eternally with Thee, according to the desire of Thy soul, expressed in the words: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me" (John 17, 24).

3. In honor of and in union with Thy great charity in giving all Thy friends and children to Thy most Blessed Mother, I resign into her hands all those entrusted to my care, imploring Thee, Good Jesus, to

commend them Thyself to Thy Virgin Mother. I implore her with my whole heart, by ~Thy very great love for her and hers for Thee, and by the same love with which Thou didst give her Thy friends and children, to look upon them henceforth as her children in a more special way, and to be their Mother.

4. In honor of and in union with the exceedingly powerful love whereby Thou didst commend me to Thy Father on Thy last day, and didst beg Him, on my behalf, for such great favors, giving me all that was most dear to Thee, with such extraordinary tokens of that love, urging me also to love my neighbor as Thou didst love me: I commend to Thee all those whom Thou knowest I should commend particularly to Thee, and I beg Thee on their behalf for all that Thou didst ask for me from Thy Eternal Father on Good Friday. I abandon myself to Thee to love Thee as Thou lovest the Father and as the Father loves Thee. I give myself also to Thee to love my neighbor as Thou didst love me, and to shed my blood and give my life for him, if it is Thy holy will.

5. O Jesus, God of all blessings, I adore Thee in the last moment of Thy sojourn on earth, upon Mount Olivet, as Thou didst leave the earth to ascend into heaven. I adore Thee giving Thy most holy blessing to Thy Blessed Mother, Thy apostles and disciples; I adore the exceeding great love and all the other dispositions which filled Thy divine soul when Thou didst impart this supreme blessing as is related in the Holy Gospel (Luke 24, 50).

O Good Jesus, behold me prostrate at Thy feet, in union with the humility and the other holy dispositions of the Blessed Mother and

### 327 - EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

the holy apostles and disciples as they received Thy blessing. I most humbly implore Thee, by all Thy love for them, and theirs for Thee, to give now to me and to all I have commended to Thee, Thy most holy blessing, so that by the power of that divine blessing all that displeases Thee in me may be destroyed and I may be altogether transformed into everlasting praise, love and benediction of Thee.

## Seventh Day

### XXVI. THE AGONY AND THE MOMENT OF DEATH.

You shall consider this day as if it were to be your last. You must strive to spend it with as much care and devotion as if you had only this one day in which to love God. For this purpose, you should apply yourself to the contemplation and adoration of Our Lord in the last

day of His life on earth, and to do everything in union with the holy and divine dispositions of His last actions. With the last day of your

life in view, you should implore Jesus to unite you to his dispositions and foster them in your heart, that you may be of the number of those of whom it is said: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Apoc. 14, 13) that is, who die in the dispositions of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Similarly you should consider and honor the Blessed Virgin on the last day of her life, uniting yourself to her dispositions, offering her the last day of your life. The prayers addressed to Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother for the end of the year should also serve your purpose here.

I may also add at this point that it is a good thing on this day to adore Jesus and honor His most holy Mother in their agony and death, offering your agony and death in union with theirs, imploring them to bless and sanctify your death by their own. It is also most beneficial to adore the infinite power of the divine love that caused the death of Jesus and of His most holy Mother, for they both died of love and by love.

You should implore that divine love to cause you to die with Jesus and His divine Mother, and to consume and sacrifice your life in its sacred flames.

#### 328- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

You should also honor the holy martyrs and all saints in their agony and death; offer them your agony and death, in union with their own, begging them to unite you with their holy dispositions as they prepared for death. Implore them specially to associate you with all the love and glory they gave to Our Lord on the last day of their life and at the moment they died for Him.

You should pray specially to St. John the Evangelist, St. Mary Magdalen and the good thief who died with Jesus, and all the other saints who were present at the death of the Son of God, that through the merits of their privilege in being near Him in death, they may give you special assistance at the hour of your own death.

On this same day it would be most advisable to read the Passion of Our Lord, the seventeenth chapter of St. John, containing His last words and prayers before setting forth to be crucified, as well as the prayers of Holy Mother Church for the agonizing soul, which are to be found at the end of the Breviary. For you do not know whether you will be in a fit state on the last day of your life to complete these preparations for a holy death. Hence, it is a good thing to anticipate that day, and to read the Passion of Our Lord and the above-mentioned prayers with all the devotion you would wish to put into them at the hour of death, and all the devotion with which they have ever been read by the whole Church.

But above all, when you read the seventeenth chapter of St. John, which contains the last words and prayers of Jesus, give yourself to Him in a sincere effort to pronounce these words and prayers in union with His love, dispositions and intentions when He spoke them, imploring Him to foster in your heart these sublime dispositions in preparation for the last day of your life and to produce the effects of these holy words. -

Finally, cast yourself down at the feet of Jesus and His most holy Mother, to implore them to give you their most holy blessing. "O Jesus, O Mother of Jesus, give me your holy blessing for the last moment of my life. By your great goodness, grant that the last moment of my life may be consecrated to the glory of the last moment of yours, and that my last breath may be an act of most pure love for you!"

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

329 -

#### **Eighth Day**

#### **XXVII. THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.**

It is a most holy practice, when present at a deathbed, to kneel down at the moment the person dies, to adore the advent of the Son of God, who comes to judge that soul right there in the body, where it remains until it is consigned elsewhere by His judgment. It would be quite easy to prove that the Son of God thus comes to judge the soul at the hour of death, because several passages of Holy Scripture clearly speak of it. This is not, however, the place to do so. All I have to say for the present is that if it is beneficial to adore the Son of God in the exercise of His judgment upon others at the hour of death, how much more should you adore Him in His coming for you and His judgment~merit at the hour of your death. Therefore, you must render to Him now, freely and out of love, the honor that shall be obligatory when your end comes. Hence, this day shall be spent in this exercise, performed as follows:

1. O Jesus, Thou art the Saint of saints and Sanctity Itself, infinitely above all sin and imperfection. Yet, I behold Thee prostrate with Thy face to the earth at the feet of the All-just Father in the Garden of

Olives, and the following day at the feet of Pilate, where the Eternal Father contemplates Thee as the Victim who has taken upon Himself all the sins of the world, giving Himself without reserve for the ransom of mankind. Thou hast taken the place of all sinners and borne the heavy judgment of our sins by dying on the Cross for our salvation. Thou dost accept that judgment with most perfect submission, most profound humility and most ardent love for Thy Father and for us. O Jesus, I adore and glorify Thee in this judgment and in all the holy dispositions of humiliation, contrition, submission and love with which Thou didst suffer to be judged and condemned to save us.

2. In honor of and in union with these dispositions, behold me prostrate at Thy feet, great Jesus, adoring Thee as my sovereign judge. I most willingly submit myself to Thy supreme power. I infinitely rejoice that Thou hast sovereign power over me and over all men and

### 330 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

angels. A thousand times I bless the Eternal Father for having given Thee this power. I affirm sincerely that if, to imagine the impossible, Thou didst not have this power, and I did have it, I would want to strip myself of it to give it to Thee; if I were not subject to Thy power to judge me, I should wish to subject myself voluntarily to that power, out of homage to Thy divine justice and to the condemnation Thou didst undergo from Thy Father during Thy holy Passion.

3. O Jesus, I adore Thee in Thy coming at the hour of my death and at the moment of Thy judgment of my soul. I adore now every aspect and detail of my particular judgment. May it please Thee to grant me now some measure of the divine light by which Thou wilt clearly show me every event of my whole life, compelling me to give an account of everything. Grant me a share in the zeal for justice with which Thou wilt be avenged for my offenses, so that I may from now on see my sins clearly and make reparation by perfect contrition, horror and detestation for these same sins.

4. O my God, how many sins I have committed against Thee all my life, by thought, word and deed, in every way! They can not be numbered, I confess; and I accuse myself before Thee, Thy Blessed Mother, before all the angels and saints, and, if it be Thy holy will, before the whole world. I accuse myself of my sins just as they are in Thy sight, as Thou knowest them. If only I could see my offenses as Thou seest them! If only I knew myself as Thou knowest me, and as I shall see and know myself in Thy light at the moment of judgment! How I shall be confounded and humiliated then by the realization of what I am! What horror my crimes will awaken in me! What regret, what anguish at having so little loved and so greatly offended so transcendent a goodness as Thine! How quickly will I then accuse and condemn my own self! Indeed there will be no need of any other judge, for I shall be the first to pass sentence upon my own misdeeds and ignominy.

5. But why wait until that final hour? Lord, at this very moment I surrender myself to the zeal of Thy divine justice and to the spirit of Thy just hatred and righteous horror for sin. In honor of and in union with Thy extreme hatred of sin, I hate and detest all my sins; I hold them in abhorrence; I renounce them forever; I offer myself to Thee

### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

331 -

to suffer for them all the penance Thou shalt order. Casting myself down before Thy face, in the ultimate depths of abjection, to which, O great God, I have deserved to be reduced by my sins, I pronounce against myself, in the presence of heaven and earth, that final sentence. Since I, who am nothing but a worm of the earth, a handful of ashes and mere nothingness, have in so many ways offended so exalted and great a majesty, there are no tortures, either on earth, in purgatory or in hell, capable of worthily expiating my sin, without the intervention of Thy mercy and the power of Thy Precious Blood. For all these torments are finite, while the offense of my sins is infinite, since they offend an infinite majesty, and consequently

deserve an infinite punishment.

So, my sovereign Judge, falling down once more at Thy feet, and in the nethermost depths of the bottomless pit of my sins, I adore and bless and love Thee with my whole heart, as pronouncing the sentence that Thou shalt pronounce at the hour of my death, and I voluntarily, with all the love possible to me, submit to this sentence, whatever it may be, telling Thee with the Royal Prophet, with all the power of my will: "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right" (Ps. 118, 137). And I most obediently accept anything it may please Thee to ordain in my regard, in time and eternity, giving myself to Thee to bear not only all the sufferings of Purgatory, in homage to Thy divine justice, but any other penalty Thou mayest impose upon me. I take no thought of what is to become of me nor of what is to be done to me in time and eternity, provided only that the wrong and dishonor I have done Thee may be made good, no matter what the cost.

And yet, O God of mercy, do not permit that I should be numbered among those who will never love Thee. O most merciful Lord, what am I that Thou deignest to open Thy blessed eyes to look upon me, to summon me into Thy presence in judgment and to exercise Thy justice upon me? It is all too true that I deserve Thy mercy far less than Thy justice. But, O Thou Saviour of my soul, remember that Thou didst will to be judged for me, and that Thou art most worthy that my sins should be forgiven in Thee, since Thou didst ask the All merciful Father to pardon them for me. And yet, Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy miserable and unworthy servant, but offer

332- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

for me to Thy Father the judgment Thou didst sustain for my sins, and pray that His divine forgiveness be granted, not to me but to Thee.

O Father of Mercy, I confess that I have deserved to bear the stern weight of Thy judgments, and that I am not worthy that Thou shouldst give me the least grace, nor that Thou shouldst pardon the very smallest of my sins. I offer Thee the terrible judgment Thy Son sustained for my faults, and I implore Thee to pardon them, not to me, but to Thy Beloved Son, who begs Thy forgiveness on my behalf, and to give Him, also, all the graces I need for Thy service. All possible punishments in the world, visited upon me, are incapable of giving Thee fitting satisfaction for the very least of my crimes. Thy Son alone can make perfect reparation for the dishonor I have given Thee. And so I offer to Thee, and I implore Him to offer with me, all that He did and suffered in His whole life, and all the honor He ever rendered to Thee, whether by Himself or through His Blessed Mother, His angels and all His saints.

O Mother of Mercy, Mother of Jesus, O angels and saints of Jesus, offer to God all your merits and works on my behalf and all the glory you ever gave Him, in satisfaction for my offenses and implore Him to treat me not according to the rigor of His justice, but the multitude of His mercies, in order that I may love and bless Him with you forever.

## **Ninth Day**

### **XXVIII. DEATH AND BURIAL.**

Since Jesus Christ, our Lord, willed to pass through all the phases of human life, in order to honor His Eternal Father and to bless and sanctify them for you, you should also have a holy zeal for honoring Him particularly in each of the phases of His life, and to consecrate all the states, in which you have been and are to be, to the honor of each aspect of His mortal life. Following this teaching, after you have adored Him in the last moment of His life, dedicating to Him your own last moment, it is now very appropriate to adore Him in the state



of death, in which He remained for three days, and to consecrate to Him the condition of death in which you are to be from the last moment of your life until the day of the general resurrection, as follows:

1. O Jesus, Thou art eternal life and the source of all life, yet I behold Thee cold in the darkness and shadow of death. I see Thee bid farewell, for a little while, to Thy most lovable Mother, to Thy dearly beloved apostles and disciples, and to all Thy friends left bathed in tears, in the greatest mourning and lamentation of all time. I contemplate Thy holy soul separated from Thy divine Body, with which it had so holy, so close and so sublime a union. I see this same Body, more holy and sacred than all the heavenly bodies (I mean than all those in all the heavens, and more than the empyrean heaven itself), lying in a sepulchre, among the rocks in the dust. O my Jesus, I adore, praise and glorify Thee thus. I offer Thee all the honor rendered to Thee in this state by Thy holy Mother, by St. Mary Magdalen, by the holy apostles and disciples, by the angels, by the holy souls Thou didst free from Limbo and by the whole Church, with all the glory Thy Father gave Thee, and which Thou now enjoyest in heaven, in recompense for that humiliation Thou didst bear on earth. I offer Thee the state of death which will one day be mine, in honor of that state of death in which Thou didst remain before the Resurrection. I offer Thee the separation from the company of my friends and relatives that I shall one day have to bear, in honor of the most bitter separation which Thou didst suffer, torn from the most sweet company of Thy dearest Mother, of Thy dearly beloved apostles and disciples. I offer Thee all the sorrow and the tears of my relatives and friends in honor of the sorrow and tears of Thy harrowed Mother and sorrowing apostles. I offer Thee the separation of my soul from Thy sacred body. I offer Thee all the states of my soul, until its reunion with its body, whatever they may be, in homage to the state in which Thy holy soul existed during the time it was separated from Thy body. I offer Thee the burial of my body and all the actions that shall be done in performing this burial, in honor of the burial of Thy holy body. In honor of and in union with the same love with which Thou, O good Jesus, didst will that Thy sacred body should lie upon the dust within

### 334 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

a hollow rock, and by which Thou hast so often given me this same body in Holy Communion, although I am nothing but a worm of the earth, I most willingly surrender my body to the ground and to the worms. I consent to be reduced to ashes and dust, but only on condition, O crucified Saviour, that all the grains of dust into which my flesh and bones shall crumble, may be so many voices praising and glorifying without interruption the adorable mystery of Thy burial, and that I may thus sing with the holy psalmist: *Omnia ossa mea dicent, Domine quis similis tibi?* "All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to thee?" (Ps. 34, 10).

2. O Divine Jesus, even though Thy body and soul were separated, nevertheless they are continually united to Thy divinity. Thus, they never ceased to be worthy of infinite honor and adoration. Therefore, I adore Thy holy soul in its descent into Limbo. I adore all that happened in Thy soul and all the efforts produced in the souls of the Holy Patriarchs in Limbo. I also adore Thy body in the tomb, in all its members, for there is no part of it that is not infinitely adorable. I adore you, O most holy eyes of my Saviour's body. I adore you, O, sacred ears of my God. I adore and praise you, O most blessed mouth and tongue of Him who is the Word and eternal utterance of the Father. I adore and bless you, O most divine hands and feet of my Lord. I adore and love you, O most amiable Heart of Jesus.

Alas, my Beloved, Thy perfect body is lifeless because of my sins! Those sacred eyes, that by their sweet aspect gave joy to all who came in contact with Thee, are now darkened by the shadow of death. Those holy ears, always open to hear the cries and prayers of all unhappy creatures, are now closed and hear no more. Those divine lips, which pronounced the words of life, have become mute and speak no words. Those blessed hands that wrought so many miracles are lifeless and still. Those holy feet, so often wearied for the salvation of the world, are no longer able to walk. But above all, the most loving Heart of my Jesus, the

most exalted and noble throne of divine love, is without life or feeling. Ah, my Dear Jesus, who has brought Thee to this pitiable state? My sins and Thy love! Cursed and detestable sin, how I abhor you! O love of my Saviour, may I love you, may I bless you without ceasing!

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

335 -

3. O Good Jesus, I surrender myself completely to the power of Thy holy love. I implore Thee by that love, to reduce me now into a state of death that may imitate and honor Thy state of death. Utterly extinguish in me the life of sin and of the old Adam. Cause me to die to the world, to myself and to all that is not Thee. Mortify my eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, heart and all the other powers of my body and soul, so that I may no longer be able to see, nor hear, speak, taste, act, walk, love, think, will, nor make any other use of all the parts of my body or the faculties of my soul, save in accordance with Thy good pleasure, led by the guidance of Thy divine spirit.

4. O my Well-beloved Jesus, I give myself to Thee to derive the benefits of these words of Thy apostle: "You are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God" (COL. 3, 3). Hide me utterly with Thee in God. Bury my mind, my heart, my will and my being, so that I may no longer have any thoughts, desires, or affections, any sentiments and dispositions other than Thine own. And just as the earth changes and transforms into itself the bodies buried within it, do Thou change and transform me completely into Thyself. Bury my pride in Thy humility, my coldness and tepidity in the fervor of Thy divine love, and all my other vices and imperfections into Thy holy virtues and perfections so that, just as the earth consumes all the corruption of the body buried in it, so all the corruption of my soul may be consumed and annihilated in Thy divine perfections.

5. O Mother of Jesus, I honor and revere thee in the state of thy death and burial. I offer thee all the honor then given thee by the angels and holy apostles. I thank thee for all the glory thou didst give to the death and burial of Thy Son by Thine Own. I offer thee my own death and burial, imploring thee to obtain for me, by thy holy prayers, the grace that every aspect of my earthly end may pay everlasting homage to the death and burial of thy spotless self and of thy beloved Son, our Saviour.

336 -

#### THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

### Tenth Day

#### XXIX. ENTRANCE OF THE SOUL INTO HEAVEN AND UNDYING LIFE.

Even though we are most unworthy to see the face of God and to be admitted into the blessed company of the citizens of heaven, it is, nevertheless, most certain that the Father, the Son, the Spirit, the Blessed Virgin, all the angels and all the saints eagerly desire to behold you soon joined with them, to be overwhelmed as they are in the torrents of the heavenly and unspeakable delights of divine love which reigns with fulness in heaven. And we ought to have great trust that, in the goodness of God, this will one day be realized for us. Our greatest consolation in this world ought to be the thought and expectation of that day when we shall begin to love and glorify God in all perfection. What rejoicings we should voice with the Royal Prophet, at the vision and thought of that blessed day: *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi, in domum Domini ibimus: I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord*" (PS. 121, 1). "Blessed are they who dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee forever and ever." (PS. 83, 5).

Surely if you celebrate the day of your birth into the life of grace by holy Baptism, how much more should you celebrate the feast of your entrance into heaven and your birth into the life of glory! Anticipate that day, and begin now to celebrate that feast by means of the following exercises:

1. O Jesus, I adore, praise and glorify Thee countless times at the moment of Thy triumphant entrance into heaven. I offer Thee all the glory, love and praises that were given to Thee in welcome by the Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother and all the angels. I also honor Thy Blessed Mother in the moment of her assumption into Paradise. I offer her all the glory and praises that were given her by the Omnipotent Father, by her Beloved Son, Thyself, Thy Holy Spirit, all the angels and all the saints. I offer to Thee and to Thy glorious Mother, my own entrance into Paradise, which, I hope, by Thy great mercy, to make one day, in honor of the glorious and triumphant entry of Thy ascension and her assumption. O my Most Adorable

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

337 -

Jesus, I desire to consecrate everything that ever was, is and shall be in me, in time and in eternity, to the honor and homage of Thee and Thy most holy Mother.

2. O Most Admirable and Most Adorable Trinity, I adore, bless and magnify Thee infinitely for all that Thou art in Thy manifold works of mercy and justice toward me and to all Thy creatures, in heaven, on earth and in hell. I offer Thee all the adoration, love, glory, praise and benediction accorded Thee forever. O my God, how I rejoice to behold Thee so full of greatness, of marvels, of glory and joy! It is enough. I desire no other glory, felicity or happiness, in eternity save to behold the incomprehensible glory, felicity and happiness of Him whom I love more than myself. O my glory and my love, may all heaven and earth be transformed into glory and love for Thee! Finally, I sacrifice myself all to Thee to be sacredly annihilated and consumed forever in the most pure fire of Thy divine love.

3. O Jesus, Thou only object of my love, with what love, with what praises can I ever repay Thee for all that Thou art in Thyself, and for all the innumerable effects of Thy goodness towards all Thy creatures, myself in particular? Lord, may all Thy creatures, all Thy angels and saints, Thy Blessed Mother, and all the powers of Thy divinity and humanity be employed in blessing and loving Thee forever.

4. O Mother of God, O holy angels, O blessed saints, I hail, honor and thank you all in general, and each one in particular, especially those to whom I owe some special obligation and with whom I am to be most closely associated in eternity. In thanksgiving for all the favors I have received from you, and much more for all the glory and services you have rendered to my God, I offer to each one of you the most amiable Heart of my Jesus, source of all joy, all glory and all praise. I give you my mind and my heart; unite them with your minds and hearts and associate me in your constant chorus of praise to Him who created me, that I may praise and love Him eternally with you. Pray ardently that I may bless and love Him through you, while awaiting the day when it may please Him to unite me with you to love and glorify Him to perfection.

5. O blessed day, when I shall begin to love most purely and perfectly my Lord and Saviour who is infinitely amiable! O thousand

#### 338- THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

times happy day in which I shall begin to be all love for him who is all love for me! O Jesus, my sweet love, how consoled I am when I think that I shall love and bless Thee eternally! My eyes dissolve in tears and my heart melts with joy at the sweetness of the thought that some day I shall be completely transformed into praise and love for Thee. But, alas, when will it come, this day, so longed for and a thousand times desired? Will it yet delay for long? Heu mihi quia incolatus meus prolongatus est! "Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged" (Ps. 119, 5). Usquequo, Domine, oblivisceris me in finem, usquequo avertis faciem tuam a me? "How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me unto the end? How long dost thou turn away thy face from me" (Ps. 12, 1)? Quae admodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus (Ps. 41, 2).

No more the hunted stag desires,  
Fleeing in woe and weariness,  
Waters to quench his burning thirst,  
Than my poor heart with sadness pressed  
Sighs after Thee, O Lord, my rest.

My heart is driven nigh to death  
By cruel desires, merciless,  
And longs for Thee, Lord, Mighty God,  
And in its longing, cries apace:  
When shall my eyes behold Thy face?

When, ah, when will come that day  
To take my earthly woes away  
And bring me home at last to Thee?

While waiting for that day, I desire, O my Saviour, to realize in myself St. Paul's words: "Our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3, 20), as well as Thy words of reassurance and guidance: "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17, 21). I desire to live on earth as though I were not here, but living by my heart and spirit in heaven. I desire to concentrate all my powers on the establishment of the kingdom of

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

339 -

Thy glory and holy love within myself. But Thou knowest, Lord, that of myself I can do nothing; therefore, I give myself to Thee, that Thou mayest destroy every obstacle and perfectly establish the kingdom of Thy pure love in my body, in my soul, and in all my thoughts, words and actions.

#### **XXX. CONCLUSION OF THE EXERCISE.**

At the end of these exercises on the subject of death, you should thank Our Lord for the graces He has given you through them, and beg Him to forgive the faults you have committed in their performance. Ask Him to compensate for your deficiencies, and to accomplish in you the fulfilment of His words: "Blessed is that servant, whom when his lord shall come he shall find so doing. Amen I say to you: he shall place him over all his goods" (Matt. 24, 46-47). Pray that He may ever watch within you and for you, lest you be taken by surprise. Beg Him to keep these exercises and preparations in store for you against the hour of your death and to be Himself your disposition and preparation.

Follow the same procedure proportionately, invoking the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints, especially the saints on whose feast day the Lord knows you are going to die.

#### **XXX1. SOME OTHER POINTS OF ADVICE AND NECESSARY DISPOSITIONS FOR A HOLY DEATH.**

I shall here add a few other suggestions and practices which may prove useful to you, when you sense that your life is approaching its end.

The chief thing for you to do, when you feel that you are nearing the end of your life, is to devote yourself as much as possible to acts of love of Jesus, ever uniting humility with love. There is no more powerful and effective means of quickly wiping out our sins, advancing with great strides along the road to God, and giving Him pleasure than the divine exercise of active love.

If you are worried by the fear of death or by qualms of mistrust by reason of your past sins, ask

some' kind person to read to you the passages about confidence contained in 'Part One" of this book.

#### 340 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

If you are not too sick to listen to reading aloud, ask some kind friend to read to you, from time to time, the foregoing meditations on death, and the exercises of praise and glorification of Jesus which are to be found in 'Tart Five" of this book.

Let him also read passages from the Lives of the Saints or some other book of devotion, but particularly the Passion of Jesus Christ, the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John and the prayers for the agonizing soul, as on the seventh day of the "Exercise of Preparations for Death."

Do not forget, when you are at the end of your life, to remind one of your friends to gain a plenary indulgence for you, not in your own interest but for the pure glory of God, according to the method suggested in 'Tart Six," where indulgences are discussed.

Frequently clasp the Crucifix in your hands, so that you may from time to time make acts of love while kissing the Cross and the Five Wounds, as I explain in "Part Five!"

Let the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary be ever in your heart and frequently on your lips. Renew the desire to pronounce them with the intentions recommended for the Rosary of Jesus and Mary in 'Part Three.'

Pray with St. Francis: "Lord, release my soul from the prison of this body that I may praise Thy Holy Name with all the just who await me in heaven."

Constantly invoke the Blessed Virgin, using the words of Holy Church: Maria Mater gratiae, Mater misericordiae, tu nos ab hoste protege et hora mortis . S suscipe: "O Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy protect us from the enemy and receive us at the hour of death."

O Mother of Jesus, be a mother to my soul. Monstra te esse Matrem. "Show thyself my Mother." Monstra to esse Matrem Jesu. "Show that thou art the Mother of Jesus," by destroying in me, by thy prayers and merits, all that is contrary to the glory of thy Son Jesus, and causing Him to be loved and glorified perfectly in me.

Repeat with St. Stephen: Domine Jesu suscipe ~spirituum meum: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7, 58).

As you say all these words, ever unite yourself with the devotion,

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

341 -

the love and die other holy dispositions with which they were first pronounced.

Accept your suffering in union with Jesus, in agony in the garden of Olives: Pater, non mea voluntas sed tua fiat: 'Father, not my will but thine be done" (Luke 22, 42). And again with Jesus agonizing on the Cross, say: Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23, 46).

Constantly lift up your heart to Jesus, saying to Him with the beloved disciple St. John: Veni Domine Jesu: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Apoc. 22, 20).

Repeat with St. Peter: Domine, tu scis quia amo te. "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21, 16).

Say with the good thief: Memento mei, Domine, dum veneris in regnum tuum: "Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom" (Luke 23, 42). And as you pronounce these words, unite yourself with the, heartfelt contrition of the good thief, contrition so deep and moving that he merited the infinite grace to hear from the lips of the Son of God: "Amen I say to thee: this day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke 23, 43).

Humbly repeat with the poor publican in the Gospel: Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori. "O God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18, 13).

Let your heart chant with King David: Miserere mei Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy" (Ps. 50, 3). Suscipe me secundum eloquium tuum et vivam, et non confundas me ab expectatione mea: "Uphold me according to thy word, and I shall live: and let me not be confounded in my expectation" (Ps. 118, 116). In te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum: In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded" (Ps. 30, i).

You may also make use of these little aspirations: "O Jesus, love Thy Father and Thy Holy Spirit for me." "O Father of Jesus, O Holy Spirit of Jesus, O Mother of Jesus, O angels of Jesus, O saints of Jesus, love Jesus for me."

Volo Domine Jesu te regnare super me: "Lord Jesus, I will to have Thee reign over me."

#### 342 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

Dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum: "Lord Jesus, reign over me in the midst of all Thy enemies."

"O my Dear Jesus, be Jesus to me; O my all, be all to me, for the past, present and future."

Unum necessarium, unum volo, unum amo, unum quaero: "One thing alone is necessary. Farewell to all things else; speak of them no more to me. I desire but one thing, I seek but one thing, I love but one thing, which is all to me, and all else is nothing to me. It is my sweetest Jesus Whom I desire, my Dearest Jesus whom I seek. Him I love and Him I long to love with all the love in heaven and on earth."

Jesus meus et omnia: "My Jesus is all to me. Once more, farewell to all that is not Jesus. My Jesus is sufficient for me. I desire nought but Him in heaven and on earth." Veni Domine Jesu: "Come Lord Jesus, enter into me, there to love Thyself to perfection."

"O Jesus, my all, be Thou my preparation for my death. O Jesus, I give myself to Thee to die with Thee, in Thee and by Thee."

"O Jesus, I give myself to Thee to unite myself, at the moment of death, with all the dispositions of love and sanctity which ennobled the death of Thy divine humanity, Thy holy martyrs and all the other saints."

"O Jesus, O Mary, Mother of Jesus, I implore you to give me your holy blessing."

Finally, try to make your last word be the Holy Name of Jesus and the sweet name of Mary: Jesus, Mary! or else, Live Jesus! or Jesus, be Jesus to me!

Thus, you may converse with Our Lord with profound devotion and consoling ease by means of frequent ejaculations. But if you wish Him to give you the grace to make these loving aspirations at the hour of your death, you must develop the habit of saying these words and pronouncing these ejaculations frequently during your life, especially at night, lying in bed before falling asleep, using now one, now another, according to the inspiration of the spirit of God.

It would also be well to ask those present around to assist you during your last sickness, to read and reread frequently the above prayers. And if by chance you should lose the power of speech, let them diligently continue to make these acts on your behalf, particularly if it

#### EXERCISE OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH

343 -

should happen that you lose the use of your senses or your reason. Once you have made the request and expressed to your friends that it is your will for them to make acts of love in your name and for you, Our Lord will accept these precious acts as if you yourself were making them, since they are made at your request and on your behalf.

Pray also to the Blessed Virgin and your special angels and saints to carry out all these things for you, together with everything else they know God expects of you on the last day of your life. But above all, supplicate Jesus Himself to do this for you, and put great trust in His infinite goodness, that He will be your all, and will do on your behalf everything that is required of you for a holy and happy death. And I pray you to note this last point well.

Even though you should prepare yourself for death with all possible care and devotion, by means of these exercises, none the less, after having done all that has been suggested, you should not rely or rest upon your own acts, exercises and preparations, but rather place all your reliance and trust in the pure goodness and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever imploring Him to be your preparation, your virtue, your sanctification and your all.

For after all is said and done, to Jesus Christ alone does it belong to be all and accomplish all, in all men and all things that He may have the glory Of all, according to the divine words of St. Paul, with which I began this book, and by which I wish to finish it: Omnia in omnibus Christus: "Christ is all and in all" (COL. 3, 11). Oh, Let Him then be all, in time and in eternity!

O Jesus, be all, be all on earth as Thou art in heaven: be all in all men and things. Be all in this little book. Everything it has Of good is all from Thee. It speaks but of Thee and for Thee; it aims only at forming and establishing Thee in the souls of those who use it. Let its readers see in it nothing but Jesus, seek in it nothing but Jesus, and learn from it nothing but to love and glorify Jesus. Be all to him who has written this book and to those who shall read it; for Thou knowest,

O Jesus, my dear all, that it is my will never, in life or in death, to have any other object or desire but to see Thee live and reign in all men and all things. Live then, Jesus, live and reign in us. The wretched Jews cried: Nolumus hunc regnare super nos: "We will not

#### 344 - THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

have this man to reign over us." We, on the contrary, desire to proclaim in the face of heaven and on earth: Volumus, Domine Jesu, te regnare super nos. "We want Thee, Lord Jesus, to reign over us." Reign, therefore, O King of Souls, dwell perfectly and absolutely in thy Kingdom in our hearts that we may forever sing the divine canticle: Omnia in omnibus Jesu: "Jesus is all in all things!" Live Jesus! Live Thou great all! Live great Jesus, Who art all! Live this great all, which is Jesus! Live Jesus! Live Jesus!

**LIVE JESUS AND MARY**

**The Admirable Heart  
Of Mary**

**SAINT JOHN EUDES**

Translated from the French by  
CHARLES DI TARGIANI and RUTH HAUSER

With a Foreword by  
THE MOST REVEREND  
RICHARD J. CUSHING, D.D.

ARCHBISHOP OF BOSTON

NEW YORK

P. J. KENEDY & SONS  
1948

**Imprimi potest**

A. D'AMOURS, C.j.M.  
Praepositus Provincialis  
Laval-des-Rapides, P.Q., die 15e septembris, 1947

**Nihil obstat**

JOHN M. A. Fearn, S.T.D.  
Censor Librorum

**Imprimatur.**

FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN  
Archbishop of New York  
December 5, 1947.

Copyright, 1948, P. J. Kennedy & sons  
NEW YORK, N. Y.



## GENERAL PREFACE

ST. JOHN EUDES has been called "the wonder of his age." Missionary, founder, reformer of the clergy, he crowded into a life of seventy-nine years so many and such varied accomplishments that one marvels how a single man could achieve so much. In addition to the activities of an incessant and many-sided apostolate, he wrote a number of valuable books, which rank him among the most prolific ascetic writers of the seventeenth century.

For many years the devotional works of St. John Eudes were practically unknown.(1) Occasionally a volume was discovered in the library of some seminary or religious house. Many others preserved in manuscript form were lost in the chaos of the French Revolution(2) At the beginning of the present century the sons of St. John Eudes united in a tribute of filial piety to bring out a complete edition of the works of their spiritual father, seeking them in public and private libraries throughout the world(3) About twenty volumes were found and edited in 1905 by the late Fathers Charles Lebrun, C.J.M., and Joseph Dauphin,

(1).Before the French Revolution the works of St. John Eudes were popular in France. In 1792 the houses of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary were confiscated by the Government and its members were massacred or dispersed throughout Europe. With the suppression of the Eudists, their rich literary heritage was widely scattered and partially destroyed. It was not until the re-establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1826 that effort was made to recover the printed and manuscript works of St. John Eudes. The research was carried on until the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the "Preface Générale to the Oeuvres Complètes (Vannes, 1905), Father Charles Lebrun points out that one of the purposes of the edition was "to unearth these works buried too long in oblivion," exhumers ces ouvrages ensevelis depuis trop longtemps dans l'oubli...

(2)The following manuscripts were not found: The Christian Man, All Jesus, The Divine office, The Admirable Sacrifice of the Mass, Meditations, (2 vol.), Sermons of St. John Eudes (3 vols.), Favors obtained by the Diocese of Coutances through the Blessed Virgin, The Divine Childhood of Jesus, The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, The Admirable *Life of* Mary des Vallées, (incomplete copy found at Laval University Library, Quebec) and Correspondence of St. John Eudes.

(3). cf. *oeuvres Complètes*, P. xiv.

V -

## GENERAL PREFACE

C.J.M. The first edition in French, *Oeuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, ran into twelve octavo volumes with introductions, explanatory notes, analytic and alphabetic indexes of great value. These writings constitute a complete summa of ascetic and pastoral theology. The list is as follows:

*Volume 1 The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls.* In this work the Saint develops his spiritual teaching on the Christian life, namely, that the Christian life is simply the life of Jesus extended and continued in each one of us.

*Volume 11.* This volume contains six short treatises on subjects relating to the Christian life:

1. *A Treatise on the Respect Due to Holy Places*, which is an echo of the fiery denunciations he pronounced during his missions against profaners of the temple of God.

2. *Meditations on Humility*, a series of meditations on the profession of humility as used daily in his order of Priests, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

3. *Interior Colloquies of the Soul with God*, meditations on creation, the end of man and the grace of Baptism.

4. *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, a summary of the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Tradition on the Sacrament of Baptism.

5. *The Practice of Piety*, a brief explanation of what is necessary in order to live a Christian life.

6. *Catechism of the Mission*, an outline of the catechetical instructions given during a mission.

*Volume III.* Contains two important works on sacerdotal perfection:

1. *The Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*, an explanation of the dignity and duties of the priesthood.

2. *A Manual of Piety for Use in an Ecclesiastical Community*, in which the author explains how the means of sanctification he recommended to his priests should be practically applied in their daily lives.

*Volume IV.* Comprises significant works on the priestly ministry.

1. *The Apostolic Preacher* is one of the first treatises written on the ministry of the Word of God and is even yet one of the most practical.

## GENERAL PREFACE

V 11 -

2. *The Good Confessor* explains the qualities, and obligations of the minister of the Sacrament of Penance.

3. *Counsels for Mission Confessors* suggests practical means of assisting penitents to make their examination of conscience and excite themselves to contrition.

4. *The Manner of Serving Mass* explains the dignity and holiness of this act and what one must do to perform it devoutly and worthily.

*Volume V. The Admirable Childhood of the Most Holy Mother of God.* This book treats of the holy childhood of Mary and the practical means of honoring the mysteries and virtues of her early life.

*Volumes VI, VII, VIII* contain the entire writings of the Saint on the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The work is entitled: *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God.* It comprises twelve books covering the complete theology of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. Eleven books discuss the theory, history, and practice of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The last book deals with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is this work, together with the Offices of the Sacred Hearts, that merit for him the title of Father, Doctor and Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts.

*Volume IX. The Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*

*Volume X.* Contains *The Rules and Constitutions of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, the *Directory* of the Order, and a collection of two hundred and forty letters.

*Volumes XI and XII* embrace the Saint's *Liturgical Works*, comprising twenty-five Offices and Masses for feasts to which he urged special devotion, the *Memorial of God's Blessings* and several other minor works.

The second French edition appeared in 1935, *Oeuvres Choies de Saint Jean Eudes*, prepared under the direction of Father Lebrun, the leading authority on Eudistic research. It comprises nine volumes: *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, *Meditations of Various Subjects*, *Regulae Vitae Christianae et Sacerdotalis*, *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, *Letters and Minor Works*, *Writings on the Priesthood*, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, and *The Admirable Childhood of the Mother of God*. The format of

these volumes is compact and more convenient than the 1905 edition, which is now out of print.

The publication of the works of St. John Eudes revealed the extent and depth of their spiritual doctrine. Cardinal Pitra, who was associated with the cause of Beatification, discovered in the writings of St. John Eudes a remarkable depth of thought and purity of doctrine. Cardinal Vives has more recently expressed his admiration:

I was acquainted with the Doctors of the Order of Saint Francis; I was acquainted with Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, the mystical writers of my own country, Spain; but I was completely ignorant of the writings of Father Eudes. As a member of the Sacred Congregation of Rites it was my duty to study his life and his works, and I am in admiration. Blessed John Eudes must be ranked with the great lights of the Church. His spiritual doctrine is profound and of wonderful exactitude. He is one of the writers who has best propounded the doctrine of the Gospel.(4).

The late Father Ange Le Doré, for fifty years Superior General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, wrote:

The works of Blessed John Eudes, although they do not bear the scientific touch of the professional theologian, are nevertheless proof of his remarkable theological, ascetic and scriptural knowledge.... He is not a Doctor after the fashion of the scholastics of the thirteenth century or of the great theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As they, he might have built up theses and composed books didactic in form; but he was before all a savior of souls. For him the science of theology found its chief field of usefulness in the practice of virtue and in the acquisition of sanctity of which it is the principle.... He was a Doctor after the manner of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus de Liguori. The science which shines in his works not only emits light; it engenders piety and sanctity.(5)

The spiritual doctrine expounded by St John Eudes follows the teaching of Cardinal *Pierre de Bérulle* and Father Charles de Condren, two prominent members of the seventeenth-century French School of Spirituality. St. John Eudes applies this doctrine to the devotion to the

(4). Quoted by P. A. Bray, C.J.M., *Saint John Eudes* (Halifax, 1925), P. 116.

(5). Quoted by Bray, op. cit., p. 117.

## GENERAL PREFACE

1 X -

Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, developing and rendering it more precise and practical. He has the rare gift of expressing the most sublime truths in simple, familiar language. He also excels in condensing into a few pages a complete scheme of Christian life and perfection.

The wish was repeatedly expressed that these inspirational writings could be made available to English-speaking readers. Excellent abridged editions of certain books were published in England and in Canada, but they did not do justice to the literary value of the Saint. Consequently, the Eudist Fathers commemorating their tercentenary in 1943 resolved to publish a complete translation of the principal works of their founder. Competent translators were secured and much time and effort were expended to produce readable volumes in modern English, faithful to the spirit and style of the original.

The first English edition, *Selected Works of Saint John Eudes*, is the result. In presenting it to the public the Eudist Fathers and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, and of the Good

Shepherd, wish to thank all those who contributed to the success of this comprehensive undertaking. They are especially grateful to the distinguished churchmen who have so graciously accepted to introduce these volumes to Catholic readers, because they consider that the works of St. John Eudes should be more widely known. The Saint in his apostolic work and in his writings ranks with the eminent figures who belong not to one country and to one religious order but to the universal Church. Three centuries have passed since he wrote the works now being printed in the new world, a striking illustration that he wrote for all time. He still speaks in accents that penetrate the mind and heart of the reader to enlighten, purify and sanctify so that Jesus Christ may live and reign in the Christian soul.

WILFRID E. MYATT, C.J.M.

PATRICK J. SKINNER, C.J.M.

*Editors*

Holy Heart Seminary

Halifax, N. S.

Feast of St. John Eudes, 1945.

## CONTENTS

### PAGE

General Preface . . . . . V

Foreword . . . . . xvii

Epistle Dedicatory . . . . . X1X

### *PART ONE*

#### OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION TO THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

##### CHAPTER

- I. Reasons for the Name "Admirable" . . . . . 3
- II. The Heart of Mary in General . . . . . 8
- III. The Corporeal Heart of Mary . . . . . 13
- IV. The Spiritual Heart of Mary . . . . . 19
- V. The Divine Heart of Mary . . . . . 24

### *PART TWO*

#### FIRST FOUNDATION OF THE DEVOTION: THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

##### SIX SYMBOLIC PICTURES

- I. God the Father, Delineator of the Admirable Heart of Mary - 31
  - 11. Mary's Heart, the Heavens . . . . . 34
  - III. Mary's Heart, the Sun . . . . . 38
  - IV. Mary's Heart, the Center of the Earth . . . . . 42
  - V. Mary's Heart, the Inexhaustible Fountain . . . . . 47
  - VI. Mary's Heart, the Sea . . . . . 55
  - VII. Mary's Heart, the Garden of Eden . . . . . 60

### *PART THREE*

##### SIX ADDITIONAL SYMBOLIC PICTURES

- I. Mary's Heart, the Burning Bush of Moses . . . . . 71
- IT. Mary's Heart, the Harp of King David . . . . . 75

X11-

CONTENTS

##### CHAPTER PAGE

- III. Mary's Heart, the Throne of King Solomon . . . . . 79
- IV. Mary's Heart, the Temple of Jerusalem . . . . . 84
- V. Mary's Heart, the Fiery Furnace of Babylon . . . . . 92
- VI. Mary's Heart, the Hill of Calvary . . . . . 99

## *PART FOUR*

### SECOND FOUNDATION OF THE DEVOTION: THE HEART OF GOD THE SON DIVINE PERFECTIONS MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

- I. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Teacher of the Devotion to the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 105
- II. Some Essential Divine Perfections Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 112
- III. Purity and Sanctity of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 117
- IV. Strength and Power of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 119
- V. Wisdom and Truth of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 122
- VI. Goodness and Providence of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 125

## *PART FIVE*

### FURTHER DIVINE PERFECTIONS MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

- 1. Mercy of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary - 133
- 11. Meekness, Patience and Clemency of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . .138
- 111. Justice of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 144
- IV. Zeal of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 147
- V. Divine Sovereignty Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 151
- VI. Peace of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 156

## CONTENTS

X111-

- V11. Glory and Felicity of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . . 159
- VIII. The Admirable Heart of Mary: Compendium of the Life of God . . . . . 162

## *PART SIX*

### THIRD FOUNDATION OF THE DEVOTION: THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

#### INSPIRED SCRIPTURAL TEXTS REFERRING TO THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

- I. "All the glory of the king's daughter is within" . . . . . 167
- 11. "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me . . . . . 171
- III. "I sleep, and my heart watcheth . . . . . 174
- IV. "My beloved to me and I to him . . . . . 177
- V. "Put me as a seal upon thy heart . . . . . 182
- VI. "Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart" - 185

## *PART SEVEN*

### INSPIRED CATHOLIC TRADITION CONCERNING ME ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

- 1. Testimony of the Fathers and Ascetical Writers . . . . 193
- 11. Ecclesiastical Approbations . . . . . 202
- III. Example of Saints and Religious Orders . . . . . 206

## *PART EIGHT*

### FOURTH FOUNDATION OF THE DEVOTION: SANCTITY OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY, EXPOSITION OF ITS EXCELLENCE

- 1. Heart of Mary, Immaculate and Sinless . . . . . 213
- 11. Heart of Mary, Ocean of Grace . . . . . 217
- 111. Heart of Mary, Miracle of Love . . . . . 222
- IV. Heart of Mary, Mirror of Charity . . . . . 226
- V. Heart of Mary, Abyss of Humility . . . . . 231
- VI. Heart of Mary, Empire of the Divine Will . . . . . 236

X1V-

CONTENTS

#### CHAPTER PAGE

- V11 Heart of Mary, Treasure-House of Gratuitous Graces 240
- V111. Heart of Mary, Inestimable Treasure of Riches . . . . 245
- IX. Heart of Mary, Sanctuary, Censer and Altar of Divine Love . 249 X. Heart of Mary, Center of the  
Cross and Crown of Martyrs, Doctors and Virgins . . . . . 254
- XI. Heart of Mary, World of Wonders . . . . . 256

## *PART NINE*

### PRACTICE OF THE DEVOTION TO THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

- 1 Twelve Reasons for Honoring the Heart of Mary . . . 263
- 11. Twelve Methods of Practising this Devotion . . . . . 266

## *PART TEN*

### THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY EXPOSITION OF THE "MAGNIFICAT," TREATING OF ITS SIGNIFICANCE VERSE BY VERSE

- 1. Excellence of this Sublime Canticle . . . . . 275
- 11. The True Canticle of Mary's Heart . . . . . 277
- 111. "My Soul doth magnify the Lord ... . . . . 279
- IV. "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" . . . . 283
- V. "He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid" 288
- VI. "Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" 291

V11 "He that is mighty hath done great things unto me: and holy is His name ... ..	295
V111. "His mercy is from generation unto generation, to them that fear him ... ..	301
IX. "He hath showed might in his arm .. . . . .	306
X. "He hath Scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart" .	309
X1. "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble" . . . .	313
XII. "He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away ..	316

## CONTENTS

XV-

XIII. He hath received Israel His servant -321-
XIV. "As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to . his . sced for - 326 ever .

## APPENDIX I

### MASS AND OFFICE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Mass of the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . * *	333
Office of the Admirable Heart of Mary	338

### APPENDIX 11

### PRAYERS IN HONOR OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Litany in Honor of the Most Holy Heart of Mary . . .	355
Salutation to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary . . .	358
Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary . . . . .	359
Rosary of the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . . .	361
Consecration to the Admirable Heart of Mary . . . .	362



## FOREWORD

*THE* series of selected works of Saint John Eudes now being edited for the convenience and the edification of the devout this present work adds a great spiritual classic, the central treatise, in a way, of all the books written by Saint John. Pope Leo XIII, in proclaiming the heroic virtues of the saintly author, declared him to be the "author of the liturgical worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Holy Heart of Mary" and in so doing the Vicar of Christ implicitly paid tribute to *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, now offered in English translation by the editors of these selected works.

This was the first book written on the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. As such, it is a basic work in modern spirituality, one of the great devotional treatises which have shaped the history of Catholic prayer life. The characteristic gifts of the devout writer—his elevation of thought and directness of expression—are admirably exemplified in the beloved pages of his Marian masterpiece. The translators are to be warmly thanked for the fidelity and felicity of their English version; it keeps remarkably the spirit and the simplicity of Saint John's original work.

The Eudist Fathers are pardonably anxious to bring before an ever larger public the spiritual works of their inspired Founder. In so doing, they are acting in obedience to the filial instincts of worthy sons of a father so deserving of their zeal. But they are also doing the Church and all souls a great service. They are serving the Church because they are spreading a devotion at once true to the traditions of Catholic piety and consistent with the spiritual needs of our day. They are inspiring souls because they are making available to those who sincerely seek to love God and honor His Mother a rich treasury of the most sublime, yet most simple literature on the cult of Christ and of Mary. May God bless their efforts!

We live in times full of danger for the Church. Her enemies have rarely in history been so numerous or so organized. Her property is the Object of avaricious designs; her prelates are increasingly under attack; her organization, resented by those who hate her, daily encounters fresh

opposition and malicious interference. God's purposes are always hidden and sometimes hard for His children to discern. We can only await His Holy Will in patience and in prayer, confident that in the final day He will vindicate His saints and establish His Kingdom beyond the reach of destructive hands.

But one thing is certain: there can be no times so difficult that they will not produce saints. Indeed, times of crisis are invariably times of great Sanctity. Wherefore we rejoice that, among the many books being published on current events, sociology, politics and history as these affect the Church, there is an increase in books on the Science of the saints, the art of loving God and the means of growing in His favor. In the rich harvest of such books now made ours by modern publishing techniques, none are more fervently welcome than the works of Saint John Eudes, the "prodigy of his age," and among his books none will more enrich the spiritual lives of its readers than this incomparable devotional classic *The Admirable Heart of Mary*.

RICHARD J. CUSHING, D.D. Archbishop of Boston.

Feast of Saint John Eudes, 1947

X1X-

## EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To Her Royal Highness

MADAME DE GUISE(1)

Madame,

All the stones in the Church of the most holy Heart of Jesus and of Mary, erected at the Caen seminary, are like so many voices crying out that this book, which also bears the title of *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, should be dedicated to Your Royal Highness as a sign of the gratitude of our little Congregation. (2) We consider and honor you, Madame, as the foundress of our first and principal church, whose every stone is yet mother tongue proclaiming that, among the great number of princes and princesses who have built churches in honor of the King and the Queen of the angels, Your Royal Highness alone can claim this privilege: that there are no others to whom God has granted the favor of making them His instruments to erect churches in honor of the adorable Heart

(1). Elizabeth of Orléans, the Duchess of Alençon and Guise (1652-1696) was the daughter of Gaston d'Orléans and the widow of Louis Joseph de Lorraine, the Duke of Guise, Joyeuse and Angoulême. Lacking resources, St. John Eudes had been forced to stop work on the chapel of the Caen seminary, the cornerstone of which had been laid with great solemnity on May 20, 1664. The aldermen, seeing how slowly the construction was progressing, threatened to reclaim the ground that they had granted to the Saint on the Place Royale. In 1673 the Duchess of Guise, on the recommendation of Madame de Lorraine, the Abbess of Montmartre and her sister-in-law, gave St. John Eudes the sum of 12,000 livres to complete the chapel on the condition that Mass and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in honor of the Holy Heart of Mary be celebrated perpetually in it every Saturday for her and her family. Confiscated during the French Revolution, the chapel and Seminary in Caen became the City Hall. The chapel was divided horizontally in the middle, and until recently the upper part served as a municipal library, while the lower portion had been transformed into a hall for social functions. The building was completely destroyed during the Allied Invasion in 1944.

(2). The Congregation of Jesus and Mary was founded by St John Eudes in 1643.

XX-

## EPISTLE DEDICATORY

of His Son Jesus and the admirable Heart of His dearest daughter Mary. Your Royal Highness is the first one to be chosen by His Divine Majesty for such a noble and august work. All the citizens of heaven will look upon and respect you forevermore as the foundress of the first church in the world which ever bore the name of the Church of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, (3) and which was so named by the Sovereign Pontiff Clement X, or rather by the Holy Spirit, since this Divine Spirit is the soul of the Church as well as its head, governing it in all matters of Christian faith and piety.

Your royal birth, Madame, endowed you with certain grandeurs which earn the homage and respect of all Europe, while the excellent virtues which shine forth in the holiness of your life make you venerable in heaven and on earth. But the title of foundress of the first church to be dedicated to these two incomparable Hearts will eternally crown you with a completely unique honor and glory unrivalled in heaven.

Your Royal Highness is also the first to have established in this church the celebration each Saturday of the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, along with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, in honor

of the admirable Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is therein that the angels, who assist by the thousands at this sacrifice and benediction, and who have a special love for all persons who honor their Sovereign Princess, look upon you and honor you as the beloved of her Heart, and as the one who has had a sanctuary built on earth to be the dwelling of the King and Queen of heaven. That is why they are preparing for you a palace incomparably more beautiful, rich and magnificent than all the palaces of the greatest monarchs in the world. Did I say a palace? It is much more than that, Madame. They are preparing a glorious and eternal abode for you in their hearts.

In addition, all the Masses said in this church and all the works performed there until the consummation of the world will be like precious stones of incalculable worth which will make your crown wonderfully rich and brilliant. I very humbly and urgently beseech my most adorable Saviour and His most amiable Mother to take full, absolute and eternal possession of Your Highness's truly royal heart and to make their holy love reign supreme in it, that you may live in all perfection according to the Heart of God.

(3). St. John Eudes had previously dedicated the chapel of the Coutances seminary to the Holy Heart of Mary, "who has but one Heart with her Beloved Son." In this chapel, begun on July 3, 1652, Mass was first celebrated on September 4, 1655. Cf. Costil: *Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, 1, P. 235; Eudes: *Memoriale Beneficiorum Dei*, No. 57.

#### **EPISTLE DEDICATORY**

XX1-

That is the most ardent prayer which will be offered to them all the days of his life by him who is, with the deepest respect, Madame,

Your Royal Highness's most humble, obedient and grateful servant,

JOHN EUDES.

## PART ONE

### Object of the Devotion to The Admirable Heart of Mary

#### *Part One*

#### *OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION TO THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY*

### CHAPTER I

#### REASONS FOR THE NAME "ADMIRABLE"

JESUS CHRIST, the Only-Begotten Son of God, chose the incomparable Virgin Mary from among all creatures to be His Mother and deigned to be nourished and governed by her, In His infinite goodness He also gave her to us to be our Queen, our Mother and our sure Refuge in all our needs. He therefore wishes us to honor her as He honors her and to love her as He loves her.

According to the Apostle St. Paul, Christ is the Head of His Mystical Body, the Church, and we are the members. (1) We must therefore be animated by His Spirit; we must follow His inspirations, walk the path He has traced, and continue, as it were, His life on earth by practising the virtues which were His own. It follows that our devotion to His Holy Mother must be a continuation of His devotion to her. We must be filled with the Sentiments of respect, submission and affection which He entertained for her on earth and still entertains in heaven. Mary always held and will hold forever the first place in the Sacred Heart of her Divine Son; she always was and will never cease to be the first object of His love after the Eternal Father; and so He wishes that, next to God, she should be the principal object of our devotion. For this reason, after the veneration we owe to the Divine Majesty of God, we cannot render a greater service to Jesus Christ or do anything more pleasing to Him than to serve and honor His most worthy Mother.

The human will is not, however, moved to love a fellow creature unless

(1). 1 Cor. 12, 27; Eph. 5, 30

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

the intellect first knows what renders it worthy of respect and esteem. The infinite zeal with which the Son of God is inflamed for all that concerns His dear Mother, has urged Him to reveal to us through the inspired words of Sacred Scripture and through the writings of the Fathers some small measure of the perfections with which He has enriched her. The reality far surpassing our knowledge of her in this vale of darkness will be revealed only in heaven, the land of unclouded light.

Among the divinely inspired passages of Sacred Scripture I select one from the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, which is a compendium of all the great things that can be said or thought of our marvellous Queen. "A great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." (2) What is this great sign? Who is this miraculous woman? St. Epiphanius, (3) St. Augustine, (4) St. Bernard (5) and many other holy doctors agree that the woman is Mary, the Queen among women, the Sovereign of angels and men, the Virgin of virgins. She is the woman who bore in her chaste womb the perfect man, the God-Man. "A

woman shall compass a man." (6)

Mary appears in heaven because she comes from heaven, because she is heaven's masterpiece, the Empress of Heaven, its joy and its glory, in whom everything is heavenly. Even when her body dwelt on earth, her thoughts and affections were all rapt in heaven.

She is clothed with the eternal Sun of the Godhead and with all the perfections of the Divine Essence, which surround, fill and penetrate her to such an extent that she has become transformed, as it were, into the power, goodness and holiness of God.

She has the moon under her feet to show that the entire world is beneath her. None is above her, save only God, and she holds absolute sway over all created things.

She is crowned with twelve stars that represent the virtues which shine so brightly in her soul. The mysteries of her life are as many stars more luminous by far than the brightest lights of the sky. The privileges and prerogatives God has granted to her, the least of which is greater than anything shining in the firmament of heaven, as well as the glory of the saints of Paradise and of earth, are her crown and (7) her glory in a much fuller sense than the Philippians could be said to be the crown and joy of St. Paul.'

(2). Apoc. 12, 1.

(3). Hares., 78.

(4). De Symbolo. lib. 4.

(5). Sermo in Signum Magnum.

(6). Jer. 31, 22.

(7) Phil. 4, 1.

## OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION

5 -

But why does the Holy Ghost call Mary "a great sign"? It is simply to tell us that everything in her is wonderful, and that the marvels that fill her being should be proclaimed to the entire world, so that she may become an object of the admiration for the inhabitants of heaven as well as for mankind on earth, and so that she may be the sweet delight of angels and men.

This is likewise the reason why the Holy Ghost inspires the faithful throughout the world to sing in her praise: *Mater admirabilis*. "O Mother Most Admirable." Moreover, according to the testimony of several trustworthy authors, (8) a holy Jesuit who once asked the Mother of God to reveal to him which of the many titles in her Litany was most pleasing to her received this same answer: *Mater admirabilis*.

Mary is truly admirable in all her perfections and in all her virtues. (9) But what is most admirable in her is her virginal heart. The heart of the Mother of God is a world of marvels, an abyss of wonders, the source and principle of all the virtues which we admire in our glorious Queen: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within." It was through the humility, purity and love of her most holy Heart that she merited to become the Mother of God and to receive the graces and privileges with which God enriched her on earth. These same sublime virtues of her immaculate Heart have rendered her worthy of the glory and happiness that surround her in heaven, and of the great marvels that God has wrought in and through her.

Do not be surprised if I say that the virginal Heart of this Mother of Fair Love is an admirable Heart indeed. Mary is admirable in her divine Maternity because as St. Bernardine of Siena says, "to be Mother of God is the miracle of miracles;" *miraculum miraculorum*. But the august Heart of Mary

is also truly admirable, for it is the principle of her divine Maternity and of the wonderful mysteries this privilege implies.

Of Mary's admirable Heart I shall attempt to speak in this book although to speak and write worthily of the holy Heart of God's own Mother one would need a heart of fire. To know and proclaim the perfections of the noble Heart of the Queen of Angels one should have the intellect of a cherub and the flaming love of a seraph. Nay more, it would be necessary to possess the mind, the heart, the tongue and the hand of Jesus Christ, the King of all hearts, to understand, honor, proclaim or

(8). Cf. *Triple couronne de la Mère de Dieu* by Reverend Francis Poiré, S.J., Treatise 4, ch. 9, 89. The book was published in Paris in 1630. In 1858 the Benedictine Fathers of Solesmes brought out a new edition.

(9). The Saint enumerates here many of Mary's admirable perfections. Since most of these passages are found elsewhere, we have occurred them in this edition.

6 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

commit to writing the treasures of sanctity contained in the holy Heart of Mary, the worthiest, most royal and most marvellous of all hearts after the most adorable Heart of our Saviour Himself.

I am not so presumptuous as to believe that I can enclose within the pages of this book the immense treasure and the innumerable wonders contained in the incomparable Heart of Mary which is and will forever be the object of the ecstatic contemplation of the happy citizens of heaven.

When the angels beheld their Queen and ours at the moment of her immaculate conception they were filled with admiration at such fulness of grace and in their wonderment exclaimed: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as any army set in array?" (10) What then must their rejoicing be, now that they behold in heaven all the marvellous perfections of her Heart from the first moment of her life on earth until the last?

The God of Angels finds even the footsteps of this glorious Queen so holy and so pleasing to His Divine Majesty that He exclaims: "How beautiful are thy steps in shoes, O prince's daughter!" (11) Under His divine inspiration Holy Church, both Militant and Triumphant, celebrates on earth and in heaven Our Lady's visitation to her cousin Elizabeth. From this we see how great is Our Lord's desire that we should admire and honor as He does the many holy and admirable actions which were inspired in the most amiable Heart of His peerless Mother.

If the smallest virtuous act of this heavenly Virgin represented in Sacred Scripture by one of her hairs, is so pleasing to God as to make Him proclaim that she has wounded and ravished His heart with a hair of her neck (12) what must we think of the manifold acts of love which, like sacred flames, were constantly darting from the burning furnace of her virginal Heart ablaze with divine love? These flames were incessantly rising to Heaven to the Heart of the Most Holy Trinity.

Holy Church, whom the Divine Spirit guides in all things, celebrates on earth and will forever celebrate in heaven several feasts to honor the various events in the earthly life of the Mother of God, such as her Presentation, in which she offered herself to God in the temple of Jerusalem; her Purification to honor her obedience to a law that did not apply to her; the feast of Our Lady of Snows in memory of the dedication of the first church consecrated to her. What praises and homage her Holy Heart then deserves, that Heart which for at least sixty-three years offered up

(10). Cant. 6, 9.

(11). Cant. 7, 1.

(12). Cant. 4, 9. "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast wounded my heart . . . with one hair of thy neck."

so many acts of faith, hope, love of God and charity towards men, humility, obedience and every other virtue? What mind can understand and what tongue express the richness of this incomparable Heart, the Sovereign of all hearts consecrated to Jesus?

Her Heart is a vast sea of grace, a measureless ocean of perfections, an immense furnace of love. Would that I might lose myself as a drop of water in this ocean or be consumed like a straw in this furnace, so that nothing of what I write could be considered as coming from me, but only from Jesus Christ who is the unique source of all good!

O most holy Mary, Thy divine Son, Jesus, hath created thy Heart, and He alone knows the great treasures he has hidden therein. He it was who lit the fire burning in this furnace, and none but He can measure the heights reached by the flames which leap from its abyss. He alone can measure the vast perfections with which He has enriched the masterpiece of His all-powerful goodness, or count the innumerable graces He has poured into this ocean of grace: "He created her in the Holy Ghost, and saw her, and numbered her, and measured her." (13)

And now I beseech thee, O most Blessed Virgin Mary, through thy Heart and for the honor of that very Heart to offer me to thy beloved Son and to pray that He may annihilate my personality and set Himself in the place of my nothingness, so that not my voice but His may be heard. May Jesus Christ be the author of this book, and I but the instrument of His surpassing love for thee and of the zeal with which He watches over the honor of thy most worthy Heart. May He inspire the thoughts He wishes to *see expressed* in this book and the very words He *desires* I should use. May His blessing rest in fullest measure on the *readers* of this book, and may He transform all its words into bright and ardent coals, so that their hearts may be purified, enlightened and inflamed with the sacred fire of His love. In a word, may they become worthy to live according to God's Heart and to be numbered among the children of the maternal Heart of God's own Mother.(14)

(13). Ecclus. 1, 9.

(14). It is usual in the devotional works of the seventeenth century to find prayers scattered throughout the doctrinal parts. St. John Eudes follows this custom in the present volume. The last two paragraphs of this chapter make up a beautiful prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

## CHAPTER 11

### THE HEART OF MARY IN GENERAL

BEFORE expounding the prodigious virtues and the incomparable marvels of the admirable Heart of Mary, according to the lights which He Who is the Source of all light will be pleased to give me, I shall point out the various meanings of the word "heare, in Sacred Scripture.

1. The word "heart," first of all, signifies the material *and* corporeal heart which beats within our breast, the noblest part of the human body. It is the principle of life, the first organ to begin to live and the last to be stilled in death; it is the seat of love, hatred, joy, sadness, fear and every passion of the soul. Of this heart does the Holy Ghost speak when He says: "With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth out from it." (1)

2. "Heart" is also employed in Scripture to signify the memory. This is, no doubt, its meaning in these words of Our Lord: "Lay it up therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before how you shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay." (2) That is, remember when you are brought before kings and judges for my name's sake, not to prepare an answer for your enemies because I will give you wisdom, which your enemies will not be able to gainsay.

3. It likewise denotes the intellect, with which we meditate. Meditation is, in fact, discursive reasoning on the things of God, tending to persuade and to convince us of the truth of Christian doctrine. This is the heart alluded to in the words: "The meditation of my heart (is) always in thy sight." (3) In other words, "my heart, that is, my intellect, is always occupied in meditating and contemplating thy glory, mysteries and works."

4. The word "heare, expresses the free "I of the superior and rational part of the soul, the queen of the other faculties, the root of good and

(1). Prov. 4, 23

(2). Luke 21, 14.

(3). Ps. 18, 15.

### OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION

9 -

evil, and the mother of virtue and of vice. Our Lord refers to this heart when He says: "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil." (4) Here, "a good heare" means the righteous will of the just man, from which all kinds of good can come; and "an evil heare" means the bad will of the wicked, which is a source of all kinds of evil.

5. We must also understand by the word "heare" that highest part of the soul which theologians call the point of the spirit. It is the seat of contemplation, which consists in turning the mind directly toward God and viewing Him in all simplicity, without discursive reasoning or multiplicity of thoughts. The Fathers of the Church apply to this power of the soul those words which the Holy Ghost puts in the mouth of the Blessed Virgin Mary: "I sleep, and my heart watcheth." (5) According to St. Bernardine of Siena and several other writers, sleep and rest of the body did not prevent Mary's holy Heart, that is, the highest part of her mind, from being always united to God in sublime contemplation. (6)



6. At times "heart" stands for the whole interior life of man; I mean, of course, the spiritual life, as indicated by these words spoken by the Son of God to the faithful soul: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm," (7) that is, stamp the image of my interior and exterior life in your interior and exterior life, in your soul and in your body, by a perfect imitation of Me.

7. The word "heart" can also signify the Holy Spirit, the veritable Heart of the Father and the Son, Whom They desire to give us for our own mind and heart. "And I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you." (8)

8. The Son of God is called the Heart of the Eternal Father in Sacred Scripture, and it is of this heart that the Father speaks to His Spouse, the Blessed Virgin, when He says to her: "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse," (9) or according to the Septuagint: "Thou hast ravished my heart." And the Son of God Himself is called in Scripture "The

(4). Luke 6, 45.

(5). Cant. 5, 2.

(6). *Somnus qui abyssat et sepelit nobis rationis et liberi arbitrii actus, non credo quod talia in Virgine fuerit operatus, sed anima ejus libere ac meritorio actu tunc tendebat in Deum. Unde illo tempore erat perfectior contemplatrix, quam unquam fuerit aliquis alius dum vigilavit.* Sermon 51, art. 1, c. 2.

(7). Cant 8, 6.

(8). Ezech. 36, 26.

(9). Cant. 4, 9

10 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

breath of our mouth," (10) that is, the soul of our soul and our heart's very heart.

All these hearts are to be found in Mary, the Mother of Fair Love, and they form in her one single heart, because all the faculties of the superior and the inferior part of her soul were always harmoniously united. Moreover, Jesus, who is the heart of His Father, and the Holy Ghost, who is the heart of the Father and the Son, were given to Mary to be the soul of her soul and the heart of her heart.

To understand more clearly what is meant by the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we must recall that, just as we adore in the Most Holy Trinity and in the Incarnate Word three hearts which form but one heart, so also do we honor in the Mother of God three hearts united in one.

The first heart to be found in the Blessed Trinity is the Son of God, who is the Heart of the Eternal Father, as we have seen above. (11) The second is the *Holy Ghost*, who is the Heart of the Father and the Son. The third is *Divine Love Itself*, an adorable attribute of the divine essence, which can be considered as the Heart of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. These three hearts are in reality only one single Heart, and with it the three eternal Persons love one another as They deserve to be loved. They also love mankind with an incomparable charity.

The first heart to be found in our Loving Saviour, Jesus Christ, the God-Man, is *His heart of flesh*, deified like all the other parts of His sacred body by its hypostatic union with the Divine Word. The second is His spiritual heart, that is, the superior faculties of His holy soul, including His memory, His understanding and His will, all most specially deified by the hypostatic union. The third is His divine heart, that is, the *Holy Ghost*, by whom His adorable humanity has always been animated~mated in a higher degree than by its own soul and heart.

Thus we have in Jesus Christ, the God-Man, three hearts forming but one, because His divine Heart constituted the soul, the heart and the life of His spiritual and bodily hearts. Moreover God has established such perfect unity between them that these three hearts form only a single heart, filled with infinite love towards the Blessed Trinity and with surpassing charity towards men.

The first heart of Mary, the Mother of God, is the *heart of flesh* endosed in her virginal breast. Although this heart is corporeal, it is nevertheless

(10). Lam. 4, 20.

(11). See no. 8, P. 9.

## OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION

11 -

completely spiritualized by the spirit of grace and the spirit of God which fill it.

The second heart is her spiritual heart, made God-like, not indeed by the hypostatic union as in the Incarnate Word, but by a superlative participation in the divine perfections, as we shall see in the following pages. This heart is referred to by the words of the Holy Ghost: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within," (12) that is, has its origin in her heart and her inmost soul.

The third heart of Mary is divine and is truly *God Himself*, for it is none other than the love of God. This is the heart of which she says: "I sleep, and my heart watcheth," (13) which means according to the interpretation of several holy Doctors: "While I grant necessary rest to my body, my Son Jesus, who is my Heart and whom I love like my own heart, is always watching over me and for me."

These three hearts of the Mother of God constitute a single Heart, through the holiest and most intimate union that ever was and will be, next to the hypostatic union. Of these three hearts, or rather, of this single Heart, the Holy Ghost has said twice: "Mary kept all these words, Pondering them in her heart." (14)

Our Lady cherished the mysteries and marvels of her Son's life, first of all, in her material and corporeal heart, the principle of life, the seat of love and of the other physical emotions. All the movements, every beat of this virginal heart, the material functions that it accomplished and the emotions that swayed it, existed solely for Jesus and for the things that concerned Him. Her love was spent in loving Him, her hatred in hating all that is contrary to Him, her joy in rejoicing in His glory and His grandeurs, her sorrow and compassion in bewailing His trials and sufferings. The same may be said of every emotion of her bodily heart.

Secondly, Mary kept all these things in her spiritual heart, that is, in the noblest part of her soul, in the inmost recesses of her mind. All the faculties of her soul were constantly applied to contemplating and adoring everything that took place in the life of her Beloved Son, down to the very smallest details.

Thirdly, Our Lady kept all these things in her divine Heart, that is, in her Son Jesus, who was the mind of her mind and the heart of her heart. He in turn kept them for her and recalled them to her mind when necessary, that she might feed herself in contemplation upon the mysteries of His life, rendering them due honor and adoration, and repeating

(12). Ps. 44, 14

(13). Cant 5, 2.

(14). Luke 2, 19 and 51.

them to the holy apostles and disciples, who were to preach them to the faithful.

This then is what is meant by the admirable Heart of the beloved Mother of God. This is the worthy subject of which I shall have to speak in this book. The next three chapters will treat in greater detail of the corporeal, spiritual and divine Heart of Mary. In the rest of the book, you will find comments proper to her corporeal heart, others concerning her spiritual heart, others pertaining only to her divine Heart, while additional characteristics will be common to all three. Every word that I write, every point that I make, will further the spiritual progress of my readers, if they will but lift up their hearts to God as they read, in praise and thanksgiving for the innumerable graces and treasures of the Heart of Mary.

O Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, my task is great and beyond my power, but I trust in Thy goodness and in the love of Thy Holy Mother. I seek nothing, as I, a sinner, strive to show forth the wonders of the Heart of Mary; nothing, except to make some small return for the countless graces received from Thy paternal Heart through the loving Heart of Thy Mother. To Thee, O Jesus, I surrender myself, my mind, my heart and my pen for one purpose only: that my readers may understand and cultivate a lively devotion to the Most Admirable Heart of Thy Blessed Mother.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CORPOREAL HEART OF MARY

Just as everything in Our Lord Jesus Christ is great and admirable, so also everything that concerns Mary, His holy Mother, is replete with grandeur and marvels. Every part of the sacred humanity of the Son of God is deified and raised to an infinite dignity through its union with the Divinity; so likewise everything in the Blessed Virgin Mary is ennobled and sanctified by her divine maternity. There is no part of the sacred body of the God-Man that is not worthy of the eternal admiration of angels and men, and there is nothing in the virginal body of the Mother of God that is unworthy of the eternal praise of all creatures.(1)

The Holy Ghost, the Son of God and His Saints have given high praise to the sacred members of Mary's immaculate body. We may therefore conclude that her blessed heart, the first and worthiest part, is deserving of especial veneration. Shall we not share the sentiments of Jesus Christ, our Head, and follow the example He gives us? Mary's Divine Son, who has willed to be our Head and our Brother, manifests great zeal in honoring even the smallest exterior detail of the person of His Most Blessed Mother. Who therefore can dare to criticise(2) the other children of this Mother of Fair Love, if, following the spirit and example of their divine Head and Elder Brother, they render special homage to her maternal Heart and celebrate a feast in its honor with the permission of Holy Church?

There are five marvellous prerogatives of the corporeal heart of Mary which render it forever worthy to receive the veneration of men and angels.

(1). In the original edition, the Saint here proceeds to exalt the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary, supporting his exposition with tests from Sacred Scripture, the Fathers of the Church and the writings of various Saints. Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes* V. 6, P. 41, ff.

(2). When St. John Eudes wrote this work, the devotion to the Heart of Mary was new. It was attacked and criticised by the Jansenism. This opposition explains why the Saint in this book never misses an opportunity to silence those "who dare to criticise," by setting forth the proofs for the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

The *first* prerogative consists in the fact that the heart is the principle of the life of our holy Mother. It is the principle of all the functions of her bodily, material life, ever holy in itself and in its every function and employment. It is the source of the life of the Mother of God, the life of her who gave birth to the only Son of God, the life of the woman through whom God gave life to all the children of Adam, sunk as they were in the abyss of eternal death. Finally, her heart is the source of a life so holy, so noble, so sublime that it is more precious in the sight of God than the lives of all the angels and men.

The *second* prerogative of the corporeal heart of Mary is that it produced(3) the virginal blood with which the sacred body of the God-Man was formed in the chaste womb of His blessed Mother.

The *third* prerogative of Mary's heart of flesh is that it was the source of the human, material life of the Infant Jesus during the nine months that He dwelt in Mary's sacred womb. While the infant is in its mother's bosom, the mother's heart is to such an extent the source of the infant's life that both mother and infant can be said to depend upon it for their existence. Mary's admirable heart was therefore the source of the two most noble and precious lives, at once the source of the holy life of the

Mother of God and of her only son, the humanly divine as well as the divinely human life of the God-Man.

The *fourth* prerogative of the amiable heart is noted in the words of the holy bride to the divine bridegroom, that is, of Mary to Jesus, who is her Son and her Father, her Brother and her Spouse: "Our bed is flourishing," (4) that is, our bed is covered and perfumed with flowers. What is this bed? It is the pure heart of the Blessed Virgin where the divine Infant so gently rested?

(3). St. John Eudes thought that the blood, which curies life through the organism, is produced in the heart, or at least receives its final perfection there, so that before having passed through the heart it is unfit either to nourish the body or to assist in the performance of its vital functions. He was mistaken in that notion, as were all his contemporaries. But it still remains true that the heart influences the entire organism in sending the blood through it. "All vital movement springs from the heart," says Claude Bernard, "and thus it is the heart which gives indication of life. . . . It is still at work when the other organs surrounding it lie dormant. . . . It never rests; while everything else sleeps, the heart is beating. As long as it remains in motion, life can reassert itself, but when it ceases to pulsate, life is irrevocably lost. Just as its first movement was the unmistakable indication of life, its last beat is the sum sign of death." Quoted by Reverend Ange LeDoré in *Les SS. Coeurs et le V. Jean Eudes*, V. 2, P. 25. Cf. Father Charles Lebrun's work, *La Dévotion au Coeur de Marie* (Paris, 1910, P. 289.

(4). Cant. I, 15.

## OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION

15 -

It was a great privilege for St. John, the beloved disciple, to have rested once on the Saviour's adorable breast, from which he drew such great light and derived the knowledge of so many marvellous secrets. But not only once but many times did our divine Saviour rest on the virginal heart of His dearest Mother. What abundance of lights, of grace and of blessings the Eternal Sun, the very source of light and grace, must have poured into that maternal heart, on which He rested so often! Her heart never interposed the slightest obstacle to divine grace. On the contrary, she was always disposed to welcome every celestial favor. Our Lord loved her heart more than all other hearts put together, and was in turn loved by it more perfectly than by the hearts of all the Seraphim. What union, what intimacy, what understanding, what correspondence between these two Hearts! What fire in these two furnaces of love constantly inflamed by the breath of the Holy Spirit!

And now we come to the fifth prerogative of this holy heart. It is the altar upon which a great and perpetual sacrifice, most agreeable to God, is constantly offered. On it are immolated all the natural passions which reside in the human heart. (5) There we found at once the concupiscible and the irascible appetites of the soul, given by God to man that they may be led to hate, fear, avoid, combat and destroy the things that hurt them,

(5). St. John Eudes stresses the connection between the heart and the passions in order to bring out a final prerogative of the corporeal heart of Mary. There is, indeed, a close relationship between the heart and the perceptible feelings. "We feel our hearts affected by our emotional states, and even our moral dispositions," says Father Bainvel. "We feel that our emotional states and our moral dispositions are connected with certain states and movements of the heart. We are not simply wing a metaphor when we say; 'My heart is panting; my heart is full; my heart is oppressed; my heart is gladdened.' These expressions translate for us a physiological reality as well as a psychical." Cf. Bainvel, *La Dévotion au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus*, p. 183.

Following the physiology of his day, St. John Eudes looked upon the heart as the seat of the passions and the organ of love. This was the prevailing opinion in the eighteenth century. Even in recent years this theory found adherents. The late Cardinal Billot, an outstanding theologian, boldly made the following statement in his treatise, *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome, 1904) 4th edition, P. 348:

Cor non solum symbolum amoris est, sed etiam organum; imo symbolum quia organum; inquam, amoris sensitivi et compassivi qui subjectatur in conjuncto. "The heart is not merely the symbol of love (of the senses); it is also its organ. It is in symbol, in fact, only because it is its organ." This is also the opinion of Bainvel in *La Dévotion au Sacré-Coeur*, p. 122, and Vermeersch, *Pratique et Doctrine de la Dévotion au Sacré-Coeur*, P. 392. It must be noted, however, that most modern physiologists teach that the heart can do no more than experience the repercussions of the motions, the organ of which is the brain together with the nervous system. Cf. Lebrun, *Oeuvres Complètes*, du Vénérable Jean Eudes (Vannes. 1907), v. 6, p. xxv.

16 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

and to love, desire, hope for and seek that which will benefit them. These two principal passions comprise eleven others, which are like soldiers fighting under two captains, or like weapons and instruments used to attain the two ends mentioned above.

The irascible appetite possesses five passions, namely hope, despair, daring, fear and anger. The concupiscible appetite includes six; love, hatred, desire, abhorrence, delight and sadness.

Man's revolt against the commandments of God caused all these passions to revolt against self and to fall into such disorder that instead of being completely subject to the will, which is the queen of all the soul's faculties, they often make it their slave. Instead of being the guardians of the heart in which they reside, preserving it in peace and tranquillity, the passions usually become as many executioners who torment the heart and fill it with conflict and war.

Such was not the case with the passions that reside in the corporeal heart of the Queen of Angels, for they were always entirely subject to her reason and to the Divine Will that held sovereign sway over every part of her soul and body.

Just as these passions were rendered divine in the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so were they sanctified most excellently in the holy Heart of His Blessed Mother. The fire of divine love, burning day and night in the ardent furnace of this virginal heart, so purified, consumed and transformed her passions into its own substance, that, as this heavenly fire had no other object save God alone, towards whom it constantly tended with incomparable ardor and impetuosity, so these passions were always turned towards God and exercised in His service. They were moved and led exclusively by the love of God, which possessed, animated and inflamed them in so marvellous a manner that they became a perpetual and admirable sacrifice in honor of the Blessed Trinity.

We may consider the most pure body of Mary as a sacred temple, indeed as the most august temple that ever was or will be, next to the temple of the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, her divine Son. We see her virginal heart as the sacred altar of this temple. We behold Divine Love as the high priest offering to God uninterrupted sacrifices in this temple and on this altar. We contemplate the Divine Will bringing many victims to be sacrificed on this altar of Mary's heart. Among the victims we distinguish the eleven natural passions slaughtered by the flaming sword which the high priest holds in his hand, that is by the efficacy of Divine Love. They are consumed and transformed into the heavenly fire which burns upon the altar of her heart; they are immolated to the most Holy Trinity in a sacrifice of praise, of glory and of love.

## OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION

17 -

Thus did the great high priest, Divine Love, sacrifice on the holy altar of Mary's heart, all her passions, inclinations and sentiments of love, hatred, desire, aversion, joy, sadness, hope, distrust,

daring, fear and anger.

And this sacrifice commenced the first instant the holy Heart of Mary began to beat in her virginal breast, that is, the very first instant of this immaculate Virgin's life. It continued uninterruptedly until her last breath, gaining in sanctity and in love with every passing moment.

O great and truly admirable sacrifice, so wonderfully agreeable to the God of hearts! O blessed Heart of the Mother of Fair Love, consecrated altar whereon so divine a sacrifice was offered! Blessed art thou, O most Holy Heart, for having loved and desired nothing but Him who alone is amiable and desirable! Blessed art thou for having established thy joy and thy contentment in loving and honoring Him, who alone is capable of satisfying the heart of man, and for having known no other grief than that caused by the offenses committed against His Divine Majesty!

O Blessed Heart, thou hast hated nothing, fled from nothing, feared nothing, except what could injure the interests of thy Beloved Son, and hast never known anger except towards that which was opposed to His glory!

O Blessed Heart, so completely closed to the vanities of the earth and of self-interest that not one trace of them ever found place in thee! Thy confidence in God was equalled by thy firm trust in divine bounty, and, fired with holy generosity, never didst thou give way before the obstacles raised by hell and the world to prevent thee from advancing along the path of sacred love, but thou didst always surmount them with unremitting~ constancy and invincible strength.

These are some of the marvellous prerogatives of the admirable Heart which beats in the virginal breast of the Mother of God. Is it not true that, even if we considered only the material and corporeal Heart of the Queen of Heaven, it would still be worthy of the greatest honor and veneration?

Blessed indeed we the hearts of the true children of Mary, who strive to live in conformity with the most holy Heart of their Mother most admirable!

Think, think of the honour that is due to her Heart, most noble part of the virginal body that gave human flesh to the Eternal Word, forever the center of adoration of the angels and saints in heaven! What honour is due to her heart, life-principle of the Mother of God and of God-mademan!

Above all, what great veneration is merited by the Heart that God

18 -

## **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

Himself loved and glorified most highly, the Heart that adored and loved God more perfectly than all the hearts in heaven and upon earth! May every heart praise and magnify thee forever and ever!

## CHAPTER 1V

### THE SPIRITUAL HEART OF MARY

THE Holy Ghost is wont to describe many things with few words. Wishing to praise the principal faculties of the body and soul of His Spouse, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to exalt the merits of her Heart, He uses very few words, which nevertheless contain many meanings. What does He say? How does He praise Mary, the sovereign of hearts? He utters only three words: *Quod intrinsecus latet*. (1) But these three words encompass all the great and admirable utterances that can be said or thought of her royal Heart; they reveal to us that it is a treasure hidden from the most enlightened eyes of heaven and earth, a treasure so filled with celestial riches that God alone can have a perfect knowledge of its wonders.

Notice that the Holy Spirit pronounces these words not only once, but twice in the same chapter. He does this in order to impress them more strongly on our minds and to oblige us to consider them with greater attention, as well as to manifest to us both the corporeal heart of the Queen of Heaven, which was the subject of the preceding chapter, and her spiritual heart, of which I shall speak now.

What is the spiritual heart? In order to understand it, we must remember that, although the soul is essentially one, it can nevertheless be considered as having a threefold life.

The first and lowest life is that of the vegetative soul, which is similar in nature to that of plants, for the soul in this state has no other function than to nourish and sustain the body. The second is the sensitive life, which we have in common with animals. The third is the intellectual life, like that of angels, comprising the intellectual memory, the intellect proper and the will, together with the highest part of the mind, which theologians call the point, the summit or the eminence of the spirit. This last power is led not by the light of complex reasoning, but by a clear intuition of the intellect and a simple movement of the will whereby the soul submits to the truth and the will of God. (1). Cant. 4, 1 and 3 "what is hid within."

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

It is this third life called spirit, the mental, superior part of the soul, which renders us like the angels and carries with it in its natural state the image of God and in the state of grace, a participation of the divine nature.

This intellectual part is the heart and the noblest portion of the soul, for, first, it is the principle of the natural life of the rational soul, which consists in the knowledge it can obtain of supreme truth with the aid of the natural light of its intelligence, and in its natural love for sovereign goodness. Animated by the spirit of faith and grace, it becomes the principle of the supernatural life of the soul, which knows God by celestial light and loves Him with supernatural love, "This is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God." (2)

Secondly, this intellectual part is the heart of the soul, because in it is centered the will, the faculty and capacity of loving, but in a manner much more spiritual and noble and exalted and with a love incomparably more excellent, more lively, more active, more solid and durable than the love which proceeds from the sensitive and corporeal heart.

The will, enlightened by the light of the intellect and the torch of faith, is the principle of this love. When it is led only by the light of human reason and acts only in virtue of its natural capacities,



the will produces only a human and natural love incapable of uniting the soul to God. But when it follows the torch of faith, and is moved by the impulses of the spirit of grace, it becomes the source of a supernatural and divine love, which makes the soul worthy of God.

Thirdly, sacred theology teaches us that, even though grace, faith, hope and charity spread their heavenly influence and divine movements to the other faculties of the inferior part of the soul, they nevertheless reside and have their true natural dwelling in the superior part. Hence it follows that this same part is the real heart of the Christian soul, because divine charity can have no other abode than the heart which possesses it, according to the words of St. Paul: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts." (3)

Fourthly, St. Paul proclaims to all Christians: "Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts," (4) and assured them that he bends his knees to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ to obtain the privilege that His Divine Son may dwell in their hearts. (5) Now, what is this heart, if not the superior part of our soul, since the God of grace

(2). John 17, 3.

(3). Rom. 5,

(4). Gal. 4, 6.

(5). Ephes. 3, 14-17.

## **OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION**

21 -

and love cannot dwell in a Christian soul elsewhere than in the part where grace and charity reside?

All this clearly demonstrates that the true and proper heart of the rational soul is the intellectual part, called spirit, the mental, superior part.

This being so, the spiritual heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the intellectual element of her soul, comprising her memory, intelligence, will and the supreme point of her spirit. This is the heart which expresses itself in the first words of her admirable Canticle, the Magnificat: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' (6) It is the spirit, the soul's first and noblest part, which must, in a very special manner, glorify God and rejoice in Him.

Of this marvellous heart I have great things to say. But to use the language of St. Paul, even all human and angelic tongues together pronouncing everything that could be said would still fall far short of its perfections. "Of whom we have much to say, and hard to be intelligibly uttered." (7)

If the virginal heart beating in the consecrated breast of the Virgin of virgins, the most excellent organ of her holy body, is so admirable, as we have already seen, what must be the marvels of her spiritual heart, the noblest portion of her soul? Is it not true that, as the condition of the soul surpasses that of the body, so also does the spiritual heart excel the corporeal? We have already considered the rare prerogatives of her heart of flesh, and we shall now endeavor to express the incomparable gifts and inestimable treasures with which her spiritual heart is filled.

I shall place before you only a short summary to encourage you to bless the source of so many marvels, to praise her who made herself worthy of so many graces, and to honor her most holy heart, which so faithfully preserved her graces and privileges and used them so perfectly.

First of all, Divine Bounty miraculously preserved the heart of the Mother of Our Saviour from the stain of sin, which never touched it because God filled it with grace from the moment of its creation, and clothed it with purity so radiant that, next to God's, it is impossible to conceive of

greater purity. His Divine Majesty possessed her heart so completely from its first instant that it never ceased for a moment to belong entirely to Him and to love Him more ardently than all the holiest hearts of heaven and earth united, Such is the opinion of many great theologians.

In the second place, the Father of Light has filled this beautiful Sun

(6). Luke 1, 46-47.

(7). Heb. 5, 11.

22 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

with the most brilliant lights of nature and of grace. If we consider the natural illumination shining within Mary, we see that God gave to the chosen Spouse of the Holy Ghost a natural intellect more clear, lively, profound, vaster and more perfect in every way than any other intellect, an intellect worthy of the Mother of God, worthy of the woman destined to guide and rule Divine Wisdom, worthy of the Mistress of the Church and Queen Regent of the universe, worthy of her who was to converse: familiarly on earth with the angels of heaven, and what is more, with the King of Angels, for thirty-four years, an intellect worthy of the lofty functions and sublime contemplation to which she was consecrated.

As regards supernatural light, the luminous heart of Mary, Seat of Wisdom, was so filled with its radiance that the learned Albert the Great, nurtured in the school of the Mother of God, plainly teaches, together with many other holy Doctors, that there was nothing Our Lady did not know. (8) They assert that she possessed infused knowledge of every science, and in a much more eminent degree than the most learned minds that ever existed (9)

Her vast knowledge of the Blessed Virgin Mary was dedicated to a most holy use, employed only to urge her to love God with greater ardor, to procure the salvation of Souls with greater fervor, to hate sin more vigorously, to humble herself more profoundly, to despise still further everything that the world esteems and to prize and embrace with greater affection the things it detests, namely poverty, abjections and suffering.

Moreover, Our Lady never experienced undue pleasure in the lights that God imparted to her, never became attached to these favors, never preferred herself to other beings on account of them, but always returned them to God as pure as they sprang from their source.

Such was the knowledge of the Admirable Heart of Mary. What Shall we now say of the twofold love that inflamed her heart, her love for God and incomparable charity for men?

It was by the force of love and humility that Mary attracted the wellbeloved Son of God, the Heart of the Eternal Father, to be the Heart of her heart.

The love of Mary's most blessed heart makes it an inexhaustible source of gifts, favors and blessings for all those who truly love their Mother most amiable, and honor with affection her most lovable heart, according

(8). Tract. super Missus est, cap. 149--After enumerating the various aspects of Mary's knowledge, St. Albert the Great summarizes thus: . . . *est conclusio ex praedictis omnibus, quod nullius rei proprie habuit ignorantiam.*

(9). Here St. John Eudes describes in detail the different types of knowledge possessed by the Blessed Virgin Mary. Cf. Oeuvres Complètes, v. 6, p. 92 ff.

ing to the words the Holy Ghost puts on her lips: "I love them that love me." (10)

Finally, it is this heart which has loved and glorified God above all the hearts of angels and men, and therefore, can never be revered adequately.

What honor is due to such great and admirable wonders! What veneration should be shown to the heart of Mary, the noblest part of the holy soul of the Mother of God! What praises must be rendered to all the faculties of the spiritual heart of the Virgin Mother, namely her memory, her intellect, her will, and the most intimate part of her spirit, which were never exercised except for God and by motivation of the Holy Ghost.

What respect her holy memory commands, which only remembered the unutterable favors she had received from the divine munificence, and the graces God constantly showers on every creature, in order to thank Him incessantly!

What veneration is due to her intellect, always engaged in considering and meditating on God's mysteries and His divine perfections in order to honor and imitate them! What veneration is also due to her will, perpetually absorbed by the love of God!

What honor the supreme part of her spirit commands, which was day and night absorbed in contemplating and glorifying His divine majesty most excellently!

Is there any praise not merited by the marvellous heart of the Mother of the Saviour, a heart which never encompassed anything that could in the least displease Him, a heart so filled with light and grace, a heart possessing the perfection of all virtues, all the gifts, all the fruits of the Holy Ghost, with all the evangelical beatitudes?

Will you not admit, dear reader, that, if heaven and earth were to exalt the admirable heart of Mary eternally with all possible strength and if the entire universe were to thank God for having filled her heart with such a wealth of marvels, this honor and thanksgiving could never fittingly be made.

(10). Prov. 8, 17

## CHAPTER V

### THE DIVINE HEART OF MARY

JESUS CHRIST, the Heart of the Eternal Father, is the Heart of His Holy Mother.(1) Is not the heart the principle of life? And what is the Son of God to His dear Mother? He always was and will be *forever the* heart of her heart, the soul of her soul, the spirit of her spirit, and the sole principle of all the movements, uses and functions of her most holy life. St. Paul tells us that it is not himself who lives but Jesus Christ who lives in him? (2) Our Lord is the life of all Christians:(3) so who could doubt that He abides in His holy Mother, and that He is the life of her life, the heart of her heart, in a union incomparably more excellent even than with St. Paul and the o&r faithful saints?

Let us listen to what Our Lady revealed to St Brigid: "My Son was

(1). Between the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Holy Heart of Mary there exists a union so perfect that there never has been and *never* will be "a closer one aside from the hypostatic union." St. John Eudes calls both Jesus and the Holy Ghost the Divine Heart of Mary. We must remember, however, that no matter how close is the union between Jesus and Mary it does not destroy the distinction of persons. Jesus Christ, *the Divine Heart of* Mary, so closely united to her corporeal and spiritual hearts, is *nevertheless extrinsic to her person*. It therefore cannot belong to the immediate object of the devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary because the devotion concerns Mary herself and cannot have any object other than *whatever belongs properly to her person*. Thus it is *that the particular object of the devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary must be limited to her corporeal and spiritual hearts*.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the Saints, when it is well understood, never confines itself to their persons; it ascends to God Who is the author of their holiness and Who is no less adorable in what He effects in His saints than in what He is in Himself. Without this consideration, devotion to Mary and to the saints would not be an act of religion, for religion relates to God and if now and then the acts which it inspires are addressed to creatures, it is because of their special union to the Divinity. "The devotion we have for the Saints," says St. Thomas, "never ends with them; it passes to God, for it is God Himself whom we honor in the saints." Sum. Theol. 2a 2ae, cl. 82, an. 2, ad 3.

St. John Eudes was convinced and rightly so that all honor rendered to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the Saints in the Catholic Church implies homage to the person of Jesus Christ, who is the final object, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Cf. Lebrun, *La Dévotion au Coeur de Marie* (Paris, 1917); P. 312 ff.

(2). Gal. 2, 20.

(3). Col. 3, 4.

### OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION

25 -

truly my Heart to me. When He left my bosom to be born, it seemed as though half of my Heart were going forth from me. When He suffered, I felt His pain as though my Heart endured the identical sorrows and torments that He endured. When my Son was being Scourged and torn with whips, my Heart was scourged and whipped with Him. When He looked at me from the Cross, and I at Him, two streams of tears gushed from my eyes; and when He saw me oppressed with sorrow, He experienced such violent anguish at my desolation that the pain caused by His sorrow was my sorrow as His Heart was my Heart. Because Adam and Eve together betrayed the world for one, single forbidden fruit, so did my beloved Son wish that I should cooperate with Him in redeeming it with one Heart, *quasi cum uno Corde*. (4)

You See, therefore, how the Son of God is the Heart and life of His holy Mother, in the most

perfect union conceivable. The Holy Ghost, speaking by St. Paul, proclaims that our adorable Saviour must so live in all His servants that His life be manifested in their bodies. "That the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh." (5) Who could consequently understand with what abundance and perfection Our Lord communicates His divine life to her from whom He received a divinely human and a humanly divine life because she conceived and begot the God-Man?

Jesus lives in her soul and in her body, and in each faculty of her body and soul. He lives in her entirely, which means that whatever is in Jesus is also in Mary, His Heart abides in her heart, His soul in her soul, His spirit in her spirit. 'The memory, intellect and will of Jesus are alive in the memory, intellect and will of Mary; his interior and exterior senses in her interior and exterior senses. His passions in her passions; His virtues, mysteries and divine attributes are living in her Heart. Nay, more than living, they hold sovereign sway, producing inconceivably marvellous effects and impressing a living image of themselves as her Heart mirrors His Sacred Heart.

So it is that Jesus is the principle of life in His most holy Mother. So it is that He is the Heart of her Heart and the life of her life. St. Brigid once heard her say: "Every homage rendered to my Son is likewise rendered to me, and who dishonors Him dishonors me. We have always had such perfect mutual love that we seemed to have as it were but one Heart for both. *Quasi cor unum ambo fuimus.*" (6)

This admirable Heart it is, which receives our respect and praise, which  
(4). Revel. Lib. 1, Cap. 35  
(5). 2 Cor. 4, 11.  
(6). Revel. Lib. i, cap. 8.

26 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

must be esteemed an object of veneration for all Christians, for to honor Mary's marvellous Heart means to honor countless holy and divine mysteries deserving of the eternal veneration of angels and men. It also means to honor all the functions of the corporeal and material life of the Queen of Heaven, of which the Heart is the principle, that life superlatively holy in itself and in every use she made of it. It means honoring the perfect functions of her memory, her will, her intellect, and the highest part of her spirit. It means honoring innumerable great and ineffable mysteries which were perfected in the superior part of her soul.

It means above all to honor the great love and ardent charity of this Mother of Fair Love toward God and men, together with the effects which that love and charity produced in her thoughts, words, prayers, actions, sufferings, and in the exercise of every virtue.

This veneration of Mary means honoring the corporeal Heart, the spiritual Heart and the divine Heart of Jesus, who are also the Hearts, or rather, the one and only Heart of Mary. It means giving glory to Our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the Heart of the Eternal Father, and has willed to become the Heart of His Holy Mother.

It means honoring and glorifying all the effects of light, grace, and sanctity which this divine Heart of Mary, who is Jesus Christ Himself, has effected, and all the movements of the heavenly life of which He was the principle in her soul, and also the great fidelity with which she cooperated, on her part, with all that His grace accomplished in her heart during so many years. What tongue could proclaim, what mind could conceive, what heart could worthily honor so many great and admirable wonders of grace!

If Holy Church celebrates an annual feast in honor of the chains of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, how great a solemnity does not the august Heart of the Queen of Apostles deserve ! If the holy name of Mary is so greatly venerated by all the faithful, if the oracles of the Holy Spirit, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, like St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, St. Anselm, St. Bernard and many others, have said such wonderful things concerning the name of Mary, if one of them (7) assures us that "after the adorable name of Jesus, Mary's name is above every name, so all creatures in heaven, on earth, and in hell must bend their knees to honor it, and that every tongue must proclaim the holiness, glory and virtue of this holy name"; if the Church celebrates its feast annually in many places what must we say, what must we think of the marvellous Heart of our holy Mother, that Heart far more precious than her name? What should we do to honor it? Indeed every heart, every pen and every tongue should be employed in loving, in writing and in

(7). Raym. Jordan. Contempt. B. Virg., Part 4, Contempl. 1.

## OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION

27 -

speaking of the incomparable Heart of Mary. The entire universe should therefore celebrate the Feast of Mary's Immaculate Heart.

You all know that in various great churches throughout the Christian world there are venerated constantly, with special feasts, treasured relics of the most holy Mother of God, for example her veil. If Holy Church has proclaimed feasts in veneration of the least and smallest objects traditionally belonging to Our Lady, how much more should we not celebrate the praises of her most exalted and most sublimely honorable Heart?

To conclude the first part of my treatise, I would have you realize, dear Reader, that Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Heart of the Eternal Father, willed to become the Heart or life-principle of His Most Blessed Mother, and He likewise wills to become the Heart of your own life.

Having granted you the grace to become one of the members of His mystical body, He seeks to share your life so that you may say with St. Paul: "Christ liveth in me!" (8) Such is the infinite plan of God, such His burning desire. Our Lord seeks to establish His life, not only in your soul, but in your body, that His spirit may become your spirit and His heart your heart, united in all its love, thoughts and actions, by self-surrender. Surrender, even as His Heart was completely and perfectly the heart of His Admirable Mother.

If the will of God is to become your will, and if the spiritual and corporeal faculties of the sacred humanity of Our Lord are to animate the faculties of your soul and body, what must you do? You must cooperate.

First, you must seek the death of every activity of your soul and body that is displeasing to God, bearing in your body the mortification of Christ. (9) Then, having mortified your faculties, their powers and exercise must be turned towards virtue.

Above all, offer yourself frequently to the Son of God. Beg Him to deign to exercise the almighty power of His arm to destroy within you everything that is contrary to His Holy Will, and to establish over you the reign of His divine Soul and His Crucified Body.

Especially useful is the most devout prayer of St. Augustine, the Anima Christi, Sanctifica Me. "Soul of Christ, sanctify me." (10) It will help you to attain your purpose at all times, but particularly after you have received

(8). Gal. 2, 20.

(9). 2 Cor. 4, 1n.

(10). St. John Eudes attributes this prayer to St. Augustine, but does not give any reasons for doing so. Although St. Ignatius places it at the beginning of the Spiritual Exercises, he is not looked upon as the author of the prayer. The Anima Christi was first indulgenced in 1330 by Pope John XXII, who is thought to have written it. Cf. Dreves, *Laacher stimmen*, 1898. To this well-known prayer St. John Eudes adds the invocation: Cor Jesu, purifica me, accende me. "Heart of Jesus, purify me, enlighten me, inflame me."

28 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

ceived Our Saviour within Your heart, either during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or in Holy Communion. When you are speaking to the Divine Heart of Jesus, if you realize His actual and veritable presence within you, you will pronounce this prayer with greater fervor and receive greater blessing for its recitation.

But I tpilst return to thee, O Mother Most Admirable, to exclaim that in thee,,are accomplished all things most perfectly, most gloriously, in union with thy Divine Son. Whether it be corporeal, spiritual or divine, His Heart is thine, He is the life of thy life and the heart of thy Heart. May He be blessed, praised and glorified forever by all creatures, because of the graces imparted to thee, O Mary, and all the greatness of His humanity and His divinity!

## PART TWO

### *First Foundation of the Devotion: The Heart of God the Father*

#### *Six Symbolic Pictures*

## Part Two

### **FIRST FOUNDATION OF THE DEVOTION: THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER**

#### *Six Symbolic Pictures*

## CHAPTER I

### **GOD THE FATHER, DELINEATOR OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

The exposition I have made in Part One ought to suffice to show that, next to the sacred humanity of Christ, there exists in the universe no creature more deserving of honor and veneration than the admirable Heart of His most pure Mother, and that this devotion is specially pleasing to the Divine Majesty of God and most beneficial for all Christians.

But in order to foster and strengthen this devotion more and more deeply in the hearts of the faithful where it already exists, and to spread and establish it among those who so far have no place for it, I wish to show fully that devotion to the Heart of Our Lady, instead of being without basis and reason, is a cult established on foundations so firm, with roots so strong, that all the powers of earth and hell cannot possibly shake or weaken it.

The first foundation and the primary source of the devotion to the most holy Heart of Mary is the adorable Heart of the Eternal Father and His unfathomable love for the Blessed Mother of His Only-begotten Son. This infinite love induced our Heavenly Father to give us many beautiful images and figures of the most worthy Heart of His holy Mother.

God the Father, to whom we assign by appropriation the creation of the world, *together with* the establishment and fulfilment of the Old

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Law, was pleased to foreshadow, in every part of the universe and in all the mysteries, sacrifices and ceremonies of the Old Testament, His only Son through whom He created and willed to renew all things. Likewise, the Eternal Father lovingly prefigured, both in the visible world and in the rites of the Mosaic Law, Mary, the woman chosen from all eternity to be the Mother of the adorable Redeemer. "It was she whom the Prophets foretold long before her birth," says St. Jerome. "It was she whom the Patriarchs described in many figures; it was she who was announced by the Evangelists." (1) "Toward her converge all the predictions of the Prophets, all the mysteries of Scripture," says St. Ildephonsus. (2) Elsewhere he writes: "The Holy Ghost foretold her through the Prophets, announced her by the divine oracles, manifested her in figures, promised her by means of the things which preceded her birth, and fulfilled in her the things which followed it." (3)



St. John Damascene(4) says that the earthly paradise, Noe's ark, the burning bush, the Tables of the Law, the Ark of the Covenant, the golden vessel containing the manna, the golden candlesticks in the Tabernacle, the table with the loaves of proposition, Aaron's rod, the furnace of Babylon, were all figures of the incomparable Virgin Mary.

The Eternal Father did not content Himself with prefiguring the person of His Son Jesus in His prototypes, Abel, Noe, Melchisedech, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Josue, Samson, Job, David and many other holy persons who lived under the Old Law, which preceded His Son's appearance on earth. God also wished to give us several beautiful representations of His mysteries in detail, such as His divine espousal of human nature in the Incarnation, His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension.

In like manner, God the Father was not satisfied to foreshadow and represent the person of the Mother of His Beloved Son merely in the person of Mary, sister of Moses, in the Prophetess Debbora, wise Abigail, chaste and generous Judith, beautiful and compassionate Esther, and many other valiant women. Beyond this, the Eternal Father designed to entrust to us special pictures and images of the mysteries and qualities of His incomparable Mother, her virtues and even the more noble faculties of her virginal body. Several passages of Sacred Scripture reveal these pictures, especially the twenty-fourth chapter of Ecclesiasticus, and the Canticle of Canticles, where her Immaculate Conception is represented by

- (1). *Serm. de Assumpt.*
- (2). *Serm. I.*
- (3). *Lib. de Virginitate Mariae.*
- (4). *Oral. I de Domit. M=Mariae.*

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

33 -

the lily growing among thorns without being wounded by them: "As the lily among thorns;"(5) her Nativity, by the rising dawn;(6) her Assumption, by the Ark of the Covenant which St. John saw in Heaven;(7) the sublime eminence of her dignity, her power and her holiness, by the height of the cedar of Lebanon;(8) her charity, by the rose;(9) her humility, by the spikenard;(10) her mercy, by the olive;(11) her virginity, by the closed gate of the Temple which God showed to Ezechiel the Prophet.(12)

But above all else, Our Heavenly Father has willed to place before our eyes a wealth of beautiful figures and marvellous representations of Mary's most holy Heart. He has done this to show us how much He values and cherishes this lovable Heart and because the rare and wondrous perfections that fill it are well-nigh innumerable and can be represented and described only through a great number of figures and symbolic pictures.

Among the many images and representations of the Admirable Heart of Mary I can distinguish twelve of surpassing beauty. Six of them are found in the principal divisions of the universe; namely, the heavens, the sun, the center of the earth, the inexhaustible fountain of Genesis, the sea and the Garden of Eden. The six others appear in six of the most important manifestations witnessed by the world from the time of Moses to the death of Our Lord. They are the burning bush of Mount Horeb, the mysterious harp of David, the magnificent throne of Solomon, the marvellous Temple of Jerusalem, the miraculous furnace of Babylon, and the Holy Mount of Calvary.

In this Part we shall consider one by one the first six manifestations of the august Heart of the Queen of Heaven. We shall dwell at length upon them so that we may be inspired to bless and praise the hand of the Divine Artist who drew them, to reverence and admire the rare perfections of the prototype whose too inadequate reflection they are, and to evoke a higher esteem for the devotion to

the holy Heart of Mary. It is a wellfounded devotion, testing on a solid basis, because its first origin and firm foundation is the Adorable Heart of the Eternal Father, Who drew these symbolic pictures for us.

(5). Cant. 2, 2.

(6). *Ibid.*, 6, 9.

(7). *Apoc.* 11, 19,

(8). *Ecclus.* 24, 17.

(9) *Ibid.* 39, 17.

(10).Cant. i, it.

(11). *Ecclus.* 19.

(12). *Ezech.* 44, 2.

## CHAPTER 11

### MARY'S HEART, THE HEAVENS

THE first symbolic picture of the Admirable Heart of Mary which the Eternal Father has given to us is the heavens. Mary's pure Heart is truly a heaven of which the sky over our heads is a mere shadow and image. It is a heaven exalted above all others, of which the Holy Ghost speaks when He says that the Saviour of the World went out from a heaven surpassing all others in excellence, when He came on earth to redeem mankind: *A summo caelo egressio ejus*.<sup>(1)</sup> As Our admirable Mother had formed her Divine Son in her Heart before conceiving Him in her womb,<sup>(2)</sup> we can truly say that, having remained hidden in her Heart for a little while even as He had been in the Heart of His heavenly Father from all eternity, Our Blessed Saviour emerged from it to manifest Himself to men. But just as He went forth from heaven and His Father's bosom, without however relinquishing them: *Excessit, non recessit*; <sup>(3)</sup>a so also is His Mother's Heart a heaven whence He came forth in such a manner that He nevertheless remained and will remain forever in it: "For ever, O Lord, thy word standeth firm in heaven." <sup>(4)</sup>

The heavens are called the special work of God's hands: "The heavens are the works of thy hands," <sup>(5)</sup> but the Heart of the Mother of God is the unequalled masterpiece of His omnipotence, His unfathomable wisdom and His infinite goodness.

God made heaven to be the particular abode of His Divine Majesty:

- (1). *Ps. 18, 7.*
- (2). St. John Eudes repeats very often that Mary conceived her Divine Son in her Heart through faith and love before conceiving Him in her womb. In this connection he likes to quote the words of St. Augustine (*Lib. de S. Virginitate, c. 3*): "Mary's maternal relationship would have availed nothing, if she had not borne Christ in Her Heart more happily than in her body"; and also the saying of St. Leo the Great: "She conceived (Christ) in her soul before conceiving Him in her body." (*Serm. I de Nativitate Domini*).
- (3). Tertull.
- (4). *Ps. 118, 89.*
- (5). *PS. 101, 26.*

### THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

35 -

"The Lord hath prepared his throne in heaven." <sup>(6)</sup> It is true that He fills both heaven and earth with His divinity: "I fill heaven and earth," <sup>(7)</sup> but heaven to a far greater degree than earth, for He has established there the fulness of His grandeur, power and divine magnificence: "Thy magnificence is elevated above the heavens." <sup>(8)</sup> In like manner, we can truly say of the Heart of the Blessed Mother of God that it is a real Heaven of the Divinity, of the divine attributes and of the Most Blessed Trinity.

The Admirable Heart of Mary is an empyrean heaven, that is, a Heaven all fire and flames, ever burning with the fire and flames of celestial love, holier and more ardent than the love of the Seraphim and of the greatest Saints who dwell in the empyrean heaven.

Mary's pure Heart is the Heaven of Heavens, created for God alone, because it is the priceless inheritance and rich portion of the Lord, who always possessed it most entirely: "Heaven of heaven is the Lord's." <sup>(9)</sup> Yes, the most holy Heart of the Queen of Angels is the Heaven of Heavens for three significant reasons.

First of all, Jesus Christ is truly the Heaven of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Ghost assures us that the fulness of the Divinity abides in Him: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," (10) and this same Jesus has forever fixed His dwelling in the Blessed Heart of His most worthy Mother. This must not surprise us, for Sacred Scripture reveals that even in this present life, He maintains His dwelling in the hearts of all who believe in Him with a firm and perfect faith. We can therefore conclude that, as our most lovable Saviour is Himself a Heaven, possessing no abode more glorious and delightful, next to the adorable bosom of His Eternal Father, than the Heart of His holy Mother, which is itself a Heaven, He is truly Heaven dwelling within a heaven. In this way, the Heart of the Mother of Jesus can be said to be the Heaven of Heaven.

Secondly, Mary's Immaculate Heart is the Heaven of Heaven because the spotless Virgin is really a heaven considered in her own person. This is the quality ascribed to her by the Holy Ghost, according to a learned and holy writer: "From heaven the Lord hath looked upon the earth." (11) As this commentator explains it, "the Lord, dwelling in the Blessed Virgin Mary, as in a heaven, has turned the eyes of His mercy towards the

(6). Ps. 102, 19.

(7). Jer. 23, 24

(8). Ps. 8, 2.

(9). Ps. 113, 16.

(10). Col. 2, 9.

(11). Ps. 101, 20.

36 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

earth, that is, towards sinners." (12) Then the same author goes on to say that this marvellous Virgin is a heaven because, as all living things in the order of nature receive their life from the influence of heaven, so does Holy Church teach us that the life of grace is given to us through the Blessed Virgin Mary: *Vitam datum per Virginem*." (13) I Now if this incomparable Virgin is a Heaven, our own heaven in this world of grace, because next to God the source of our spiritual life, we can well say that her Heart is the Heaven of Heaven, having been the principle of her corporal and spiritual life on earth and of the eternal life that she now enjoys in Heaven.

Thirdly, the Admirable Heart of Mary is the Heaven of Heaven, because, as St. Bernard says, it contains the entire Church, which is called in Sacred Scripture the Kingdom of Heaven, and because all the children of the Church receive through Mary the life of grace. (14) If St. Paul assured the Christians of his time that they were in his heart, (15) who would dare to contradict St. Bernardine of Siena, (16) who tells us that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, like a good mother, carries all her children in her Heart? Who will contradict me if I add that Our Lady will forever carry all the inhabitants of heaven in her inmost Heart, which becomes the Heaven of Heaven, and a true Paradise of the Elect, in which they find the fulness of delight and joy, due to the inconceivable love for each soul which consumes her maternal Heart? Thus the blessed will forever sing: *Sicut laetantium omnium nostrum habitatio est in corde tuo, sancta Dei Genetrix*. O holy Mother of God, thy boundless charity has so vastly extended thy maternal Heart that it has become like a great city, or rather an immense heaven, full of ineffable consolations and unspeakable joys for thy beloved children, whose happy dwelling it shall be for all eternity.

The Heart of our Holy Mother is thus truly a heaven, an *empyrean* heaven, the Heaven of Heaven. O Heaven, more exalted, more *extensive* and more vast than all the heavens! O Heaven, enclosing Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain! O Heaven, filled with more praise, glory and love of God than the Heaven *where eternal* bliss resides! O Heaven, wherein the King of Heaven reigns more *completely than* in all other heavens! O Heaven, where the Most Holy Trinity dwells

more worthily and accomplishes wonders far greater than in the *empyrean*

(12). Ignotus in Ps. 101.

(13). Ignotus in Ps. 109.

(14) Serm. 3 Super Salve.

(15). 2 Cor. 7, 3.

(16). Serm. 6, art. 22, Cap. 2.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

37 -

heaven! O Heaven, in which divine mercy has established its throne and deposited its treasures, where it hearkens to the cry of the unfortunate and helps them in all their necessities! "O Lord, thy mercy is in heaven." (17)

Let us draw nigh to this throne of grace and with great confidence present our requests to the Mother of grace and mercy. Through the intercession of her Heart, most exalted, yet most tender, we shall obtain the graces that we need to become pleasing in the sight of the celestial majesty of God.

Rejoice, O readers, rejoice, you whose great happiness it is to be numbered among the true children of the Mother of pure love, for your names are written in her maternal Heart! Lift up your eyes and your hearts to that beautiful heaven! It is there that your hearts will find light, strength, powerful aid in the battle of life, guidance and succor, and above all inspiration to love your Creator and Redeemer, the Lord of Heaven, strongly, purely and above all things.

(17). Ps. 35, 6.

## CHAPTER III

### MARY'S HEART, THE SUN

THE sun is the second symbolic picture which God, the Creator of heaven and earth, has deigned to give us of the Immaculate Heart of the Queen of heaven and earth. God did not create the natural sun, our wonderful luminary, merely to enlighten our material world; He made it also to be a representation of the excellent perfections which shine in the luminous Heart of the world's Sovereign Lady.

We should remember that the infinite power of God has divided this great universe into three different states or orders, namely the state of nature, the state of grace and the state of glory. His divine wisdom has nevertheless established such a perfect bond, relationship and resemblance among these three states and among the beings existing in these orders that whatever is in the order of nature is an image of the things belonging to the order of grace, and whatever belongs to the order of nature and grace is a figure of what is to be seen in the state of glory. Hence, the sun, which is truly the heart of the visible world, and the most beautiful and glowing gem of nature, gives us, in spite of its dazzling light, only a very faint shadow of our heavenly Sun, the Heart of the Mother of God.

Sacred Scripture calls the sun an admirable vessel, the work of the Sovereign Lord. "An admirable instrument, the work of the Most High. Great is the Lord that made him.(1) I But we can say of the most excellent Heart of the Mother of God that it is an incomparable masterpiece of God's almighty hand. It is a compendium of all the marvels He has worked in pure creatures, and will be the eternal object of the admiration and delight of angels and men. Great indeed is He who made it, because His divine magnificence appears in her admirable Heart more clearly than in all the other wonderful things of nature, grace and glory.

The sun, which gives light to our visible world and which is, so to  
(1). Eccclus. 43, 2 and 5.

### THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

39 -

speak, its heart, is entirely luminous, is light itself and the source from which the other heavenly bodies *receive their* light. Mary's Heart is surrounded, filled, penetrated by light, and her light is incomparably more brilliant and radiant than all the lights of the celestial spaces. It is all light, and after God, it is the first source of the lights which shine in the firmament of the Church. "I made that in the heavens there should rise light that never faileth."(2)

The sun is, moreover, the principle of the vegetative, sensitive and animal life in the visible world. The Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the source of life of three great worlds. We have already seen(3) that it is the source of life of the Mother of God, who is a world unto herself, filled with marvels far greater and more wonderful than the world we contemplate with our bodily eyes.

But I shall add that the pure Heart of Mary is the source of three different lives to be found in this holy Mother, namely the natural and human life that animated her body on earth; the spiritual and supernatural life which her soul then possessed; and the glorious, eternal life which both her body and soul enjoy in Heaven. Everyone agrees that the heart, in the sense in which we have defined it, is the source of the corporeal life; we must likewise admit that it is the source of love and charity, the virtues which constitute the true life of a Christian soul in time and in eternity, and hence can be

said very truly to be the very element which fosters the life of the soul for earth as well as for heaven.

Secondly, the immaculate Heart of Mary is the principle of the life of a second world, infinitely more admirable than the preceding one. What is this world? It is the God-Man, filled with countless rare marvels. Now, this God-Man is the Son of Mary, and Mary's Heart is consequently the source of His life, since the mother's heart is the principle of the child's life as well as her own.

Thirdly, the Heart of the Mother of Our Saviour is the origin of life for a third world, composed of true children of God, who are vivified by grace on earth and glory in heaven, because under God they derive both the life of grace and the life of glory from the Mother of Him who is their Head and whose members they themselves are. They are indebted for this benefit to her holy Heart, whose original purity, profound humility and ardent love, made her worthy to become the Mother of God and of all the children of God. St. John Chrysostom is surely right when he says that the heart of St. Paul was "the heart of the whole world. For it is through that apostolic heart that the Spirit of Life was

(2) Ecclus. 24, 6.

(3). Part one, Ch. 3, P. 25.

40 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

poured forth on all things and given to the members of Jesus Christ." (4) But how much more true is this of the incomparably loving Heart of the Queen of Apostles? Yes, hers is indeed the heart of the entire world, the heart of Heaven and earth, the heart of the Church Militant, Suffering and Triumphant, since the Holy Spirit bids us sing: *Vitam datam per Virginem, genies redemptae plaudite*. "All ye nations, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, rejoice, sing the praises of your Redeemer and His glorious Mother! You were condemned to eternal death, and the Son of Mary has made you free; the Mother of Jesus has restored life to you, even eternal life, by giving you her Son, who is Life essential and the source of all life."

The solar sun has been in perpetual motion since its creation in space, and it travels so rapidly that mathematicians calculate its speed to be over one Million leagues an hour. Similarly, the holy Heart of Mary, from the moment of her Immaculate Conception, has been completely kept in motion by love for God and charity towards mankind. As long as Mary, the admirable Sun of Light and Purity, was on earth, she sped or rather flew with such celerity on the path of sanctity that the speed of our material sun is simply a shadow and a figure by comparison. For this holy Sun, Mary's immaculate Heart, progressed incomparably farther in the mystical and supernatural way of the world of grace than the material sun which revolves around our visible world.

Sacred Scripture teaches us that the Sun is the tabernacle of God. "He has set his tabernacle in the Sun." (5) This is infinitely more true of the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Ambrose applies these words to her, and we should refer them especially to her Heart, in which God resides more gloriously and works far greater wonders than in the sun of any universe. I hear the Eternal Father pronounce that the throne of His Only-Begotten Son is like to a Sun before His face: "His throne (is) as the sun before me. . . ." (6) What is this throne of Christ, if not the Heart of His dearest Mother, which is therefore the ever brilliant Sun shining before the Father of lights?

If the material sun radiates its light, heat and influence over all living things on earth, still more does this mystical Sun, the Heart of Mary, make its holy light, divine warmth and celestial influence felt everywhere in Heaven and earth, over men and angels: "There is no one who can hide himself from his heat." (7) The earthly sun gladdens with its rays die

(4). In cap. 16, Epist. *ad Rom. homil*, 23.

(5). Ps. 18, 6.

(6). Ps. 88, 38

(7). Ps. 18, 7

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

41 -

inhabitants of the lowly world; the heavenly sun enriches the whole universe with its great and boundless charity towards all God's creatures. *Gaudium annuntiat universo mundo*. It is the consolation of the suffering souls in Purgatory, the joy of the faithful on earth, the exultation of the angels and saints in heaven, and the delight of the Most Blessed Trinity. St. Germanus of Constantinople calls the Heart of Mary the happiness of the entire world. *Commune mundi gaudium*. (8) And St. John Damascene says that it is an ocean of inexhaustible delight: *Gaudii pelagus inexhaustum*. (9).

"Take away the sun that enlightens our material world," says St. Bernard, "what will become of day or light? Take away Mary, the Star of the Sea, or take away the Heart of Mary, the true Sun of the Christian World, and what would be left? Without Mary's radiance, nothing is left but enveloping darkness, the shadow of death and the frightful night of the grave." (10)

O excellent Heart of my Queen, my most amiable Sun, blessed are the hearts that love thee! Happy the minds that meditate on thy greatness, and the tongues that preach and praise thee! Blessed are the eyes that contemplate thee, O radiant Mary! The more they gaze on thee, the greater their desire, the stronger the light and strength they *receive* to enable them to gaze yet more upon thy dazzling light!

O beautiful Sun, enlighten our darkness, melt our frigidity, dispel the clouds and fogs of our minds, inflame our hearts with thy sacred fire! Make us ever receptive to thy sweet influence, that every Christian virtue may flourish in our souls, so that they may be rendered fertile in all kinds of good works. By thy intercession, obtain that we may lead a heavenly life on earth, and never seek any joy here below except the joy of the children of God, which consists in pleasing their Heavenly Father and obeying His adorable will in all things.

O radiant Sun, let our hearts become like clear and polished mirrors, and be pleased to impress thy likeness on them, that they may bear a perfect image of thy humility, purity and submission to the divine will as well as of thy charity, love, sanctity and all the other virtues and perfection of thine admirable Heart. This we ask for the glory of God who made our hearts for Himself alone.

(8). *Homil. de Nativit. Mariae*.

(9). *Orat. 2 de dorm. Deip.*

(10). *In Serm. de Aquaeductu, in Nativit. B. Mariae*.



## CHAPTER IV

### MARY'S HEART, THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

THE third symbolic picture of the most noble Heart of Mary is described in the inspired words: "God hath wrought salvation in *the midst of the earth*." (1)

What is this earth and what is its center? I find several meanings of the word "earth" as mentioned in Sacred Scripture, among which two seem to be most important. The first is the earth created by God at the beginning of the world, which He gave to Adam and his descendants. "But the earth he has given to the children of men." (2) The second is the earth made for the new man, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, to whom the following words were spoken: "Lord, thou hast blessed thy land." (3)

The first earth incurred the wrath of God because the first man sinned. Cursed is the earth in thy work. (4) The fallen earth is a land of misery and darkness, of disorder and death, a land of never-ending woe. In the words of Job, it is "a land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth." (5)

The second earth is a land of blessings, grace and light, a land of eternal life, a land that has become nobler, more august, more luminous and holier than all the heavens. What is this priceless renewed earth? It is the most Blessed Virgin Mary, of whom the first earth, considered as it left the hands of God and existed before being cursed by God, is only an imperfect image and sketch. Of this earth did the Holy Ghost speak in Scripture: when He said through the Prophet, Isaias: "Let the earth be opened, and bud forth a saviour." (6)

It was in Mary, the center of this blessed earth, that God worked out the salvation of mankind. "He hath wrought salvation in the midst of

- (1). Ps 73, 12
- (2). Ps. 113, 16.
- (3). Ps. 84, 2.
- (4). Gen. 3, 17
- (5). Job 10, 22
- (6). Isa. 45, 8.

### THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

43 -

the earth:' (7) Both St. Jerome and St. Bernard (8) apply these words to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Notice, however, that the Holy Ghost who uttered these words through the lips of the Royal Prophet, David, does not proclaim merely that God worked the salvation of the world in this earth, but in the *midst of the earth, in media terrae*, or according to another version, *in intimo terrae, in the center* or *in the heart of the earth*. By that is meant the heart and bosom of the spotless Virgin Mary. Yes, it was in the midst of this "good earth," or better, in the good and excellent Heart of Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ, "in a good and perfect heart," (9) that the Eternal Word, coming forth from the Father's bosom to save mankind, was received and zealously nourished, producing fruit a hundredfold and one hundred thousand times a hundredfold.

All this was declared in that divine prophecy of the Holy Spirit which reveals so many great and admirable mysteries: "There shall be a firmament on the earth on the tops of mountains, above Libanus shall the fruit thereof be exalted: and they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth;" (10) or according to another version: "A full measure of wheat scattered over the lofty

mountains, shall grow so tall that, stirred by the breath of the wind, its undulations shall imitate the verdant woods of Libanon."

What is this overflowing measure of wheat, if not the only Son of God, the true wheat of the elect, the bread of God, Who is the life and strength of man's heart? "Bread may strengthen man's heart." (11) The Eternal Father scattered this sanctifying wheat when He gave us His Divine Son with such great love in the mystery of the Incarnation and He still scatters it every day in full measure when He continues to give us Our Lord daily with consummate goodness in the Blessed Eucharist. What are the lofty mountain-tops, if not His most worthy Mother, whom the Holy Spirit sets before our eyes under the name and figure not of a single mountain but of many mountains? Mary possesses in the highest degree all that is most excellent in the sacred mountains, that is in all the Saints, who are called in Sacred Scripture "the holy mountains," (12) and "the everlasting hills." (13) What are the mighty summits of these mountains, if not the exalted prerogatives and sublime perfections of the Sovereign Lady of the Universe?

(7). Ps. 73, 12.

(8). Serm. 2 in die Pentec.

(9). Luke 8, 15

(10). Ps. 71, 16.

(11). Ps. 103, 15.

(12). Ps. 86, 1.

(13). Ps. 75, S.

44 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Now then it was up on these holy mountains with lofty summits in the midst of this sacred soil, in the excellent Heart of the best of Mothers, that the adorable wheat of redemption was first Sown and planted, since she received Our Saviour in her heart before conceiving Him in her womb. It was later scattered throughout the world by the preaching of the Apostles, animated by the Holy Ghost as by an impetuous wind and became infinitely multiplied in the hearts of all Christians.

We can, therefore, say in truth that Jesus is the fruit of Mary's Heart as well as of her womb, and that the faithful are the fruits of the same Heart, because the very virtues of faith, humility, purity, love and charity, which rendered her worthy to become the Mother of God, made her also the Mother of all God's children. As the Eternal Father gave her the power to conceive His Son in her Heart and in her virginal womb, by clothing her with the divine virtue whereby He generates His Divine Son from all eternity in His own adorable bosom, so also did God grant her the power to form Christ and give birth to Him in the hearts of the children of Adam, who thus became members of Jesus Christ and sons of God.

Even as Mary conceived and will eternally bear her Son Jesus Christ in her Heart, she also conceives and holds forever in the same Heart all the holy members of our Divine Head. They are her beloved children, the fruits of her maternal Heart, and she offers them to the divine majesty as a perpetual sacrifice.

Thus did Our Lady, "the good earth," fructify the grain of wheat which she received from God. Her Son had to die even as the seed must die and, as it were, become annihilated that He might not remain alone, but might produce numberless other grains. In this sense did the King of Kings work out our salvation in the center of the earth.

I could quote many holy Fathers and illustrious Doctors to show how Almighty God saved mankind "in the midst of the earth," that is, in the Holy Heart of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Her Heart

cooperated with His divine mercy, having received such a plenitude of grace, according to the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, that she became enabled to cooperate with her Son in the salvation of all men.(14) This inspires St. Bonaventure to say that her Heart is the source of universal salvation.

"All salvation springs from Mary's Heart." (15)

(14). *Magnum est in quolibet Sancto, quando habet tantum de gratia, quod sufficit ad salutem multorum; sed quando haberet tantum, quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium hominum de mundo, hoc esset maximum, et hoc est in Christo, et in beata Virgine. Opusc. 8.*

(15). *In Psalt. B. Virg. Ps.79.*

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER 45 -

All this being conceded, what must be our obligations towards the most charitable Heart of our Blessed Mother! What gratitude can we show, what praises can we sing, what feast can we celebrate in honor of her Heart, that will be worthy of her excessive charity towards us, and of the favors granted to us by divine mercy through her intercession?

Mary is the center of the earth in which our salvation was wrought. She is also the center of the renewed world, the Christian world, the world of the new man, the world of divine love and holy charity. Here are three reasons to show that Mary's Heart is the center of the Christian world.

First, all beings consider their center the seat of their repose, their conservation, and, as it were, their salvation. The salvation of man having taken place in the Heart of Mary, all Christians must consider her as the source of their life after God and as the cause and the center of their happiness.

The words of the Fathers of the Church will bear us out in this. Here is what St. Bernard has to say. -His words refer to the person of the Blessed Virgin, but can be applied especially to her Heart. "With good reason is Mary called the center of the earth, for all the inhabitants of Heaven, and those of hell, those who come before us, and those who will come after us, their children's children and their entire posterity look to her as to the midst and the center of the earth. She is, in fact, next to her divine Son, the mediator between God and Man, between the Head and the members of the Mystical Body, the Church, between the Old and New Testament, between Heaven and earth, between justice and mercy. They look to her as to the Ark of God, Ark of the Covenant and of peace between God and His people, as the cause of all that is good and the masterpiece of all ages, past and to come. The inhabitants of Heaven, that is, the angels, look to her as to the one through whom the losses inflicted on them by sin will be repaired; those who are in the fiery torment, which here means purgatory, look to her as to the one through whose mediation they will be delivered, those who came before us see in her the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, those who shall follow us consider her as the means whereby they will one day be crowned with immortal glory." (16)

These words of St. Bernard not only may be applied to the Heart of the Mother of God, but are actually more applicable to her Heart than to her person. The cause being nobler than its effects, her Heart so, full of humility is, as we shall see, the cause and the source of all virtues which adorn Our Lady and render her worthy to be the object, the

(16). *Serm. 2 in die Pentec.*

46-

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

refuge, and as it were, the center of every creature past, present and to come. Hence I conclude that her marvellous Heart is indeed the midst and center of the world of the new man.

Secondly, I say that the Heart of Mary is the center of this new world, meaning the world of divine love and holy charity, a world of tenderness and dilection, having charity as its only law, because all holy love and divine charity contained in the hearts of angels and men, who love God for Himself and their neighbor for the love of God, are found united in the Heart of the Mother of Fair Love as in their centre. Mary's Heart is like a beautiful mirror, large enough to reflect all the Sun's rays focussed on its polished surface.

Thirdly, you will remember that the most humble and pure Virgin ravished and attracted to herself the adorable Heart of the Eternal Father, His Beloved Son, and that He became the Heart of her Heart. Jesus is, therefore, the true Heart of Mary. Is not this amiable Jesus the love, the delight, the center and the joy of Heaven and earth? Is it not certain, therefore, that the true Heart of Mary, namely Jesus, is the center of all the hearts of angels and men? They must ever be turned towards it, gaze upon it unceasingly and make it the object of their aspirations and desires. It is the seat of their perfect repose and of their supreme felicity. Out of it there is only trouble, fear, anxiety, death and hell.

O Jesus, true Heart of Mary, take possession of our hearts, and draw them nigh to Thee. Inspire them to love, desire, seek and relish only Thee. May they ever long for Thee, may they always seek their rest and happiness in Thee, may they remain in Thee forever and be consumed in the ardent furnace of Thy Divine Heart so as to be transformed eternally in Thee!

## CHAPTER V

## MARY'S HEART, THE INEXHAUSTIBLE FOUNTAIN

THE fourth symbolic picture of Our Lady's most blessed Heart is the wonderful fountain that God caused to spring from the ground at the beginning of the world, as described in the second chapter of Genesis. "A spring rose out of the earth, watering all the surface of the earth." (1) St. Bonaventure tells us that this fountain was a figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "She was prefigured in the fountain that sprang from the earth." (2) But we have equal reason to say that this represented her Heart, which is truly a living fountain whose heavenly waters irrigate not only the whole earth, but every created thing in Heaven as well as on earth.

Mary is the sealed fountain of the holy Spouse, which her divine Bridegroom calls "a fountain scaled up," (3) for it remained scaled not only against the world, the devil and every kind of sin, but it was closed even to the Cherubim and Seraphim, who could not penetrate the marvellous secrets or comprehend the inestimable treasures hidden by God in Our Lady's pure Heart.

Sacred Scripture states that the heart of man is evil and inscrutable. (4) But the Heart of the Queen of Heaven inspires these words: "God created her in the Holy Ghost, and saw her, and numbered her, and measured her." (5) In other words, so holy and impenetrable is the Heart of Mary that only God Who enclosed within His treasures of grace and put His seal upon it, can know the quality, quantity and price of the graces hidden in this scaled fountain. All we can say is that Mary's immaculate Heart is a fountain of light, a fountain of holy and blessed water, a fountain of living and life-giving water, a fountain of milk and honey and a fountain of wine. It is the source of a great river, nay, of four miraculous streams, and finally, it is the source of an infinity of blessings and goodness.

(1). Gen. 2, 6.

(2). *Figurata fuit per fontem quae ascendebat de terra. In opusc. inscripto Laus Virg.*

(3). Cant. 4, 12.

(4). Jer. 17, 9.

(5). Ecclus. 1, 9.

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Mary's peerless Heart is a *fountain of light*; that foreshadowed in the person of Queen Esther, who is represented in Sacred Scripture as a small fountain that becomes a great light and is turned into the sun. "The little fountain which grew into a river, and was turned into a light, and into the sun . . ." (6) It is the fountain of the sun, *fons solis*, mentioned in Chapters fifteen and seventeen of the Book of Josue.

The Heart of Mary, as well as her name, which means "enlightened" or "the one who enlightens," and also "star of the sea," is indeed a true fountain of light. Holy Church considers and honors her as the resplendent door of pure light; Tu *porta lucis fulgida*, and salutes her as the portal through which divine Light entered the world: *Salve porta, ex qua mundo lux est orta*. Truly the Heart of Mary is the fountain of the sun, because Mary is the Mother of the Sun of Justice, and this divine Sun is the fruit of Mary's Heart.

O incredible wonder! O inconceivable miracle! Who could ever have thought that the sun could be born of a star, or that a fountain could be the source of the sun, *fons solis*. Thus, then, the virginal Heart of Mary is a true fountain of light.

Mary's Heart is a *fountain of water*, but one of blessed, holy and precious water. I here speak of the innumerable tears that poured from this sacred fountain and, united with those of the Redeemer Himself, cooperated in our redemption. O Mary, how many streams of tears have Bowed from thine eyes, with their source in thy loving, charitable, devoted and merciful Heart Tears of love, tears of charity, tears of joy, of sorrow and of compassion! How often did not the ardent love of the maternal Heart for thy infinitely lovable Son cause thee to shed bitter tears, beholding Him so little loved, so much hated, offended and dishonored by the majority of men, although it was the duty of man to serve Him? How often thy burning charity for souls caused thee to weep because through their own malice, millions of precious souls would be lost, notwithstanding all that He did and suffered in order to save them? How many times have the holy angels witnessed tears of sublime devotion coursing down thy beautiful face, as thou wast absorbed in holy communion with the Divine Majesty? All the saints were granted the gift of tears, which could not possibly have been wanting in the Mother of Sorrows who has assured us that she possesses the fulness of gifts bestowed on all the saints. *In plenitudine sanctorum detentia mea.* (7)

O Mother of Jesus, the joy which filled thy peerless Heart on so many occasions while thou wast on earth with thy beloved Son caused sweet

(6). Esther. 10, 6.

(7). Ecclus. 24, 16.

#### THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER 49 -

est tears to flow from thine eyes. Those were tears of joy and consolation, for example, when He assumed our human nature in thy sacred womb, when thou didst visit thy saintly cousin Elizabeth, when thy dear Son was born in Bethlehem, when the three Holy Kings came to adore Him, when, after having lost Him for three days, thou didst find Him in the temple among the Doctors, when He visited thee after the resurrection and when thou didst watch His triumphant ascension into Heaven.

Alas, thy consolations in this life were negligible compared to the sufferings thou didst have to endure. If the joys of thy Heart caused tears of rapture to flow from thine eyes, the poignant sorrows that were so often thine, especially at the Lime of the passion and death of thy beloved Son, made thee shed floods of bitter tears. Then were the sacred words fulfilled in thee: "Let tears run down like a torrent day and night: give thyself no rest, and let not the apple of thy eye cease." (8)

Now then are not all these tears of joy, love, charity, devotion, sorrow and compassion like so many waters streaming from the holy fountain of Mary's immaculate Heart? Oh, with what good reason, therefore, do we call her admirable Heart a fountain of blessed, holy and precious water!

The most pure Heart of Mary is also a *fountain of living water*, which means a fountain of grace. This ought not to astonish us, for the Archangel Gabriel declared long ago that the Mother of the Saviour was full of grace, *gratia plena*, and the Church calls her *Mater gratiae*, Mother of Grace, and *Mater divinae gratiae*, Mother of Divine Grace. The Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, affirms that Our Lady is so full of grace that out of her abundance she can dispense graces to all men. (9)

Her most generous Heart is indeed a fountain of living waters whose salutary streams flow on all sides, over the land of the wicked as well as of the just, in imitation of the All-good and All-merciful Heart of our Heavenly Father who causes His providential rain to fall on the good and the bad alike. This is the reason why the Holy Ghost calls the charitable Heart of the Mother of Mercy "the fountain of gardens," *fons hortorum*. (10) In another passage He names it the fountain that "shall water the torrent of thorns." (11)

What are these gardens, what is this torrent of thorns, watered by this beautiful fountain?

(8). Lam. 2, 18.

(9). Opusc. 8.

(10). Cant. 4, 15

(11). Joel. 3, 18

50 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

The gardens are all the Orders of the Church that lead a truly Christian and holy life. They are delicious gardens for the Son of God, blooming with flowers and fruit that the Spouse longs for when she exclaims: "Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples: because I languish with love." (12) These mystical gardens likewise represent all holy souls, no matter what their state or condition, in whom the heavenly Bridegroom finds His delight among the flowers of holy thoughts, desires and affections, and among the refreshing fruits of virtues and good works.

These gardens of delight are constantly watered by the fountain which is called by the Holy Ghost "the fountain of gardens," according to many holy Doctors who apply these words to the Blessed Virgin Mary. (13)

But Mary's Heart is not only the fountain of gardens whose waters impart refreshment to just and holy souls. St. Jerome also refers to the Holy Mother of God these words of the Prophet Joel: ". . . a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the torrent of thorns." (14) What are these thorns and this torrent? The thorns represent the wicked, whose lives are infested with the thorns of their sins. This torrent is the world, which resembles an impetuous torrent, full of refuse and evil odors, making much noise, but flowing swiftly past, dragging the majority of men into the abyss of perdition. "The world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof." (15)

But the Heart of the Mother of Mercy is so full of goodness that its effects are felt even by the torrent of thorns, or rather, by the poor thorns which are swept in this torrent to be thrown into the eternal whirlpool of hell. The wonderful waters of her holy fountain, coming in contact with these barren and dead thorns, fit only for eternal fire, cause many of them to awaken to new life, and some are even transformed into beautiful trees that bear quantities of good fruit, worthy to be placed on the table of the Eternal King. The reason is that this fountain's divine waters are not only living, but life-giving. Mary's Heart is, therefore, not only a fountain of living waters but a fountain of life, and of life eternal.

But it is not enough to love life without furnishing the substance to nourish and sustain it. For this reason, Mary's maternal Heart is not only a fountain of living and life-giving waters; it is, moreover, *a fountain of milk, of honey, of oil and of wine.*

It is a fountain of milk and honey, for we hear the Divine Spouse say

(12). Cant 2, 5.

(13). Cf. Rupen. in Cantio.

(14). Joel. 3, 18.

(15). John 2, 17.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

51 -

ing to Mary: "Thy lips, my spouse, are as a dropping honeycomb, honey and milk are under thy tongue," (16) which means, "Thy words are full of sweetness and tenderness, and thy Heart must consequently be filled with them." Mary's heart and tongue always agree, and there is perfect

conformity between her words and her sentiments. If therefore she has milk and honey in her mouth, she must also have them in her Heart; and they are under tongue and upon her lips only because her Heart is filled with incomparable sweetness.

Hence, the inspired words: "My spirit is sweet above honey, and my inheritance above the honey and the honeycomb." (17) We must, therefore, conclude that her Heart is a real fountain of milk and honey, whose streams flow incessantly into the hearts of her children, thus verifying the saying of the Holy Ghost: ". . . you shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knee, (she) shall caress you, as one whom the mother caresses." (18) Happy are they who raise no obstacles to the fulfilment of these consoling words! Happy are those who do not close their ears to the voice of the sweetest Mother constantly crying: "As newborn babes, desire the rational milk without guile, that thereby you may grow unto salvation." (19) Come, my well-beloved, come, ~t of my honey and drink of my milk, that you may taste and see how sweet and delightful it is to serve and love Him Who has made me so amiable and tender towards His children, and how my Heart is full of love and affection for those who love me in return. "I love them that love me." (20)

We see therefore that the Heart of the Mother of Fair Love is a fountain of milk and honey for all her children, especially for those who are still weak, tender and delicate, not yet capable of taking more solid food.

Her Heart is also a fountain of oil, that is, of mercy for all sinners. It is, moreover, a fountain of wine to give strength and vigor to the weak and comfort to the sorrowful and afflicted, according to the divine words: "Give strong drink to them that are sad: and wine to them that are grieved in mind." (21)

All those who comfort other men for the sake of charity, and, above all, who work for the salvation of their neighbor, should be inebriated with the wine of divine love! To such as these our charitable Mother, ever burning with zeal for the salvation of souls, cries in a loud voice:

(16). Cant. 4, 11.

(17). Ecclus. 24, 27.

(18). Isa. 66, 12-13.

(19). Peter 2, 2.

(20). Prov. 8,

(21). Prov. 31, 6.

52 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

"Come, children, come beloved of my Heart, come, draw from the fountain of your Mother's Heart the heavenly wine of divine love; drink long and deep; filled with the rapture of the spirit, you need fear no excess. 'Drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved.' (22) Drink of this pure wine, father of virginity and of all holy virgins. 'Wine springing forth virgins.' (23) His heavenly wine fills the Seraphim with delight; it inebriated the Apostles of my Divine Son; it filled the Redeemer Himself with holy rapture when, in the excess of His love for you, He renounced the grandeurs of His divinity and humbled Himself in the lowly crib and on the ignominious Cross. Drink with Him of this delicious wine, that you may forget and despise what the world loves and esteems, that you may love and value God alone, and exert yourself with all your might to establish the reign of His love and His glory in the souls of men. Thus will you become the beloved children of His Heart and of my own.

Who will give me a voice strong enough to be heard in all the world, crying to all men: "All you that thirst, come to the waters: and you that have no money make haste, buy, and cat: Come ye, buy wine and milk without money, and without any price." (24)



You who thirst vainly after the false honors of the world, come instead to the most honorable Heart of the Queen of Heaven, and you will learn by the example of this Heart's thirst for the glory of God alone, that true honor consists in following His Divine Majesty: "It is great glory to follow the Lord." (25) Every other honor is only smoke, vanity and illusion. You who thirst after the riches of earth, come hither, and you will find incomparable treasures.

You who thirst after worldly pleasures, Come and you will find the contentment of the angels, the delights of God, the peace and joy of the children of God and of God's Mother, according to the divine promise addressed to each faithful soul: "Behold I will bring upon her as it were a river of peace, and as an overflowing torrent the glory of the Gentiles." (26)

Emerge from the filth of the world's horrible torrent, of the torrent of thorns that is whirling you into the abyss of perdition! Emerge and enter the sweet waters of the river of peace. Give yourself up in holy ecstasy to this torrent of delights. *Properate*, hasten, why do you wait?

(22). Cant. 5, z.

(23). Zach. 9, 17

(24). Isa. 55, 1.

(25). Ecclus. 23, 38.

(26). Isa. 66, 12.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

53 -

Do you fear to slight the incomparable goodness of the Heart of Jesus, your God and Redeemer, if you invoke the charity of His Mother's Heart? Do you not know that Mary is nothing, possesses nothing, and can do nothing except in, through and by Jesus? Do you not know that Jesus is everything and that He can and does accomplish everything through her? Do you not know Jesus made Mary's Heart as it is, and that He willed it to be the fountain of light, of consolation and of every possible grace for those who will have recourse to it in their necessities? Do you forget that not only does Jesus reside and dwell perpetually in Mary's Heart, but that He is in truth the heart of her Heart and the soul of her soul; and that therefore coming to the Heart of Mary means to honor Jesus and to invoke her Heart is to invoke Jesus?

Our Lady asks of you only one thing, which is, that if you seek to taste the sweetness of the milk and honey flowing from the fountain of her Heart, and experience the potency of its wine, you must renounce all evil feasting and give up all tasting of the wine of the demons. It is impossible to drink of the chalice of Our Saviour and of the goblet of the devil, to partake of the heavenly banquet of God and at the same time to eat at the table of the devil (27) You must choose between them. It should be so very easy to make your choice!

Consider how strange it is! The world offers nothing but crumbs and dregs of feasting, empty fame, wealth and fleeting pleasure, but it sells you these stale crumbs and dregs at the costly price of worry, pain, bitterness, restlessness, anguish, often even at the price of your very life. As Sacred Scripture exclaims: «Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which doth not satisfy you? » (28) Furthermore, the libations that the world sells so dearly are not only stagnant and bitter, completely unable to satisfy you in this life, but their venom is poison bringing eternal death. What satisfaction can you possibly expect to derive from waters as bitter as those of Egypt? (29).

On the other hand, the Divine Son of God and of Mary offers you the refreshment and rapture of the fountain of the fulness of the House of God, of which you are free to drink forever. O what blind, blind folly it is to choose the goblet of sin instead of the chalice of Our Saviour! God Himself has

exclaimed in amazement at this, through the prophet Jeremias, saying:

«Be astonished, O ye heavens at this, and ye gates thereof, be very desolate. . . . For my people have done two evils. They have forsaken

(27). I Cor. 10, 21.

(28). Isa. 55, 2.

(29). Jer. 2, 18.

54 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (30)

O dearest Lord, have pity on such wretchedness, and by the pure heart of Thy most blessed Mother, grant unto us the living water that flows from Thee through the miraculous fountain of her Heart. Stifle in our hearts the dangerous thirst for worldly things and grant us instead the thirst that burns only to please Thee, to love Thee, to seek our delight and refreshment in following Thy Holy Will, in imitation of the admirable Heart of Mary, fountain of sweetness and grace, who knew no joy or paradise except to accomplish Thy Divine Will most perfectly.

(30). Jer. 2, 12-13.

## CHAPTER VI

### MARY'S HEART, THE SEA

THE Admirable Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary is not only a fountain, as we have seen, it is also a sea, of which the ocean created by God on the Third Day is a beautiful figure. This is the fifth symbolic picture or representation of Our Lady's immaculate Heart.

St. John Chrysostom says that the heart of St. Paul is a sea: *Cor Pauli Mare Est*,<sup>(1)</sup> but the Holy Ghost Himself gives this name to the most holy Mother of God, and therefore to her Heart, to which the title is even more applicable than to her person, 'Or we shall show that her Heart is the principle of all the holy qualities that adorn her.

The Holy Spirit declares that Mary, His most worthy Bride, is a sea. A humble and learned writer who, while revealing his brilliant gifts in his excellent commentary on the psalms, has chosen that his name and person remain unknown,<sup>(2)</sup> reaches us that the name of sea is given in Sacred Scripture to the glorious Virgin because she is indeed a sea of purity, vast in extent and in usefulness. We shall consider shortly that Mary is a mean in purity and in extent. As for usefulness, this holy Doctor tells us that just as the sea does not permit the adjoining land to remain sterile, so the souls who approach the Mother of God with true devotion bring forth abundant fruits of benediction, thanks to the graces she lavishly bestows on them. Let us say of her Heart that it is a sea full of great and wondrous riches.

In the order of nature, the sea is one of the greatest marvels of God's omnipotence. "Wonderful are the surges of the sea." (3) God, Who is great everywhere, is especially admirable in the sea. "Wonderful is the Lord in the depths." (4) The holy Heart of Mary is an ocean of wonders and an abyss of miracles. It is the extraordinary masterpiece of essential and uncreated

(1). In cap. 28 Act. Apost. homil.

(2). Incognitus, in PS. 71.

(3). Ps. 92, 4.

(4). Ibid.

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Love, in which the effects Of infinite Power, wisdom and goodness shine more brilliantly than in all the hearts of angels and men.

What is the sea? It is the gathering of the waters, says Sacred Scripture, or if you prefer, it is the place where all the waters are gathered. "Let the waters that are under the heaven, be gathered together into one place." (5) And the sacred text adds: "the gathering together of the waters, be called Seas." (6) Now what is the august Heart of Mary? It is the place where are gathered and united the living waters of all graces springing from the Heart of God, as from their first source. St. Jerome says: "Grace is divided among other saints, but Mary possesses the plenitude of sanctity." (7) For the same reason St. Peter Chrysologus calls Mary *collegium sanctitatis*,<sup>(8)</sup> that is the place where A grace and holiness are assembled and gathered together; and St. Bernard, *mare admirabile gratiarum*,<sup>(9)</sup> a prodigious sea of graces.

"All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea doth not overflow," says the Holy Ghost.<sup>(10)</sup> Thus also all the streams, all the torrents and all the rivers of heavenly grace run into the Heart of the Mother of Grace, and are readily contained there. All the graces of heaven and earth merge their

waters in the great sea of the Holy Heart of the Mother of the Saint of Saints. "In me is all grace of the way and the truth." (11) In Mary's Heart are all the graces of the angels and of men, all the graces of the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels, all the graces of the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, disciples of Jesus, martyrs, priests and levites, confessors, hermits, virgins and widows, of the Holy Innocents and of all the blessed in heaven. There is no overflow of grace in Mary; she is not overwhelmed, for her Heart is worthy of all the gifts and all the liberalities of God's infinite goodness, and is capable of receiving and using them all for the glory of His Divine Majesty.

St. Bernardine of Siena tells us that all the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost descended into the soul and heart of this heavenly Virgin in such fulness, especially when she conceived the Son of God within her chaste womb, that her Heart forms an abyss of grace which no human or angelic intellect can comprehend. The mind of God, that of

(5). Gen. 1, 9.

(6). Ibid. so.

(7). Caeteris per partes: Mariae vero simul se tota infundit plenitudo gratiae. Serm. de .assumpt. B. Mariae.

(8). Serm. 1, 46.

(9). Serm. de B. Virg.

(10). Eccles. 1, 7.

(11) Ecclus. 24, 25

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

57 -

her Son, Jesus Christ, and her own, are alone capable of understanding the abundance and perfection of this mean of grace.(12)

The sea does not hoard its waters, but freely dispenses them to the earth through the rivers, which flow into the mean only to come out of it again, that they may water the whole earth and make it bear all kinds of fruit. "Unto the place from whence the rivers come, they return, to flow again." The Heart of our munificent Queen does not withhold any of the graces she receives from the generous hand of God. She returns them all to the first source, and waters the barren earth of our hearts to the extent needed to make them fruitful for God and for eternity. "That we may bring forth fruit to God." (13)

St. Bernard's words on this subject are most beautiful. He tells us that Mary desires to become everything to everyone. In her abundant charity, she denies no man a claim upon her Heart. She opens the door of her mercy and the portals of her generous Heart to all, that all may receive of her fulness. To the captive, she brings redemption; to the sick, healing; to the afflicted, comfort; to the sinner, forgiveness; to the just, increase of grace. She augments the joy of the angels; to the Son of God she gives the substance of human flesh, and to the Most Blessed Trinity glory and everlasting praise. The love and charity of her Heart make themselves felt by the Creator Himself and by all His creatures.(14)

Yes, Mary's admirable Heart is indeed a sea, being, after Our Lord Himself, the basis and sustenance of the Christian world, a sea of charity and love, a sea more solid and firm than that which sustained the feet of St. Peter as he walked upon its surface. Her heart is an mean more strong than the firmament itself, that sea of which St. John speaks in the Apocalypse: "And in the sight of the throne was, as it were, a sea of glass like to crystal; a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had overcome the beast . . . standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." (15)

Let us study the symbolism of the vision of the Evangelist. Glass is a product which owes its clarity, shape and perfection to moulding in the heat of intense fire. Similarly, the Heart of Mary was fashioned in the all-consuming fire of the Blessed Trinity, the furnace of the Holy Spirit, of which it is the most perfect work. Also, during her life on earth, the heart of Mary was tempered, like glass, in the furnace of suffering.

St. John speaks of glass like to crystal, meaning glass that is both

(12). Serm. 5 de Nativ. B. Virg, cap. 12.

(13). Rom. 7, 4.

(14). Serm. de verb. Apoc, Signum magnum.

(15). Apoc. 4, 6 and 15, 2.

58 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

transparent and shining, absorbing and radiating clear light, the most vivid symbol of purity. The sea like unto crystal is the mean of Mary's heart shining in its flawless purity. Glass made by man is dark in darkness, needing light to be luminous, shining most brilliantly in the direct brightness of the sun, reflecting the measure of light it receives. Similarly, the admirable Heart of Mary absorbs and reflects most marvellously the full celestial radiance of the Eternal Sun.

She is the sea of crystal "in the sight of the Throne" that is, directly before the face of the Divine Majesty, her entire existence being to receive and to reflect the image of God, not only as a sea but as a shining mirror.

St. John also speaks of the vision of a miracle, a sea mingled with fire, and thus he explains the inspired words of the Canticle of Canticles: "Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it." (16) These floods represent the torrent of sorrow that engulfed the heart of Mary, the Beloved Spouse, particularly during the Passion of her Divine Son. ". . . O Virgin daughter of Sion, great as the sea is thy deep affliction." (17) Yet even the mean of sorrow did not overwhelm the fire of love in the heart of Mary, but rather caused its flames to glow more brightly.

The Evangelist envisions the saints standing upon the sea of crystal, because their salvation has been founded upon Mary and they have chosen to dwell with her Beloved Son. Because of her, they have won the grace to chant forever the canticle of the Lamb, the hymn of praise, of joy, of victory over evil; therefore they stand upon the sea of her heart, hearing harps.

O adorable Jesus, grant unto us that we may sing with thee, with Thy Mother most admirable, and with the entire company of the saints, this miraculous canticle in praise of the adorable Heart of the Blessed Trinity, which is the source of the countless wonders and perfections enriching the heart of Mary, the ocean of grace and charity.

O Mary, thou sea of love unquenched by sorrow, behold my heart, the least and smallest of all hearts, a mere drop of water seeking to unite itself with thy vast ocean, to become lost in thy depths forever! O Mary, Queen of all hearts consecrated to Jesus, look down upon the tiny drop, my unworthy heart, offered to thee, to become merged forever in the sea of thy glowing love! Mother of Mercy, thou seest us here below, tossed upon a stormy sea of raging trial and temptation. In thy great mercy, deign to be our strength, our guiding-star, our sustenance, that, standing

(16). Cant. 8, 7.

(17). Lm. 2, 13

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER**

59 -

firm upon that crystal sea before the Throne, thy Admirable Heart, which tempests cannot assail, we may sing without fear:

"Thy royal heart is our pure light, our refuge safe. Why should I fear? Her goodness is firm support of our lives. Nothing can trouble our hearts."

## CHAPTER V11

## MARY'S HEART, THE GARDEN OF EDEN

THE Garden of Eden described in the second and third chapters of Genesis is one of the most expressive figures drawn by the omnipotent and all-wise hand of God to represent the Heart of His beloved Daughter, the Blessed Virgin Mary. His infinite goodness has given us an excellent picture of her immaculate Heart. The earthly paradise of Scripture is the perfect representation of another paradise; it is the paradise of the first man, Adam, excellently portraying the paradise of the Second man, Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer.

To view this picture in its true light, we must consider many aspects Of it.

Let us begin with the name. If we consult Sacred Scripture, we shall learn that the first paradise was called "a paradise of pleasure," (1) "a place of pleasure." (2) The name of the garden of delights can very properly be applied to the admirable Heart of the Mother of God, true paradise of the new man, Jesus Christ. It is a garden of the Beloved, a garden scaled and doubly barred, a garden of delights. The Divine Spirit gives three names to the Heart of His holy bride, and they contain many profound meanings.

In the first place, Mary's Heart is *the Garden of the Beloved*. Do we not hear the Holy Ghost inspiring her to say: "Let my beloved come into his garden." (3) Who is the beloved of whom she speaks? Is it not her Son Jesus, the single and only object of her love? Into what garden does she invite Him to come, if it be not her virginal Heart, into which He was attracted, as we have said, by her humility and her love? Such is the explanation of the learned Balingham. (4) The Garden of the Beloved, therefore, is the Heart of the Beloved Bride; the Heart of Mary is the Garden of Jesus.

(1). Gen. 2, 8.

(2). Ibid. 2, 10.

(3). Cant. 5, 1.

(4). In locis commun. Sac. Script. verbo Cor. 4.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

61 -

In the second place, the Admirable Heart of the Mother of God is a *sealed garden*. Her heavenly Spouse says of her: "My sister, my Spouse, is a garden enclosed, a garden enclosed, a fountain *sealed up*." (5) But why does He twice repeat that it is an enclosed garden? He thereby means to teach us that the Heart of His Beloved Bride is absolutely shut against two things: it is shut against sin, which together with the serpent, the author of sin, never entered there: and it is shut against the world and all things of the world, against everything that is not God. He alone has always occupied this garden entirely, and *there never existed* place in it for anything else.

The third name given by the Holy Ghost has reference to the prophetic figure, the first Paradise, and He calls it a garden of delights, *locus voluptatis*, (6) *paradisus voluptatis*. (7) Mary's spotless heart is indeed a garden of rapture for the Son of God a garden where He experienced joys which were His greatest delights after those enjoyed from all eternity in the heart and bosom of His Eternal Father.

If Thou dost assure us, O Jesus, that Thy delight is to be with the children of men, (8) even though they are full of sin, ingratitude and infidelities, what must not have been Thy delight in the most amiable Heart of Thy Blessed Mother, where Thou didst never meet anything displeasing to Thee,

but found. Thyself always praised, glorified and loved more perfectly than in the Paradise of the Cherubim and Seraphim? One can easily say that, after the adorable Bosom of the Eternal Father, no place ever was or will be so holy, so worthy of Thy majesty, so filled with glory and contentment for Thy delectation as the virginal Heart of Thy most amiable Mother.

Hence it is, O Saviour, that after hearing the invitation to come into her garden, that is, her Heart, expressed in the words: "Let my beloved come into his garden," (9) thou dost answer her: "I am come into my garden, O my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my myrrh, with my aromatical spices: I have eaten the honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk." (10) The myrrh represents *the* mortifications and anguish of thy loving Heart which I have gathered as well as all acts of virtue thou hast practised for love of Me, and I shall keep them in my Heart forever to be eternal joy and glory. I have also eaten honey, and

(5). Cant. 4, 12.

(6). Gen. 2, 8 and to.

(7). Ibid. 3, 23 and 24.

(8). Prov. 8, 3 1.

(9). Cant. 5, 1.

(10). Ibid.

62 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

drunk my wine and milk, that is, I find so many delights in this paradise given to me by my Heavenly Father, that I seem to be constantly feasting therein on honey.

These inspired words certainly define for us the name of "paradise."

Do you wish to know the Creator of this earthly paradise? Listen to the Word of God; "The Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning." (11) It was His infinite goodness towards the first Adam, that impelled God to plant this first paradise for men and posterity. If men had been obedient to God, they would have passed from an earthly, temporal paradise to an eternal and celestial heaven.

The unfathomable love of the Eternal Father for the second Adam, namely His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, led Him also to create a second paradise for Christ and all His true children, who will abide therein forever with their all-good Father. He causes them to participate even now as well as for all eternity in the holy and divine delights He there enjoys. For this reason, having told His most worthy Mother that He has come into her garden to eat His honey and to drink His wine and milk, He turns to His children and says to them: "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved." (12)

I see three principal objects in the garden of the First Adam. I see the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, planted in the centre of Paradise. I see also many other trees being all kinds of fruit, agreeable to look upon and delightful to taste.

In the second Garden, I behold incomparably better trees, of which the first are but shadows. I see the real Tree of *Life*, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, Whom the Father planted in the midst of this divine paradise of the virginal Heart of His most Holy Mother, when the Angel said to her: "The Lord is with thee." St. Augustine thus explains this passage: "The Lord is with thee, to abide first in thy Heart and then in thy virginal womb, to fill thy soul before descending into thy chaste bosom." (13)



Was it not the fruit of this Tree of Life that restored to us the eternal life which we had lost by eating another fruit given to us by a woman whose name was Eve? Was not the fruit of everlasting life given to us by the hands of a celestial woman whose name was Mary? "What didst thou say, O Adam?" exclaims St. Bernard. "The woman whom Thou didst give to me gave me of the fruit, and I did eat." These words tend to increase thy guilt, rather than diminish it. Change this unjust excuse

(11). Gen. 2, 8.

(12). Cant. 5, x.

(13). De sanctis, serm. A.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

63 -

into words of gratitude, and say: 'Lord, the woman thou gavest me, gave me of the fruit of the Tree of Life, and I did eat, and my mouth found it sweeter than honey, because by this precious fruit Thou hast restored me to life.' " Then the Saint adds: "O Marvellous Virgin, worthy of every honor! O woman to whom the highest veneration is due, who are admirable above all others, who hast repaired thy parent's fault and hast imparted life to those who will come after thee!" (14)

Such is the first tree I behold in the second Paradise, the Virginal Heart of Mary, which is more of Heaven than of earth. But I also see there the Tree of *Knowledge of Good and Evil*, because the luminous and most enlightened Heart of the Mother of God has been filled with the science of the Saints, with the wisdom and science of Jesus Christ, the Saint of Saints. Her Heart is the dwelling-place of the Sun, ever united to Him in Whom all the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge are hidden. Mary's heart has therefore perfectly known the sovereign good, which is God, and the supreme evil, which is sin. She did not know sin, however, as Adam and Eve knew it, by transgressing the commands of God; she knows sin in the light of God and as God knows it, hating it as God hates it. The fruit of this tree did not harm her as the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the first paradise harmed the first man and woman. Adam and Eve lost themselves and their posterity by eating of its fruit, because they ate of it against God's will. But our true Eve, the real Mother of the Living, sanctified herself and contributed to the sanctification of her children by eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge which God had planted in her Heart. She ate of it as God does, and as God wished that she should eat, that is, in using her knowledge as God employs His divine omniscience, availing herself of knowledge only to love God as God loves Himself, and to hate sin as God hates it.

God said of Adam, after his sin, in a sense implying his confusion and condemnation: "Behold Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil." (15) So also can He say of our incomparable Virgin, but in a sense that contributes to her praise and glory: "Behold Mary is become like one of us, knowing good and evil in the same light as we know them, and thus becoming a clear image of our holiness and perfection."

I see many other trees in our new Garden, that is, in the Heart of Mary, laden with excellent fruits most agreeable to the sight and delightful to the taste of Him who planted them. Does she not have them in mind when she says to her Beloved: "Let my beloved come into his

(14). Homil. 2, SUP. Missus est.

(15). Gen. 3, 22.

64 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

garden, and eat the fruit of his apple trees? (16) Is Her faith, her hope, her charity, her submission to the divine will, are as many holy trees planted in her Heart and bearing an infinite variety of fair fruits.

Her virginal purity is another heavenly tree which bore the fruit of fruits, Christ, the King of Virgins, and later the thousands of virgins who will ever be found in the Church of God. Mary's ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls is a divine tree upholding as many fruits as there are souls in whose salvation she has cooperated. Our Lady speaks of these fruits, which she also calls flowers, when, in the excess of her love for souls, she exclaims: "Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples: because I languish with love." (17) With the flowers she indicates newly converted souls who have just begun to serve God; with the fruits, those souls who have made progress and are more steadfast in virtue.

Such then are the trees to be found in the first and the second gardens of Eden. Are any flowers to be found there? Sacred Scripture does not mention the presence of any blossoms in the first garden; yet who can doubt that a garden of delight must have contained flowers in great abundance? It is certain, however, that the garden of Jesus is filled with heavenly flowers, the most beautiful and sweet-scented imaginable. The Heart of Christ's Mother is a celestial flower-bed dotted with the holy blossoms of all Christian virtues, immortal flowers, which never fade, whose ravishing beauty and delightful fragrance remain in every season. They fill the universe with their sweet perfume and give joy to the Angels, yea, even, to God Himself. They are at once flowers and fruits, for the Holy Ghost inspires the words: "My flowers are the fruit of honour and riches." (18)

The Eternal King adorns His garden with these flowers, and by means of their divine fragrance attracts innumerable hearts to Himself. He cat of these fruits, which are among the choicest viands of His heavenly table, and gives them as nourishment to His children. He assures us, moreover, that He takes His rest and refreshment in the works of mercy which are among the first flowers of His garden: "This is my rest, fresh the weary, and this is my refreshing." (19) So also does He feast with delight on the other acts of virtue which proceed from devoted hearts, and especially from the perfect Heart of His glorious Mother. With them He nourishes and strengthens the souls of His children.

(16). Cant. 5, 1

(17). Cant. 2, 5.

(18). Ecclus. 24, 23.

(19). Isa. 28, 12.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

65 -

This is what God meant when He said that He came into His garden, ate His honey and drank His wine with milk, and then invited His friends and children to eat, drink and be inebriated with Him. (20)

Among the flowers in Mary's Garden for her divine Spouse, St. Bernard admires especially the perfume of violets, the whiteness of lilies and brilliant color of the roses. Here are his words: "Thou art an enclosed garden, O Mother of God, wherein we cull all kinds of flowers. Among them, we gaze with particular admiration on thy violets, thy lilies and thy roses, which fill the House of God with their sweet fragrance. Thou art, O Mary, a violet of humility, a lily of chastity, and a rose of charity." (21) We may add: "Thou art, O Mary, a carnation of mercy, a double carnation, because thy wondrous Heart is filled with mercy and compassion, not only for our corporal infirmities, but still more for our spiritual misery, which is infinitely more painful and complex than our bodily ills can ever be. O Mother of Mercy, have pity on all who are miserable, and especially on those who remain unaware of their own misery."

And now I go on to another object to be envisioned in the earthly paradise. In the second chapter of Genesis, we read that God brought to the first man the animals and the birds He had created that Adam might give them suitable names, as a sign of his dominion over them and of their

dependence on him. Several learned Doctors are of the opinion that Adam offered some of the animals to God in sacrifice at that time.

We may now ask if any qualities of the Heart of the Queen of Heaven can have been symbolized by such humble things as animals and birds? Yes, and this should not surprise you, since her Son, Who is God Himself, willed to be represented by oxen, sheep, lambs, and several other beasts which, under the Old Law, were sacrificed to God.

What, then, is represented by the animals and birds subjected by God to the dominion of Adam in Paradise? They represent the natural passions that have their seat in the corporal and physical heart of man. These passions are of two kinds, that is, the more earthly and animal instincts, such as anger, hatred, fear, sadness, aversion, distrust, which are represented by the animals, and the more spiritual emotions, such as love, desire, hope, courage and joy typified by the birds.

All these passions existed as we have seen, (22) in the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, just as they are found in the hearts of all children of Adam, but she enjoyed the great privilege that in her Heart they were completely subject to reason, just as the savage beasts were under the complete control of Adam in the earthly paradise. The spirit of Christ, the new man, reigned so perfectly in Mary's Heart and so absolutely ruled her passions, that they never experienced any motivation contrary to the will of God. She never employed them except under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit and for the glory of His Divine Majesty. She never loved anything besides God; she never desired anything except to please Him; she feared nothing save to displease Him. All the difficult tasks she undertook were accomplished in His service and for His glory, the sole cause of her joy, even as the offence and dishonor afforded Him by sin were the only motives of her hatred, her aversion, and her anger. So truly were her natural passions uplifted and almost annihilated towards the world and all worldly objects and concerns, even with regard to herself and her own interests, that her emotions existed and vibrated only for what was pleasing to Him who possessed, animated and directed them in all thoughts.

(20). Cant. 5, 1.

(21). In deprecatur et laude ad B. Virg.

(22). See Part I, Chapter 111.

66 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

From this we learn that the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary was truly the Earthly Paradise, in which there was no war, trouble or disorder of any kind, but peace, tranquility and marvellous order, combined with ceaseless praise and adoration of the God who had established His throne in this Paradise. All her passions, being entirely subject to reason and the Spirit of God, and perfectly blended together, blessed and praised Him with admirable harmony in the variety of their distinct motions, uses and functions. They were all guided by the same Spirit and all directed towards the same end, to glorify the Divine Majesty.

Now let us study the gardeners. In the first terrestrial paradise, Adam was appointed "to dress it, and to keep it," (23) but instead of cherishing his beautiful garden, he sold it to his arch-enemy the serpent, for a mere taste of the forbidden fruit. Instead of cultivating the Garden of Eden, Adam brought sin into it, filling it with thorns and thistles. What an unfaithful guardian! What a wicked gardener!

But in the second Paradise, the enclosed garden of the Heart of Mary, the gardener is Wisdom, eternal, watchful and faithful, and the three assistant gardeners are Love, which digs and prepares

the soil to receive the seed of heavenly inspiration, Grace which sows the seed, and Patience that cultivates it to fruition by perseverance. 'Thus the flowers of Mary's heart grow ever more beautiful, more admirable to us and more delightful to God, while the fruits of her garden multiply a hundred thousandfold.

As for the significance of the events that transpired, I consider that the marriage of our First Parents in the Garden of Eden, a holy union designated directly by God, was symbolic of the hypostatic union between the  
(23). Gen. 2, 15

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

67 -

divinity and humanity of the Eternal Word, and the mystical alliance of Our Saviour and His Church. Yet where was the contract for these divine alliances drawn up, if not in the Garden of the heart of Mary, the handmaid of God Almighty and the beloved Spouse of the Holy Spirit? There took place the secret and ineffable negotiations between the Eternal Father and the Blessed Virgin concerning the mystery of the Incarnation. There she made the offering and surrender of herself to the Divine Will, and gave her consent to have a part in the Divine Espousals, not only between the august Trinity and herself, but between divine and human nature, between the Son of God and Holy Church.

In the original garden of Paradise, God sought for Man, saying "Where art thou?" (24), because sin made Adam seek to hide and blot himself out in fear. In the second Paradise, God sought to hide Himself and His great glory for love, concealing His royal splendour so that the Three Kings, who came from afar to adore Him, had to ask: "Where is he?" It was sin that caused the annihilation of Adam, but love achieved the annihilation of the new Adam, the Son of God, who descended into the garden of Mary to draw us from the nothingness of sin.

In the first garden, God pronounced sentence upon the serpent: "The woman shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (25) In the garden of Mary's heart, this pronouncement was fulfilled. Her Immaculate Conception crushed original sin, her sanctity routed the powers of evil, and her love obtained the commutation of our death sentence, bringing us the Saviour of the world. (26)

Man, having rebelled against God in the first paradise, was driven from that garden and banished forever with all his posterity, and at the gate was placed an angel with a flaming sword in his hand to prevent the children of Adam from re-entering the Garden of Eden. From this we learn that to enter and share the second paradise, namely the pure heart of the Mother of the new Adam, we must cease to be sons of Adam and become children of Jesus Christ, that is, our old life must die.

This death seems fearful; the sword of the cherubim is terrifying; yet actually it is a sword of love, which wounds, or even slays the blessed, in order to heal their souls and make them live the life of God. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (27) says Sacred Scripture, meaning the death that is not death but the beginning of eternal life.

(24). Gen. 3, 9.

(25). Gen. 3, 15.

(26). Cf. St. John Damascene: Orat 2 de domit. B. Mariae.

(27). Ps. 115, 15.

68 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Now that I have shown you, dear reader, the admirable Heart of Mary as the garden of delectation of the God-Man, I would warn you that your own heart must be one of two things, either a hell of torment for yourself, or a paradise of delights for you and for Jesus Christ. If you banish sin and self-love from the garden of your heart, opening wide the door to grace and to the King of Virtue, He will enter in and find repose in that place.(28) If you drive away grace and mortification, letting sin grow in your garden, then the demons will enter and make it their abode, a veritable hell instead of paradise. But if you strive to imitate Mary, your Queen, tending your heart with wisdom, love, grace and patience, God will not refuse you the full measure of His gifts so that you may cultivate your garden fruitfully, and make it, like Mary's, a paradise of delight for your Lord and Saviour, as well as a place of refreshment, deep sweetness and peace for yourself.

(28). Prov. 15, 15.

## PART THREE

### Six Additional Symbolic Pictures

#### Part Three

#### Six Additional Symbolic Pictures

### CHAPTER I

#### MARY'S HEART, THE BURNING BUSH OF MOSES

JOHN GERSON, very learned and devout chancellor of the famous University of Paris, when commenting on the *Magnificat*, Says that Mary's incomparable Heart was prefigured by the burning bush seen by Moses on Mount Horeb. (1) Gerson does not speak thus without good reason. The extraordinary spectacle of a bush burning in the midst of a blazing fire without being consumed is a beautiful representation of the Heart of Mary, which it excellently portrays in Several ways.

First, we should consider that the mountain on whose slopes the bush grew is called in Sacred Scripture "the mountain of God," *mons Dei*. (2) it is also spoken of as "a holy mountain," for Moses heard a voice saying to him: "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." (3) We shall easily be convinced, therefore, that it represents the most Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the true mountain of God, a mountain of holiness of whom we can well say with St. Gregory the Great (4) that she is the mountain foretold by the Prophet Isaias as the peak towering above all other heights: "A mountain ... on the top of mountains," (5) because God has raised her in dignity, in sanctity and power above the chief Seraphim and the greatest saints.

Secondly, we ought not to despise this insignificant bush, a lowly shrub, the least of all plants. On the contrary, we should regard it with

(1). Altare Cordis (Mariae) in quo semper ignis ardebat holocausti. Fuit enim rubus ardens incombustus. Tract. 9 super Magnificat, part. 1.

(2). Exod, 3, 1.

(3). Ibid- 3, 5.

(4). In Reg. 1.

(5). Isa. 2, 2.

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

respect, since God so honored this bush as to choose it in preference to the tallest cedars of Lebanon for this manifestation of His glory, amid the fire and flames of its miraculous blaze. Would you know the reason of this? Listen to the Holy Ghost: "The Lord is high and looketh on the low: and the high he knoweth afar off. (6) I Though God is most high and infinitely above His creatures, nevertheless it delights His divine Providence to look with a kind and loving eye at that which is small and lowly. While He draws near to the humble, He surveys the great and mighty from afar, as though He disregarded and despised them.

Thus was He attracted by the humility of Mary, His handmaid. *Respexit humilitatem ancillae suae.* (7) St. Bernard speaks as follows of the profound humility of Mary's Heart: "She who in her own mind and heart was the least of all creatures, has rightly been made the first, because, even though she was in fact the first, she considered herself as being the last." (8) This humility of the

Heart of Heaven's Queen is represented by the lowliness of the mysterious bush of Mount Horeb.

Thirdly, we must not be frightened or horrified by the sharp thorns which guard this bush on all sides, both outside and inside. This should, on the contrary, make us love it more, because God Himself loves it for this reason. It is obvious that God loves all His creatures and hates none of the works of His hands, for it is written: "Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which thou hast made." (9) It is also obvious that God cherished a specially tender love for this little bush, that His Heart was there and that He took pleasure in it. He chose it to be His throne, the place where He would manifest His glory to His servant Moses, where He would speak to His prophet, disclose divine secrets and reveal His providential designs to deliver the Chosen People from Egyptian bondage.

God loved the burning bush because the fire that encompassed without consuming it represented the fire of divine love which filled the Heart of Mary, a love far greater than that of all the hearts of men and angels. The thorns symbolized the bitter sorrow and unspeakable anguish which pierced the Heart of the Mother of God, suffering that she accepted for the love of God and the salvation of mankind.

Moreover, God descended from Heaven into the bush on Mount Horeb and manifested Himself to Moses, "in the flame of fire," to show His love and charity towards his people, and spoke "from the midst of the

(6). Ps. 137, 6.

(7). Luke 1, 48

(8). In Assumpt. Serm. 5, De Verbo Apoc. Signum Magnum.

(9). Wisd. 11, 25.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

73 -

bush," or according to another version "from the heart of the bush," to declare His intention of delivering the children of Israel from the captivity of Pharaoh through the instrumentality of Moses. In like manner the Son of God, in the excess of His love, descended from the bosom of the Eternal Father into His Mother's Heart, ablaze as it was with love for God and charity towards men, in order to bring about our redemption and to associate her with Himself as the instrument of this great work.

God remained in the burning bush only a short time, but He has always been and will forever abide in the Heart of our glorious Mother. *Deus in medio ejus, non commovebitur?* (10) God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved." According to another rendering, *Deus in intimo ejus non amovebitur*, "God is in the inmost Heart and shall never depart therefrom."

The principal characteristic we should consider about the burning bush, however, is marked by the words of Moses: "I will go and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." (11) The sacred text says that Moses saw the bush in the midst of a glowing fire, which nevertheless did not destroy it. "He saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt." (12)

This is truly a great miracle. Yet it is only a figure of the much greater wonder that took place in the Heart of our admirable Mother. Mary's Heart was a galaxy of marvels, and one of the most stupendous was that, while the Mother of Fair Love remained in this world, her Heart became inflamed with love for God to such intensity that this sacred flame would have consumed her corporal life if she had not been miraculously preserved in the midst of such heavenly fervor. It was, therefore, a *greater* wonder to behold Our Lady living surrounded by heavenly fire, without being annihilated, than to watch the burning bush of Moses in the midst of fire without being consumed.

From the foregoing we may therefore conclude that the burning bush of Mount Horeb was indeed a significant representation of the most Holy Heart of the Mother of God.

Likewise, dear reader, do not forget that your heart must burn with the loving fire that enkindled the virginal Heart of Mary, the fire that the Son of God came to spread upon earth, or else it must burn forever in the dreadful conflagration prepared for the devil and his cohorts. Oh, what a difference between these two kinds of fire! The devouring flames

(10). Ps. 45, 6.

(11). Exod, 3, 3.

(12). Ibid. 3, 6.

74-

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

that torment eternally without consuming, and the delightful, joyous flames that constantly ravish the hearts of the ardent seraphim!

Rejoice, each one of you who reads or listens to these words! Give thanks to God that you are still alive, that yours is still the power to choose which of these fires shall enkindle your heart. Strive earnestly to extinguish the flame of self-love, of worldliness, the burning of anger, lust, envy and ambition. Give your heart entirely to Jesus Christ, asking Him to set it on fire with His love. For this purpose there is no better prayer than the words of St. Augustine:

"O divine fire that burneth always and is never extinguished; O love always ardent and never growing cold, enkindle my being! Set me on fire completely, so that I may become nothing but a glowing flame of love for Thee."



## CHAPTER 11

### MARY'S HEART, THE HARP OF KING DAVID

THE mysterious harp of King David, mentioned in several passages of Sacred Scripture, is another symbolic picture of the Holy Heart of Mary. It is an excellent representation because her pure Heart was indeed the harp of the true David, namely Our Lord Jesus Christ. He fashioned it with His own hands; He alone always possessed it. No other fingers but His ever evoked its melodies, because her virginal Heart never vibrated with sentiments, affections or impulses other than those inspired by the Holy Ghost.

The strings of this royal harp are the virtues of Mary's Heart, especially her faith, hope, love of God, charity towards her neighbor, religion, humility, purity, obedience, patience, mercy, hatred of sin, love of the cross. On these twelve strings the Divine Spirit played with wondrous harmony melodious canticles of love which so greatly charmed the ears of the Eternal Father that He forgot His anger against sinners, He laid aside the thunderbolts wherewith He vowed to destroy mankind and gave His own Son to be the Saviour of humanity.

Sacred Scripture tells us that King David employed his harp specially on four great occasions and we see Jesus, the Son of David, using His mystical harp to accomplish four infinitely greater achievements.

In the first instance, David, the man of God, by the mere sound of his harp, put to flight the evil spirit which possessed Saul. Similarly, the new David used the Heart of His loving Mother as a sublime harp and consequently freed by its divine music the human race that grovelled under the evil dominion of Satan.

The prophet David also employed His harp to sing many psalms and canticles to the honor and glory of God. Our true David, likewise, sang with His instrument five types of canticles in praise of the Most Blessed Trinity. The first were canticles of love, the strongest, purest, most perfect love that ever was or shall be. The second were canticles of praise and thanksgiving for the benefits of divine goodness on behalf of all creatures, for the Blessed Virgin Mary did not limit herself to thanking

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

God for the infinite favors she received from His hand, but she praised Him unceasingly for the graces He pours on all created beings. The *third* were *canticles of sorrow, of anguish and bereavement* at the time of the sufferings and death of her beloved Son. The *fourth* were *canticles of triumph* for all the victories won by herself as general of the great King's armies over His enemies and, we may truly say, over Himself, having so often disarmed divine vengeance when it stood ready to destroy the world and punish its innumerable crimes. The *fifth* were *canticles of prophecy* to announce the great designs of God for the future, many of which were foretold by the Queen of Prophets in the wonderful canticle she composed when greeting her cousin St. Elizabeth.

The third purpose for which King David used his harp was to praise God and especially to praise Him *with joy*. In like manner, Christ the second David, not only attuned His holy Mother's Heart to praise and bless His divine Majesty in every way, but He also induced Mary to seek her joy and bliss *exclusively* in His praises, and in all the acts she performed for His glory and in His service.

King David chose as the fourth function of his harp to excite and attract other men to the praise of God, with hearts full of joy and gladness like his own. So too Christ the King attracts innumerable souls to the love and praise of His heavenly Father by the sweet sound of His precious harp, that is, by means of the blessed Heart of His glorious Mother. The extraordinary virtues of her vibrant Heart resound so loudly and harmoniously throughout the entire Christian Church that numberless persons of all ranks and conditions find themselves urged to imitate the perfections which adorn it, thus beginning to carry out on earth what the angels and saints achieve in Heaven. In other words, they place their entire contentment and felicity in all that concerns the sovereign Monarch in Heaven and earth.

Another point worthy of special mention is that Christ, our adorable David, possesses many other harps given to Him by the Eternal Father to satisfy His boundless desire to hear the praise of God unceasingly in every place, at every time, in all things and in every way.

His first and sovereign harp is His own Sacred Heart. It is this harp that He speaks of when He says: "I will sing to thee with the harp, thou holy one of Israel." (1) On this harp, in fact, He sang continually during His mortal life on earth, and will forever sing in the glory of heaven a thousand canticles of love, praise and thanksgiving to His heavenly Father, in His own home as well as in the name of all His members and of all creatures God has made. But the love that inspires these canticles (1). Ps. 70, 22.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

77 -

is infinitely higher, their song is immeasurably holier than those of the canticles He sings on His second harp, which we have just described, namely the Heart of His peerless Mother.

These two Hearts and *these two* Harps are nevertheless so closely attuned that in a certain sense they constitute one single harp, vibrating in unison, giving forth but one sound and one song, singing the same canticle of love. If the first sounds a canticle of praise, the second *echoes it* with its own chords. If the Heart of Jesus loves God the Father, Mary's Heart unites in that love; if the Heart of Jesus pours itself out in thanksgiving before the Most Holy Trinity, Mary's Heart sings an identical hymn of gratitude. The Heart of Mary loves and hates all that the Heart of Jesus loves and hates. What rejoices the Son's Heart rejoices the Heart of the Mother as well; what crucifies the Heart of the Son likewise nails the Mother's Heart to the Cross. "Jesus and Mary," says St. Augustine, "*were two* mystical harps. What sounded on the one, also sounded on the other, even though no one touched it. When Jesus was in sorrow, Mary was in sorrow; when Jesus was crucified, Mary was crucified." (2)

The Eternal Father gave His Divine Son innumerable other harps, namely, the hearts of all the angels and saints, on which to praise and glorify His Almighty Father while they were pilgrims on earth, and forever to praise and glorify Him in blissful eternity. All the glory, honor and praise that ever was or will be rendered to God the Father by the angels and saints was and will be rendered through His Divine Son, Jesus Christ. "By Him, and with Him, and in Him, is to thee, God the Father Almighty, all honor and glory."

These are the harps mentioned in several passages of the Apocalypse, (3) where St. John tells us that God permitted him to behold the Saints all holding harps on which they sang many canticles in honor of the Lamb of God. But a learned author, (4) in his commentaries on the Apocalypse notices a striking difference between these harps and the harp of the Mother of God. The former, while on earth, were often discordant, because of human weakness and frailty, and they sometimes wearied of praising God; hence it was necessary to tune them from time to time and urge them to do their duty.

The harp of the Queen of all Saints, on the other hand, never suffered any weakening or interruption in its song, having praised and glorified the Most Blessed Trinity with a changeless love and the most perfect harmony. Hence Viegas says that Our Lady did not exclaim, as though exhorting herself: Magnificat, anima mea,

(2). Serm., de Pass. Dom.

(3). Apoc. 5, 8; 14, 2; 15, 2

(4). Viegas, in Apoc.

78 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

*Dominum*, but *Magnificat "anima mea Dominum"*; (5) not "O my soul, magnify the Lord," but "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

The Eternal Father has given His Beloved Son yet another harp, which like the hearts of all Christians is meant to chant the praises of His Holy Name, and this harp is your own heart. Beware lest you follow the miserable example of those who take away from Christ the hearts given to Him by the Heavenly Father and purchased by His Precious Blood. Unlike an ordinary instrument, the harp of your heart cannot remain silent. It must be played either by the hand of God or by the hand of the devil. Either it will sing the divine canticles of Our Lady and of the saints, or it will echo the cursed and unhappy songs of the worldlings here below in dishonour to God's Maker, and vibrate eternally with the blasphemies and horrid dirges of the damned in hell.

To make your heart a harp of Our Saviour, the true David, you must pluck out the strings of vice and replace them with the strings of virtue, which must be set in tune with the peace and charity of the hearts of your fellow-men. Sound your harp in unison with the inspired paeans of true Christians, of the angelic host and of the saints, above all with the sublime Harp of the Heart of Mary, Queen of all saints, joining in the chorus of praise and love of Almighty God, led by the Royal Harpist, Our Lord, "singing with one voice: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts."

(5). Luke 1, 46.

### CHAPTER III

#### MARY'S HEART, THE THRONE OF KING SOLOMON

Among the many beautiful qualities attributed by the Holy Ghost to the Blessed Virgin Mary, one stands out preeminently. It is contained in these words of the eighty-sixth psalm, which Holy Church and her Doctors apply to the Mother of God: "Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God." (1)

Mary is indeed the great and glorious city of God, the holy city, the city of Jerusalem, the city of peace, the royal city, "the city of the great King." (2) The King of Kings built this city with His own hands; He exempted her entirely from the infamous tribute of sin; He honored her with countless great and extraordinary privileges; He enriched her with inestimable gifts and treasures and He established His first and most glorious abode within her Heart. In her He chose to reveal the rarest marvels of His power and royal magnificence.

O Holy City of God, what high and admirable things must be said and thought of thee! Thou art not only the city of the great King, O incomparable Virgin, thou art also His royal and eternal palace. "Yes," says St. Bonaventure, "this heavenly maiden is the sacred palace of the great God: *Sacratum Dei palatium!*" (3) Now, if Mary is the palace of the King of Kings, her heart must be the King's imperial throne.

This magnificent throne is perfectly represented by the throne of King Solomon, as described in the Book of Kings. (4) We read there that this great king erected a throne of ivory in his house on Libanus and covered it with brilliant gold. Six steps led up to this throne; the top of it was rounded at the back, and there were two hands on either side to hold the seat, with two large lions standing near, while small lions stood upon either side of the six steps. Never was any similar throne made in any kingdom of the world.

(1). Ps. 86, 3

(2). Ps. 47, 3

(3). In Carminibus super Salve Regina.

(4). 3 Kings 10, 18-20.

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

There is another throne of King Solomon which also represents Our Lady's Heart most perfectly. The third chapter of the Canticle of Canticles describes it as follows: "King Solomon hath made him a litter of the wood of Libanus. The pillars thereof he made of silver, the seat of gold, the going up of purple: the midst he covered with charity for the daughters of Jerusalem." (5)

In the same chapter, immediately before the description of this throne mention is made of Solomon's bed with the following words: "Behold~ threescore valiant ones of the most valiant of Israel surrounded the bed of Solomon. All holding swords, and most expert in war; every man's sword upon his thigh, because of fears in the night." (6)

What does all this mean? Here is the answer.

The throne and the couch of Solomon symbolize the same representation, namely the holy Heart of the Queen of the world, the couch representing the Heart in contemplation, the litter describing in it action. Mary's Heart is at once the throne and the bed of the true Solomon, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. It is the bed on which He rests in the sweetness and calm of contemplation. It is the

litter in which love and charity that set Him on this throne, carry Him from place to place, that He may reign everywhere for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. An illustrious commentator expresses a similar thought when he says: "The bed of Solomon represents the heart resting in the sweetness of contemplation. His litter is the heart going about in the exercise of good works." (7)

Who are the valiant ones surrounding Solomon's bed well armed and expert in war? According to St. Bernard and several other learned Doctors, they are the angels and the mightiest among the angels, namely the Seraphim, who armed with God's strength and expert in combat against His enemies, always kept watch around the seraphic Heart of their Empress, in the world's dark night. They kept guard against the fears in the night, that is, they prevented the powers of darkness to approach and in any way trouble the divine Solomon as He rested on this holy couch.(8)

But let us return to Solomon's litter. He designed it with his own hands like the throne of the palace on Libanus: *Fecit sibi*. (9) In like manner, our adorable Solomon is Himself the author of the incomparable masterpiece of Mary's Heart. He prepared for Himself a throne worthy

(5). Cant. 3, 9-10

(6). Cant. 3, 7-8.

(7). Hugh of St. Victor, *Erudit, Theolog.*, lib. 1, tit. 61.

(8). S. Bern. in *Deprecat. ad Virgin*; Honorius Augustodun. *Presbyter*.

(9). Cant. 3, 9.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

81 -

of His infinite grandeur and eternal majesty in the august Heart of His glorious Mother.

We have good reason to call Solomon's litter a figure of the throne of the King of Kings, namely of the Heart of the most holy Mother of this great King. St. Gregory of Nyssa tells us that this throne of Solomon is "a figure of the heart of every faithful Christian," (10) and a famous Doctor says that "the heart of the true Christian is the litter of the Son of God, because it goes where the one it bears wills that it should go, and never elsewhere." (11) This was fulfilled more perfectly in the Heart of the holy Virgin than in the hearts of even the holiest of creatures. Her virginal Heart never experienced inclinations or affections other than those it derived from the Master who held absolute sway over it.

Solomon's throne was made of incorruptible wood of the cedar of Libanus, to show that the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God was not only preserved from the corruption of sin, but also that its superabundance of heavenly graces rendered it incapable of sin by grace, as God is incapable of sin by nature.

The four columns of Solomon's throne are the four cardinal virtues, which sustain the throne of the true Solomon, namely justice, prudence, fortitude and temperance. The pillars made of silver denote the candor of innocence preserved in the heart that possesses them. This symbol was eminently verified in the most pure and innocent Heart of the Queen of all virtues.

The gold seat represents free-will transformed by love into the adorable love of God. It can be truly said with David, the Royal Prophet, "Whatever befall me, my soul shall trust the Lord in all things, with humility and submission to His will. From Him is my salvation. He is my God, my stronghold, my living rock, nothing can shake me." (12) Every human will attaining this state of submission becomes the seat of the throne of Jesus, and in the will of His Blessed Mother this was accomplished in a most perfect manner. Therefore St. Peter Damian calls her "the golden seat on which, after the tumult and disorder occasioned by the sins of angels and men, He sought and found

His rest." (13)

The "going up" or back of purple represents ardent desire for the glory of God, for the sanctification of His name and the accomplishment of His will on earth as it is accomplished in heaven. It symbolizes the di

(10). Homil. 7.

(11). Richard of St. Victor.

(12). Ps. 61, Philip des Portes version.

(13). Serm. de Annunt.

82 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

vine love that constantly urged the zealous Heart of the Mother of Love upward and onward to do and suffer great things towards the fulfillment of the designs of the Creator.

Finally, our beloved Christ prefigured by Solomon, filled His throne with Charity for the daughters of Jerusalem, that is, for all souls, especially for each Christian soul, and more particularly still for the beloved children of His Blessed Mother's Heart. These are the humble, pure and charitable souls who entertain a singular devotion towards her maternal Heart. Yes, our lovable Solomon filled the virginal Heart with charity towards us, for He did everything for us, as the Apostle St. Paul says: "All things are for your sakes." (14) If He created the world, it was for us; if He became Man, it was for us; if He was born in a stable, it was for our sake. For us He remained thirty-four years in this world, accomplished and suffered so many great and extraordinary things and shed the last drop of His precious Blood. For our sake, He died on the Cross, ascended into Heaven, established Holy Church, confided the sacraments to her care, and especially the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar where He resided in person. All this was for us: *Ommia propter vos*. In like manner, if He willed to have a true Mother on earth, it was for our sake. If He made her so good, so wise, so powerful, so full of incomparable privileges and extraordinary powers, it was that she might possess the knowledge, power and desire to protect and assist us in all our necessities. He gave her a Heart filled with charity, benignity, zeal, care and vigilance towards us, that we might profit thereby, if we but invoke it in our needs with utmost confidence. He set His throne in her Heart for two purposes, both equally useful and profitable to us; Our Saviour made Mary's Heart a throne of honor and glory and established it as a throne of grace and mercy.

Her Heart is a *throne of honor and glory*, where Our Lord wills to be honored and glorified more than in the hearts of all angels and saints, even though they also are thrones of glory given to Him by His omnipotent Father. "The soul of the just is the seat of wisdom." It is a throne on which all the citizens of Heaven adore and glorify Him without end. It is the throne of which Holy Church speaks when she says: "Upon a high throne I saw a man sitting, whom a multitude of angels adore singing together: Behold Him the name of whose empire is to eternity." (15) Notice that it is during the Octave of the Epiphany that Holy Church, guided by the Divine Spirit, utters and sings these heavenly words, for the three Kings found and adored the Messiah in the arms close to the

(14). 2 Cor. 4, 15.

(15). Introit for First Sunday after Epiphany.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

83 -

Heart of His most worthy Mother as up on His royal throne. "They found the child with Mary his mother." (16) If they had had the eyes of angels, they would have beheld and adored Him enthroned within Her Heart, as well as reposing against it. On this throne, Christ wills to receive our homage and humble respects, and the children of the Church Militant must join those of the Church

Triumphant in adoring Bud glorifying Him.

Our Lady's Heart is also *a throne of grace and mercy*, where Christ absolves all sinners who approach Him in a spirit of humility and penance, where He abundantly dispenses His gifts and graces to those who ask Him. Our Lord grants with extraordinary goodness the requests presented by those who render to Him, in the Heart of His most honored Mother, the homage He desires to receive there. He wishes to be praised and glorified in the hearts and even in the bodies of His saints and "Glorify and bear God in your body." (17) How much more, then, should we not honor and magnify Our Saviour in the Heart of His Blessed Mother?

Let us approach with humility, respect and confidence this throne of grace and mercy, and the Son of God will grant us every blessing we ask through the Heart of His glorious Mother. "Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace." (18)  
(16). Matt. 2, 11.  
(17). 1 Cor. 6, 20.  
(18). Heb. 4, 16.

## CHAPTER IV

### MARY'S HEART, THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM

IN THE time of the Mosaic Law one of the greatest wonders of the world was the temple of Jerusalem. Yet this stupendous temple was merely a figure and an image of the multitude of temples to be found in the Christian world. It prefigured particularly the Sacred Humanity of the Son of God, for Christ referring to His own body said to the Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (1)

The temple of Jerusalem was a figure of Holy Church and a figure of each Christian. It prefigured our churches and cathedrals, but was also a representation of a temple far more holy and august than any material structure. What then is the true temple? It is the Holy Heart of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. The Church says of her person that Mary is "the temple of the Lord, the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost," and we can apply these words with still better reason to her admirable Heart, having seen that it is the source of all the qualities and excellences with which she is adorned. If, according to the divine Word, the body of each Christian is the temple of God, (2) who will dare to deny this characterization to the most worthy Heart of the Mother of all Christians? I affirm, therefore, that the Holy Heart of Mary is the true temple of the Divinity, the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost, the Holy of Holies of the Blessed Trinity.

This temple was not like Solomon's built by a host of workmen, but by the Almighty Hand of God, Who can achieve greater wonders in a single instant than all the powers of Heaven and earth can accomplish during the whole of eternity.

The temple of Mary's Heart was consecrated by the Sovereign Pontiff, Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It was never profaned by the slightest sin and stood adorned with a tremendous wealth of ordinary and extraordinary graces, and by all Christian virtues practised in the highest degree.

(1). John 2, 19.

(2). 1, Cor. 6, 19.

### THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

85 -

Not only is her Heart entirely covered with King Solomon's gold, but it is itself wrought of the finest and purest gold, of a metal infinitely more precious than all the material gold to be found in the universe. The Heart of our amiable Mother is filled with love of God and charity towards us. It is entirely transformed into love and charity, and completely identified with the purest love and the most perfect charity. Its love is more ardent, more pure and divine, its charity more fervent, holier and more excellent than the love and charity of all the Seraphim. The temple of Mary contains all the riches of God together with all the treasures of Heaven and earth because it keeps within its cloister all the mysteries of the life of the Son of God. "His Mother kept all these words in her heart." (3) Her Heart possesses the very Son of God Himself, the treasure of the Eternal Father, Who encompasses all the wealth and beauty of the Most Holy Trinity.

In this temple Christ, the Sovereign Priest, offered His first sacrifice at the time of the Incarnation. Christ, the Doctor of doctors and the Preacher of preachers, Who taught and preached so often in the temple of Jerusalem, imparts to us from the temple of His Mother's Heart as many instructions and lessons as there we virtues exemplified in this virginal Heart.

In this temple God is adored more profoundly and worthily, praised and glorified more



perfectly than in all other material or spiritual temples that ever were and shall be in Heaven and on earth, the sacred humanity of Jesus alone excepted. The smallest acts of virtue and even the prayerful thoughts of Mary's holy Heart are more agreeable to the Divine Majesty and render God greater honor and glory than the greatest actions of the foremost among the Saints.

The Heart of the heavenly Mary is indeed a temple and a temple filled with rarest marvels. God entrusted to King David a description of the temple of Jerusalem written by His own hand, as recorded in the words: "All these things came to me written by the hand of the Lord." (4) The Eternal Father willed to place several remarkable objects in this temple to foreshadow and represent many great and wondrous mysteries that were to be found in the admirable Heart of His holy Mother. Among them I notice seven principal objects that add significance to this symbolic picture, namely: the golden candlestick, the table with the loaves of proposition, the altar of perfumes, the Ark of the Covenant, the Tables of the Law, the Propitiatory and Oracle which reposed on the Ark, and the Altar of Holocausts.

(3). Luke 2, 51.

(4). Par. 28, 19.

86 -

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

St. Epiphanius' and St. John Damascene, (6) together with several other Doctors, tell us that the golden candlestick is a figure of the Holy Mother of God. Next to Jesus, her beloved Son, Mary is the most luminous torch and the brightest light of the House of God. "O virginal candlestick," says St. Epiphanius, "which enlightened those who sat in the shadow of death [O virginal torch, which dissipated the gloom of hell, and caused the brilliance of heaven to shine in our souls! O radiant lamp, ever filled with the oil of grace and light, with the fire of divine love, lighting our minds and inflaming our hearts! This virginal light has spread its splendour throughout the world!" (7)

O admirable Virgin, thou art truly the golden candlestick of the chosen temple of God, which is His Church! With excellent reason does Holy Church salute thee and recognize thee as the portal through which the light came into the world: "Hail, gate of morn, whence the world's true Light was born." (8) But this parallel can best be applied to thy most holy Heart, and especially to thy spiritual Heart, which comprises the three faculties of the superior part of thy soul. Thy shining Heart is the seat of light, of the light of reason, of the light of faith, and of the light of grace. It is the throne of the Eternal Sun and is itself a sun filling Heaven and earth with its radiance.

The remarkable table in Solomon's temple, described in the twenty fifth chapter of Exodus, was made by divine command from the wood of Setim, not common variety of cedar, but according to the Septuagint, a most rare and altogether incorruptible wood. The table was completely covered with gold-plate and edged with a gold-plated cornice or border surrounding it like a crown while two additional golden crowns embellished it. It was designed to hold the loaves of proposition that were offered to God daily by the priests, and were thus named because they lay in the temple as a perpetual sacrifice proposed or exposed to the Divine Majesty. Afterwards they were consumed by the priests.

The Fathers of the Church all agree that the *loaves of proposition* were a figure of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the royal bread that came down from Heaven. Christ is the bread of the angels, the bread of God, the bread of the children of God, a bread which is the nourishment and life of the Christian soul, and all Christians are called priests in Sacred Scripture: *Fecisti nos Deo nostro sacerdotes*. (9) Some are priests by office

(5). De laudib. B.M.V.

(6). Orat. 1 de Dom. Deiparae.

(7). St. John Eudes does not give the reference for this quotation.

(8). Words taken from the hymn Ave Regina caelorum.

(9). Apoc. 5, 10.

and bear the special character of consecrated priesthood; others share it by participation.

What is the table bearing this divine bread, prefigured by the table carrying the loaves of proposition? St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, answers that it was the Blessed Virgin Mary(10) and St. Epiphanius confirms his words.(11)

Is not the table designed to receive the bread and food laid on it? Is it not true that the Heart of the Mother of God was the first to receive Our Lord as He came forth from the bosom of the Eternal Father? Did she not receive Him in order to give Him to us? Is it not true that the Eternal Father carries His Beloved Son in His all-glorious Heart from all eternity and that the Blessed Virgin will carry her Son in her Heart for all eternity? God the Father has revealed that His paternal Heart gave us His well-beloved Son, the Divine Word, in the Incarnation, and still gives Him to us daily in the Eucharist: *Eructavit* or according to another version, *Effudit Cor meum Verbum bonum*. "My heart hath uttered a good word." (12) In like manner, the Blessed Virgin refers to her maternal Heart, and Holy Church often represents her as speaking in unison with the Eternal Father: *Eructavit Cor meum Verbum bonum*. Hence we hear the words which the Holy Ghost puts on Mary's lips: "I was with him," that is, with the Eternal Father, "forming all things." (13) In the Hebrew version this passage reads: "I was with Him and near Him as a nurse," which reveals Mary's role as the Mother who gives nourishment to mankind.

Our Lady says: "I was intimately united to Almighty God in will, mind and heart, possessing only, as it were, one will, mind and heart in common with Him, and a heart ablaze with love for men. This love induced God to give mankind His well-beloved Son; a similar love urged me to give this same Son, who is my own as truly and really as He is the Son of God, so I gave Our Divine Son, the fruit of His Father's Heart and of my own, to be the bread of men's souls and the life of their hearts."

Several learned interpreters of Sacred Scripture teach us that the altar of perfumes of the Mosaic temple represents the hearts of the faithful, which are symbolized as altars on which each one should offer a perpetual sacrifice of prayer and praise to God. Now if the hearts of the

(10). Orat. in Nativit. B. Virg.

(11). Maria cur fidei mensa intellectualis, quae vitae panem mundi suppeditavit. In serm. de laud. Virg.

(12). Ps. 44, 2.

(13). Prov. 8, 30.

children of God were figured by this altar, how much more truly does it symbolize the Heart of the Mother of God, which is after the Heart of Jesus, the first and holiest of all altars? It is "the golden altar, which is before the throne of God," mentioned in the eighth chapter of the Apocalypse.(14) On this altar the Mother of the Saviour offered to God a sacrifice of love, adoration, praise, thanksgiving and prayer far more to His Divine Majesty than all the sacrifices that ever were or ever shall be offered on all other altars.

If we consult the Fathers of the Church we learn particularly from St. Ambrose that the *Ark of the Covenant* was a figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and therefore of her most holy Heart, the holy Heart, the first and noblest part of her person. "Yes," exclaims the seraphic St. Bonaventure, "the Ark of Moses was merely a reflection of the Virgin's Heart. Her Heart is the true ark containing within itself the secrets of the divine Word and the treasure of the law of God." (15) A holy

Abbot(16) of the Cistercian Order calls Mary the Ark of Sanctification, containing revelations written by the hand of God. She is the holy Ark of the Covenant, the Covenant by which God reconciled us with Himself and pledged His alliance with us forever.

What more shall we say of the Ark of Moses? We may regard it as an image of the Blessed Virgin's most holy Heart inasmuch as it contained the essential treasure, the chief glory and the holy joy of the Jewish people, the principal mystery of their religion, the bulwark of their defence and the terror of their enemies, even as the admirable Heart of our Queen is the glory, treasure and joy of Christendom. Next to God, Mary's Heart should be the first object to which we look up when we pray. Her Heart is an impregnable stronghold, *turris fortissima Car Mariae*, for the true children of this heavenly Mother. This tower is strong, so well fortified with defensive and offensive weapons that the soldiers fighting under the banner of Mary, leader of the armies of the Most High, find there a mighty defence against the heaviest assaults of hell. Yes, her mighty Heart is more formidable to the enemies of her children than any army terrible in battle. *Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.* (17)

Let us, then, withdraw into this invincible fortress; let us entrench ourselves in the impregnable tower of Mary. May we ever dwell there, and never depart from its walls.

But let us remember that the Heart of Mary is a tower of ivory, *turris*

(14). Apoc. 8, 3

(15). In Exposit. Cap. 2 Lucae.

(16). Nicolaus Salicetus in Antidotario animae.

(17). Cant. 6, 3.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

89 -

eburnea, which does not suffer within its Precincts anything defiled and unclean. It is the tower of David, open only to those who follow the meekness of Jesus Christ, the true David. It is a tower built and adorned with all kinds of precious stones: *Turris Jerusalem gemmis aedificabuntur*, (18) that is, with perfections of every kind. He who seeks to dwell therein must renounce sin and imperfection; he must undertake wholeheartedly the practice of every Christian virtue.

St. Gregory of Nyssa states that the Tables of the Mosaic Law kept in the temple of Solomon were a figure symbolic of the hearts of the Saints. (19) Hence, St. John Chrysostom affirms that the Heart of St. Paul was the table of the Holy Spirit and the book of charity, a living book in which divine charity inscribed with letters of gold the evangelical law of love and charity. (20)

Now, if the hearts of the Saints are real tables of the evangelical law, what shall we say of the holy Heart of the Queen of Saints, who is the Mother of the Saint of saints? Her glorious Heart is the first and holiest table of the Christian law. It is not made of stone, but of gold, or better still, of diamond; it is not dead but living; not breakable like the tables of Moses but indestructible. On it the Holy Ghost, the finger of God, has written and engraved in golden letters, not merely the will of God and His laws, but all the counsels, maxims and truths of the gospel as well. They are so deeply engraved that the united forces of hell and of earth could more easily snatch the sun from the sky and destroy the world than remove a single iota or tarnish a single letter of this sacred writing.

Mary's incomparable Heart is not only the true table of God's Law, but also a living and admirable book in which the Holy Ghost has stamped all the mysteries of the Deity, all the secrets of eternity, every Christian law, each maxim of the gospel and all the truths drawn by the Son of God from the Heart of the Almighty Father and poured forth abundantly in the Heart of His Immaculate

Mother. St. Augustine (21) assures us that the books mentioned in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse *represent the hearts of the Saints*, in which are engraved God's will and His laws; how much more truly must this be said of the most holy Heart of the Mother of Him who is holiness personified?

*The Propitiatory* (22) is regarded as another figure symbolic of the glory  
(18). Fifth antiphon of Vespers and Lauds for the Office of the Dedication of a Church.  
(19). Homil. 14.  
(20). In cap. 16 Epist. ad Rom. HOMII. 23.  
(21). Lib. 10 de Civit Dei, ap. 14  
(22). Cf. St. Germanus of Constantinople, Orat. in Nativ. Virg.; St. Ildephonsus, Serm. I de Ass.; St. Andrew of Crete, De dormit. Virg.; St. Antoninus, Part. 4, tit. 15, Cap14, 4; Richard of St. Lawrence, Lib. 12 de laud. B. Virg.

90 -

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

ous Virgin because by her intercession the flame of God's wrath was extinguished, His Divine Majesty was turned to look upon mankind with favor and His infinite mercy moved Him to compassion for our infirmities. For this reason St. Ildephonsus calls the Mother of Grace; *Propitatio humanae salutis*. "The propitiation of man's salvation." (23) St. Andrew of Crete styles Mary: *Universi mundi commune propitiatorium*. "The universal propitiatory of the entire world." (24) Lastly, St. Epiphanius proclaims her: *Admirandum propitiatorium*. "Admirable propitiatory." (25)

Now this qualification applies most properly and principally to her merciful Heart. It is this gentle Heart which is the admirable Propitiatory. Whence does her compassion for sinners spring, if not from her Heart full of mercy? What urged Mary to become our advocate before the throne of divine justice, if not the loving kindness of her Heart? What could be more symbolic of Our Lady's holy companionship with the angels than the golden cherubim designed to guard the Propitiatory?

St. Augustine, (26) St. Gregory the Great, (27) and several other Fathers say that the *Altar of Holocausts* also symbolized the hearts of all the Saints, who are the real altars on which God is honored by the spiritual sacrifices offered day and night to His Divine Majesty. Yet much more truly can this be said of the Holy Heart of Mary. "Her Heart is the true altar of holocaust," says the illustrious John Gerson, "and on it the sacred fire of divine love blazed day and night." (28)

The Mother of the Sovereign Priest constantly offered to God sacrifices of love, praise, thanksgiving, expiation for the sins of the world and every possible sacrifice. On the altar of her Heart Mary sanctified to God all the things of the world and every creature of the universe as so many different victims. She sacrificed her being, life, body, soul, all her thoughts, words and actions, the employment of her senses and faculties, and in general, all that she was, all that she possessed and every power of her soul. She offered to the Divine Majesty the very sacrifice that her Son Jesus Christ offered on Calvary. Our adorable Saviour offered Himself to the Eternal Father only once on the altar of the Cross, but His holy Mother immolated Him ten thousand times on the altar of her pure Heart.

(23). Serm. 1 de Ass.  
(24). De Dormit. Virg.  
(25). Serm. de laud. Deiparae.  
(26). Serm. 255 de temp.  
(27). Homil. 22 in Ezech.  
(28). Tract. 9 sup, Magnif. partit. 1.

**THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER**      91 -

What veneration is then due to this sacred altar! Be thou blessed, O God of my heart, for having consecrated this most worthy altar to the glory of thy most adorable majesty. Deign to transform our cold hearts into glowing altars on which we may offer Thee an unremitting sacrifice of praise and love.

## CHAPTER V

### MARY'S HEART, THE FIERY FURNACE OF BABYLON

ANOTHER symbolic picture of the admirable Heart of the most Holy Mother of God is the miraculous *furnace* described in the third chapter of the Prophet Daniel. St. John Damascene and many other holy Doctors affirm that the fiery furnace was a figure of the sinless Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary and its burning fire a reflection of the heavenly fire in the holy breast of the Mother of Fair Love. Here are St. John Damascene's words: "Is it not true," he says addressing Our Lady, "that this furnace, filled with a fire at once burning and refreshing, was a faithful image of thee and an excellent picture of the divine and eternal fire dwelling within thee?" (1)

But you may well ask how anything so noble and holy as the Heart of the Queen of Heaven could be represented by the furnace of Babylon, an instrument of torture designed by the wickedness and cruelty of King Nabuchodonosor? Remember that the three young men, Sidrach, Misach and Abdenago, thrown into the furnace to be burnt to ashes, belonged to the people of Israel, and everything that happened to the Israelites was a figure and a foreshadowing of the great miracles that were to be fulfilled in Christianity, and in the Father and Mother of Christians, "All these things happened to them in figure." (2) Remember also that St. Augustine (3) and St. Gregory the Great (4) tell us that Sacred Scripture mentions many objects which though profane and wicked in themselves, are nevertheless a representation of good and holy thoughts.

What can be more profane than a malodorous he-goat or a venomous snake? Yet the Holy Ghost employs them both to represent the Lamb of

(1). Annon te fornax illa praemonstravit cujus ignis roridus simul et flammens erat, quae divini ignis in te habitantis figuram praeferbat? Orat. i de Dormit. B. Virg.

(2). 1 Cor. 10, 11.

(3). Contra Faustum, lib. 22, Cap. 83

(4). Moral. lib. 3, cap. 21.

### THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

93 -

God laden with the sins of the world. (5) What could be worse and more reprehensible than the sensual and inordinate love of King Solomon for strange women or the immoral marriages he contracted, which were absolutely forbidden by God's law? The Holy Spirit makes of them, nevertheless, a figure of the adorable love of the King of Angels for sinful souls, and of the divine union His infinite goodness seeks to contract with the hearts of men. (6) What resemblance can we find between an Egyptian woman, dark like all those of her race, in contrast to the Jews, as she herself admits: "I am black," (7) and the peerless Queen of all women? The Egyptian woman springing from a barbarous and heathen people, was the daughter of an infidel and idolatrous king, and the spouse of one who recognized the disorders of his dissolute life, confessing himself to be the most foolish of men; (8) Mary was fair as the moon, bright as the sun, born of God's chosen people, the daughter of King David, the Spouse of the King of Kings, the Mother of God Himself. Nevertheless, the Sacred Canticle, written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, presents the Egyptian queen to us as an image and likeness of the Virgin Mother? (9)

A passionate lover delights to write the name of his beloved and sketch her image wherever he happens to be, not only on paper or canvas, but also on trees, stones and whatever else comes under his hand. Similarly, the incomprehensible love of God, Father and Spouse of the most perfect and lovable Virgin Mary, causes Him to take pleasure in picturing her Heart even in the burning furnace

of Babylon.

Certainly that furnace was the product of Nabuchodonosor's impious rage, but divine Providence, without whose order and permission nothing can happen, designated it to show the extent of the power of God and the marvels of His goodness, through the miraculous protection given to His faithful friends. God also willed that the fiery furnace should give us a glorious picture of the ardent Heart of the Queen of Heaven, which is indeed a furnace of love and charity.

In the furnace of Babylon we behold many marvels wrought by God's omnipotence. Consider that in the midst of the furnace filled with fire and flame, there should be a refreshing wind, likened to fragrant dew. "The angel made the midst of the furnace like the blowing of a wind

(5). Lev. 16, 7-9.

(6). Cant. 6, 7-8.

(7). Cant. 1, 4.

(8). Prov. 30, 2.

(9). Cant. 6, 9.

94 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

bringing dew." (10) What a marvel it is to behold a burning furnace whose flames protect those inside its crucible, while they destroy those who remain outside! What a miracle to see fire comforting and refreshing those cast into the sevenfold beat of its flames, while burning to death those standing at a safe distance! How miraculous for three young men to survive in a furnace whose flames leapt to a height of forty-nine cubits, not suffering injury but walking about with joy as in a place of delight! The three gladly sang the praises of Almighty God and emerged from their ordeal with greater strength and vigor than before while the fire could not so much as singe a single fibre of their clothing. Great indeed are the marvels to be found in Babylon's furnace; yet they merely foreshadow the miracles which we find in the furnace of the glowing Heart of the Queen of Angels.

It is a great miracle to witness fire and water subsisting side by side in the furnace of Nabuchodonosor. The fire did not turn the cooling water into steam nor did the water quench the burning beat of the fire. What manner of fire is this? It is the fire of divine love burning in the Virginal Heart of Mary. What is the cooling dew? It is the water of tribulation, which so often flooded the holy Heart of the Mother of Sorrows. The fire of love did not dry up the waters of affliction; and the waters of tribulation were unable, I shall not say to extinguish, but even to diminish in the least degree the divine ardor of that heavenly fire: "Many waters cannot quench charity." (11) On the contrary, the excess of love produced the abundance of affliction and the waters of tribulation were like inflammable liquids that augmented still further the fire of her love.

Is it not a great miracle to see a fire possessing at once the virtue of fire and the properties of water? Love has the virtue of fire, that it may unceasingly inflame the Virgin Mother's purest Heart with its sacred ardour, and also the properties of water, as it extinguishes entirely the fire of self-love and of attachment to vain and perishable things.

Is it not a great miracle to behold a fire refreshing, consoling and fining with joy the children of the Mother of God, while it pursues, burns, devours its enemies? Her virginal Heart, which is ablaze with love for her true children, directs the fire and flame of its anger against those who injure or scandalize her loved ones.

Only three Hebrew boys were thrown into the furnace of Babylon, but all children of the admirable Mother of God can enter the furnace of her Heart and dwell there as in a paradise of

delights where they praise and  
(10). Dan. 3, 50  
(11). Cant. 8, 7

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER**      9 5 -

glorify God forever in company with their heavenly Mother, and their hearts are filled with joy and consolation. "Me dwelling in thee is as it were of all rejoicing," (12) O holy Mother of God.

Three Hebrew children walked safely in the first furnace; yet the prophet saw there four, and the fourth was like the Son of God. "The form of the fourth is like the Son of God." (13) Actually it was an angel, representing, according to Daniel, the Only-begotten Son of God in the Babylonian furnace, but this same Son of God resides and dwells in person in the glowing Heart of His most holy Mother. He is all fire and flame of love and charity. "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire." (14) He possesses a throne of fire. "His throne like flames of fire," (15) and a "fiery chariot." (16) In like manner, He wills to have a dwelling of fire and flame in the Heart of His most worthy Mother. This dwelling-place was depicted in the words: "The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame," (17) which means that the abode of Jesus Christ, prefigured by Jacob and Joseph, shall be an abode of flaming fire.

We also notice that the three young men were bound hand and foot when thrown into the furnace, but immediately their bonds were consumed by the fire and they were freed within the furnace. Come, come, poor slaves of sin and of the world! Come, slaves of passion, of self-love and self-will, chained in the irons and fetters of Babylon! Fear not to plunge into our sacred furnace!

These flames will not harm you; instead they will destroy your fetters and establish you in the holy liberty of the children of God and of His loving Mother. They will inflame your hearts with the fire of heavenly love, they will transform them into divine fire itself. Your hearts will become holy furnaces heated seven times with the fire and flames that leap from the Heart of your heavenly Mother. Your hearts must become furnaces of eternal love, if they would avoid being ranked with the miserable hearts of the wicked against whom the terrible sentence was uttered: "Thou shalt make them as an oven of fire, in the time of thy anger." (18)

What dost Thou will to do, O Lord, with the ungrateful wretches,  
(12). Ps. 86, 7.  
(13). Dan. 3, 92.  
(14). Deut. 4, 24.  
(15). Dan. 7, 9.  
(16). 4 Kings 2, 11.  
(17). Abdias 1, 18.  
(18). PS. 20, 10.

9 6 -

## **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

whom Thou didst create to love Thee, whose obligations to love Thee are boundless, yet who have loved everything but Thee, and have even kindled fires of insult and heaped outrages upon "Thee? Thou shalt make of them furnaces of wrath, in the time of Thy terrible vengeance. Thou shalt hurl them into the eternal fire prepared for Satan and his minions, where they will be swallowed, burned and penetrated by the infernal fire. In life these souls would not permit the sweet and radiant flames of Thy holy love to burn within them, so they shall be yielded to the eternal torments of devouring fire in endless hell.



Would you avoid this tragedy, the greatest of all misfortunes? Then give your hearts to your admirable Queen, imploring her to offer them to her beloved Son with the prayer that He may kindle in them the fire He came to spread on earth, the fire He so greatly desires should be lighted. On your part, correspond by removing every obstacle from your hearts, and if this sacred flame is already burning there, make every effort to increase it more and more, by the practice of Christian virtues, the meditation of the gospel and especially the exercise of divine love and charity.

Be not satisfied with doing simply this. Seek to share actively in the ardent desire of the Son of God that the entire world should be illuminated with heavenly fire and to cooperate with him in spreading it everywhere. Nothing could be more agreeable to His Divine Majesty. All Christians who would please God should exert themselves towards this end but more especially should those whom He has chosen to be His cooperators in the salvation of souls. Take, then, a torch in your hand and, if possible, set the entire world afire with love. (19)

If you ask me what this torch should be, I shall answer that is yourself. Each one is a torch. Have you not heard the Holy Ghost say of the Prophet Elias that he rose up like fire, and that his words were like a burning torch? "And Elias the prophet stood up, as a fire: and his word burnt like a torch." (20) And does the Son of God describe St. John the Baptist as "a burning and a shining light"? (21) When speaking through Zacharias of the time at which He shall work great wonders in His Church and in the entire world, God describes the leaders of Juda, namely, the Apostles and the other participants in the fulfilment of His desire to enkindle the earth with the fire of heaven, stating that they

(19). This thought is expressed in the symbolic picture, Our Lady of Hearts, which St. John Eudes distributed among the faithful. See reproduction opposite p. 96.

(20). Ecclus. 48, 1.

(21). John 5, 35.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER

97 -

shall be like a furnace of fire and a burning torch, consuming and devouring peoples to the right and to the left like fire which devours wood and hay. This means that His disciples will enkindle everything, fusing earthly and carnal-minded men into heavenly and spiritual beings, aglow with love of God and charity towards their neighbor. "In that day I will make the governors of Juda like a furnace of fire amongst wood, and as a firebrand amongst hay; and they shall devour all the people round about, to the right hand, and to the left." (22)

This is what you must become if you profess a particular obligation to work for the salvation of souls. You must be made of fire like Elias, and of flame like St. John the Baptist. Each of you must be a burning furnace, a fiery, radiant torch; aglow within, shining without; ardent before God, and shining before men: ardent in prayer and brilliant in action; ardent with the love of God, and luminous with charity for your neighbor.

But where will you light your torch and obtain the fire *which you* must kindle in the hearts of men? It must be in the furnace of the Holy Heart of the Mother of Fair Love. To this end, approach the holy furnace of her Heart more frequently with respect and veneration. Concentrate upon the divine fire inflaming her Heart; imitate its all-glowing love and charity and humbly beg of our Mother most merciful that she may kindle in your hearts sparks of the celestial fire which burns in her own.

Having lighted and seized your torch, you will set everything on fire to the right and to the left, that is, you will inflame the hearts of the just, and at the same time set fire to the hearts of sinners through the ardent example of your actions, the bright fervor of your prayers and the light of your teaching.

O divine fire that burns in the noble Heart of our glorious Mother, come, come into the hearts of all men! Extinguish every other fire, destroying whatever would resist Thee. Burn, inflame, set on fire, transform into Thyself the hearts of men that they may become all fire and flames of love for Him Who created them that they might love Him and Him alone! Grant that we may say with St. Augustine and in as holy a frame of mind: "O sacred fire, how sweet and pleasant is thy heat! How intimate and penetrating thy light, how amiable and desirable thy burning coals! Woe to them on whom thou shinest not, to them whom thou dost not burn!" (23) Happy they who are illuminated by the light and burned with thy sacred flame!

(22). Zach. 12, 6.

(23). Soliloq. Cap. 34.

98-

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

Come, then, most holy fire; come, heavenly flames; come divine furnace come, torrents, come flaming floods of the adorable fire of eternal love! Sweep over us and over every rational creature in the world! Burn everything, set all things on fire, that everything may be melted and fused into an eternal fire of love and charity towards Him Who is all love and charity towards us. St. Augustine adds these words: "O fire ever burning and never dying out! O love always ardent and never weakening, inflame my entire being that I may love thee with all my heart."

## CHAPTER V1

### MARY'S HEART, THE HILL OF CALVARY

LAST in my series of symbolic pictures of the holy Heart of the spotless Virgin I show you Calvary, as it reveals the Sorrows of the crucified Heart of Mary at the time of her Son's Passion.

What is Calvary? It is a mountain, the most important and notable mountain of the Holy Land. What is the Heart of the Mother of God? Is it not also a mountain, the most illustrious mountain of that blessed land referred to in these words of Sacred Scripture: "Lord, thou has blessed the land." (1) This land is the Blessed Virgin Mary, and her Heart is the noblest and highest peak of her body and of her soul.

What is Calvary? It is Mount Moriah on which God commanded Abraham to slay his son, Isaac. The Hebrew rendition of the twenty second chapter of Genesis reads: "Go into the land of Moriah," instead of the usual version: "Go into the land of vision." (2) It is the place where King David raised an altar and offered Sacrifice that God might stop the plague that ravaged his people, and also the site on which Solomon erected the Temple of Jerusalem, for Mount Sion is the same as Mount Moriah, and Calvary is part of the same chain of hills.

We have already seen that Christ, the true Solomon, established His foremost temple and holiest altar in the Heart of the most worthy daughter of Abraham and of David. In this temple, on this altar she immolated, not merely in desire like Abraham, but in very truth, Her dearest and most adorable Son, her Isaac.

What is Calvary? It is the place where the Cross of Jesus was raised. And was the Cross of Salvation not raised first of all in Mary's holy Heart? What is Calvary? It is the place stained with the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. But Mary's Heart was bathed with It through love and

(1). Ps. 84,

(2). Gen. 22, 2.

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

compassion and the Precious Blood of her beloved Son penetrated and impregnated His Mother far more than it soaked the soil of Calvary.

On Calvary, we behold the thorns that wounded the adorable head of our Saviour, the nails that pierced His hands and feet, the lance that opened His Heart, the ropes that bound Him, the gall and vinegar He was given to drink, and the wounds which covered His body from head to foot. We can see the same wounds in the maternal Heart of His saintly Mother. "The Cross and the nails which crucified the Son's body, crucified the Mother's Heart as well." (3) St. Jerome quotes St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, as saying: "All the wounds which covered the body of Jesus, had their counterpart in Mary's Heart. The whips, the thorns, the nails which pierced and tore the Saviour's body, ran through His holy Mother's Heart and shattered it. Every blow rending the body of the Son had its cruel echo in the Heart of His Mother." (4)

"O my Queen," exclaims St. Bonaventure, "Thou art not only standing near the Cross, but thou art with Thy Son on the Cross; Thou dost suffer, thou art crucified with Him, the only difference being that while He suffers in His body, thou dost suffer in thy loving Heart. All the wounds scattered over His body are united in thy Heart, because the sword of sorrow has pierced thy very soul. Thy

virginal Heart, O my sovereign Lady, is wounded by the lance, pierced by the nails and thorns, heaped with opprobrium, ignominy and imprecations, saturated with vinegar and gall. Why wouldst thou, most honored Lady, be immolated for us? Is not our Saviour's Passion sufficient for our salvation? Must the mother also be crucified with her Son? O sweetest Heart, so full of love, must thou then be changed into bitter sorrow? I seek to behold thy loving Heart, my dearest Mistress, but it seems to have vanished and in its place I find only the bitterness of gall, myrrh and absinth. I seek the Mother of God and I find only thorns, nails, a lance, a sponge and vinegar. I look for Mary on the Cross, and I see only spittle, insults, lashes and wounds, so truly has she been overwhelmed by outrages." (5)

I see my Redeemer crucified, suffering, agonizing, dying and finally dead on Calvary. I also behold His sorrows, suffering, agony and death in His Blessed Mother's Heart. "She had lived of her Son's life, and when He died on the Cross, she died with Him," says a holy Premonstratensian Abbot.(6) "Both Mother and Son were nailed to the Cross, the

(3). St. Augustine, Serm. de Passione Dom.

(4). In Epist. ad Paulam et Eustochium, de Assumpt. B.V.

(5). Stimulus amoris, lib. I, cap. 3

(6). Philipp. Abbas Bonae Spei, in Epist. 14 ad Radulphum.

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER                      101 -**

Son in the body, the Mother in her Heart," exclaims St. Lawrence Justinian,(7) the sainted Patriarch of Venice. "Could not Mary die in her Heart, as Jesus died in His body?" asks St. Bernard.(8)

Among the great miracles wrought by Our Saviour on Calvary the most remarkable, according to St. Augustine, was the miracle of goodness and charity on behalf of His executioners, when He besought His Heavenly Father to forgive them. At the same time, living in His holy Mother's heart, He communicated to her the charity which filled Himself, inducing her to imitate His sublime example of mercy. We hear His kind voice pleading with the all-just Father, and then we seem to hear the echo of His words in the Heart of His holy Mother repeating: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."(9)

On Calvary, the only Son of Mary gave us an inestimable gift, when in the excess of His incomprehensible goodness He addressed Himself to each one of us in the person of St. John and speaking of His holy Mother, said to us: "Behold thy Mother:(10) And from Calvary, the Mother of Jesus, whose sentiments and will are one with those of her beloved Son, gives herself to us to be our Mother with the same Heart and with an equal love. Having enshrined the words of her Son in her maternal Heart, she echoes them again, and adopts each one of us in particular. Thus. both Jesus and Mary my to us: "Behold thy Mother."

On our part, we should unite with Jesus in saying to this supremely good Mother: "Behold thy Son." Yes, O Mary, each one of us is thy child, who desires to love, honor and imitate thee as His Mother. Vouchsafe to look upon us, O most amiable Mother, and to love, protect, guide and treat us as thy children in spite of our extreme unworthiness.

We also behold on Calvary the author of life grown cold in death and we see the gloom of the sepulchre in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, a part of Calvary's hill. But we can behold Him buried in the Heart of His loving Mother more truly than in the tomb. Her marvellous Heart is a living and life-giving tomb. Having cooperated in the Incarnation of the Son of God by the ardor of her love, the fervor of her desires and the power of her prayers, Mary's Heart also contributed to His resurrection, as we shall explain further on. Jesus arose in the sepulchre, but left it immediately.

He likewise came back to life in Mary's Heart, but there He remained and will remain forever. Of this living sepulchre,

(7). Lib. de triumphanti agone Christi, cap. 21.

(8). Serm. in Signum Magnum.

(9). Luke 23, 34

(10). John 19, 27.

102 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

rather than of the inanimate tomb, can we say with good reason: "And his sepulchre shall be glorious," (11) in the sight of angels and men, for time and for all eternity.

Finally, it was on Calvary that our Redeemer accomplished and consummated the work of our salvation, in which His Mother's Heart cooperated so faithfully.

You see therefore that Calvary is a most excellent picture of the admirable Heart of the Mother of our Crucified Redeemer. Do you wish your own heart to bear some faint resemblance to the Heart of your heavenly Mother? Then plant in its center the Cross of Christ, her Son: or better still, implore her to obtain for you the grace that Our Lord Himself may fix it there, and engrave on your heart a great love for His Holy Cross. May His love make you embrace, cherish and bear all the crosses that will be sent to you, in a spirit of humility, patience and submission to the Divine Will, and all the holy dispositions with which the Son of Mary and the Mother of Jesus carried their heavy cross.

These symbolic pictures are but twelve of the many figures by which the Eternal Father has illustrated for us the glory of the admirable Heart of Mary. I have chosen them to reveal how unmistakably is the Divine Heart of God the first author and origin of devotion to the virginal Heart of the Mother of His beloved Son. Almighty God enriched the heart of Mary with surpassing beauty and incomparable treasures so that our hearts would be stirred to venerate and love her with fitting devotion. Having begun to study the tributes of the Most High to His immaculate handmaid, how can we possibly refrain from pouring out our admiration and honour of Mary, and our humble praise of God for the countless favours He has heaped upon her Admirable Heart?

O Divine Painter, grant us the grace to praise and thank Thee for having, in these twelve pictures, portrayed the heart of our glorious Queen and Mother in symbols so colorful, rich and expressive, that even such as we can learn to understand, to love and to imitate her. We implore Thee now to take our hearts and make each one of them yet another symbol to depict forever some measure of the love, humility and purity of the other virtues of Thy infinite glory as they are manifested so magnificently in the Heart of Mary, Mother most admirable.

(11). Isa. 11, 10.

103 -

## **PART FOUR**

### **Second Foundation of the Devotion: The Heart of God the Son**

#### **Divine Perfections Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary**

105 -

#### *Part Four*

#### *SECOND FOUNDATION OF THE DEVOTION: THE HEART OF GOD THE SON*

#### *Divine Perfections Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary*

### **CHAPTER I\***

#### **OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, TEACHER OF THE DEVOT- TION TO THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

WE HAVE every reason to consider the adorable Heart of Jesus as the second foundation of the devotion to the admirable Heart of Mary. The supremely ardent love for the Heart of His dearest Mother, burning in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, makes Him the herald of this devotion, which He teaches to us both by word and example.

Would you know how the Only-begotten Son of God, who is also the Son of Mary, exhorts us to venerate His glorious Mother's loving Heart? Listen to what He revealed in 1300 to St. Mechtilde, one of the most glorious daughters of St. Benedict, whose writings have been approved by learned and devout doctors. One day during Advent, as the Saint sought to salute the Mother of God in a most pleasing manner, Our Lord Himself deigned to instruct her as follows:

"Thou shalt salute my holy Mother's virginal Heart as an ocean replete with heavenly grace and a treasure filled with myriad blessings for mankind.

"Thou shalt honor it as the purest Heart after mine own because she was the first to take the vow of chastity.

(\*). Comprising Chapters I and 2 of the original edition.

#### **106 - THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

"Thou shalt hail it as the humblest Heart of any simple creature, for her humility drew me from my Father's bosom and rendered her worthy to conceive me in her chaste womb by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"Thou shalt reverence her Heart as supremely devout and most ardent in its desire for my Incarnation and birth on earth, because the fervor of her desires and of her longing attracted me to her and became the cause of man's salvation.

"Thou shalt honor her Heart as most glowingly inflamed with love for God and man. Thou shalt salute it as the wisest and most prudent, for she kept in her Heart the memory of each event of my childhood, youth and adult life and made a most holy use of this remembrance.

"Thou shalt greet her Heart as the most faithful, for she not only consented to permit me, her only Son, to be sacrificed, but she also offered me to my Eternal Father as a sacrifice for the redemption of the world.

"Thou shalt salute her Heart as the most vigilant and most zealous for the interests of the nascent Church, for the care she took to pray unceasingly could not be disregarded.

"Thou shalt glorify her Heart as raised to the highest degree of uninterrupted contemplation, for no tongue can worthily speak of the graces and favors that men owe to the power of her intercession." (1)

Thus did Our Lord speak to St. Mechtilde, revealing clearly how pleasing to His Divine Majesty is the devotion to His Blessed Mother's Holy Heart and how profitable to those who practise it.

But if we shall further lend our ears to Jesus, the great teacher of the devotion to Mary's august Heart, He will impart to us many other edifying and consoling truths. Let us listen.

I alone, Our Lord tells us, can worthily proclaim the devotion which the hearts of all who love me shall cultivate towards the Heart of my holy Mother, for I am the source and principle of all the great and marvellous qualities to be found in this abyss of wonders, and I alone have a perfect knowledge of the eminent perfections of her Heart.

I am the eldest Son of this maternal Heart and am therefore filled with the most tender and filial love for it. I am the first-born of my most worthy Mother's incomparable Heart, as I am the first fruit of the adorable Heart of my Eternal Father. My admirable Mother formed me and carried me in her Heart more holily, longer and sooner than in her womb. (2) For the Sanctity of her blessed bosom has its origin in the charity and purity of her most holy Heart, and she became worthy to form me.

(1). Lib. spec. gratiae, lib. 1, cap. 2.

(2). Prius et felicius in Corde quam in ventre concepit. S. Leo, Serm. de Nat. Dom. See also S. Aug., Lib. de Sancta Virginitate, c. 30.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

107 -

to bear me in her womb because by humility, purity and love she first formed and carried me in her Heart. She bore me in her bosom for nine months only, but she always held me and will forever hold me in her Heart. I am, therefore, in a way, more truly the fruit of her Heart than of her womb.

O admirable mystery! Her incomparable Heart is, among created beings, the masterpiece of my Almighty Goodness; yet by an unfathomable miracle I am myself the excellent product of her humility, whereby she drew me from my Father's adorable bosom, where I was born before all ages began, that I might be born of my virginal Mother in the fulness of time.

I have always been and shall forever be the most singular object of all the affections of her Holy Heart, as she herself has always been and will forever be, after my Eternal Father, the first object of my love.

All who truly love me must, therefore, be particularly zealous in honoring and teaching others to honor the Heart that I love more and that gives me greater glory and love than the hearts of all the angels and men together.

For all these reasons, I myself have willed to be the teacher of this devotion practised by many of my saints during the past centuries, a devotion still observed in many churches today; and I personally taught the first principles of this devotion to St. Mechtilde.

It is I, my dearest children, who have made it flourish again in your hearts. I am now addressing those who have a special veneration for the most worthy Heart of my virginal Mother. I myself have rooted in your hearts your ardent desire of honoring Her Heart as I wish it to be honored.

I know that, as her Heart is the first object of the love of my Heart, after the Eternal Father, it is likewise, after God, the first object of your most tender and holy affection. Therefore have I given it to you to be an inexhaustible fountain of blessings in your midst.

I have given my Mother's Heart to you as a divine Sun to enlighten you through the darkness of the world, to warm you in the frosts of mortal life, to gladden and to comfort you in the sorrows, pains and miseries of earth, and to vivify and strengthen you against the decline and weakness of human frailty.

I have given her Heart to you as a beautiful mirror, into which you should often gaze in order to see the stains that tarnish your Souls, so that you may cleanse them. With the aid of this celestial mirror, you should array your Souls with becoming ornaments that they may become pleasing in the sight of my divine majesty.

108 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

I have given the Heart of My Mother to you as an unshakeable tower and impregnable stronghold in which you may take refuge and seek shelter against the machinations of the enemies of your salvation.

I have given it to you as a burning furnace of divine love into which you are to throw yourselves and be consumed, that you may turn into fire and flames of love for Him who is all fire and flaming love for you.

I have given her Heart to you as a perfect pattern of the respect, love and obedience that you must entertain for those who hold God's place on earth. I have given it to you as a fountain of wine, milk and honey, whence you may draw the charity, kindness and meekness with which you should treat one another.

I have given her Heart to you as a heavenly chronicle and book of life, that you may study its pages unceasingly, and learn to know perfectly and to love ardently the ravishing beauty of those Christian virtues whose faithful practice gives eternal life. But what you should learn above all from this book are the marvellous merits of holy humility and the means to practice it, so as to crush in your hearts the cursed serpent of pride and vanity that wreaks such havoc, not only in the Souls of children of perdition, but in my own children's hearts as well.

I have given the Heart of my incomparable Mother to you as a holy Rule that will enable you to become saints, if you faithfully observe it. It is the rule of the divine life you should lead, of the high qualities and habits you must assume, of the evangelical teachings you are to follow. By this rule you



must measure the holiness that should permeate all your actions, the Sentiments and affections that should fill your hearts. It is the rule of the love and hatred, the joy and sorrow, the desires and fears that must be yours, if you are to please me and sanctify yourselves.

I have given her Heart to you as a vast ocean of graces of every kind, from which you must draw the graces you need at every hour, every moment, every place and every occasion, to avoid the manifold snares of Satan, which cover the entire earth, and to be able to Serve God in justice and holiness all the days of your lives.

I have given her Heart to you as a precious vessel, filled with manna from heaven and the nectar of paradise, to nourish your hearts with the meat of the angels, even in this world, and so to inebriate them with heavenly wine, that the things of the earth and time may be forgotten entirely and the sole delight of your hearts rest in those things which are heavenly and eternal. Such was always the life of my holy Mother, who is also your beloved Mother, and such were the affections of her Holy Heart.

I have bestowed upon you the royal Heart of your great Queen to be

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

109 -

regent of your hearts, to rule and govern them according to the most adorable will of my heavenly Father that you may be entirely fashioned according to His Heart.

I have likewise given you the admirable Heart of my most worthy Mother, which is identified with my own Heart, that it may be your true Heart as well; that my children may possess only one Heart with their Mother, and my members the same Heart as their Head. Thus you may serve, adore and love God with a Heart worthy of His infinite goodness: *Corde magno et animo volenti*, ( 3 ) that is, with an immense and measureless Heart, with a Heart all pure and holy, so that you may sing His divine praises and accomplish all your actions in the spirit, love, humility and all the holy dispositions of her admirable Heart. But in order to make this come true, you must renounce entirely your own heart, that is, your mind, your will and your love of self. Strive, therefore, to rid yourself of your earthly heart that is depraved and wicked, and you shall receive an entirely heavenly, holy and divine Heart.

I have finally given this marvellous Heart as an inestimable treasure containing every possible blessing. It is for you, beloved children, to engrave in your hearts a high esteem, a profound respect and a particular affection for so rich a treasure, and to preserve it jealously by the continuation and increase of your veneration for a Heart so holy and amiable.

It is to encourage you to do so that I have said these things. Set down my words in your hearts and practise them faithfully. In this way, you will become the true children of my holy Mother's Heart, and you will live according to my own. My eyes and my Heart shall ever watch over your necessities. I will carry you in my innermost Heart. You will yourselves be my Heart, my joy and my delight. I will love you as my own Heart, and I will prepare a glorious habitation for you throughout eternity in my Heart and in the Heart of my blessed Mother, which is one with my own. You shall abide forever in our Hearts, and live by their life, you shall possess all the treasures enclosed in our Hearts, and be immersed and buried in their joys. Our Hearts shall be your paradise, the life of your life, the Heart of your heart.

In the love of these Hearts, or rather, this one Heart, you will eternally love, bless and glorify my holy Mother and the Sovereign monarch of all hearts, which is the adorable Heart of the

most Holy Trinity. May It be forever praised, adored, and loved by all the hearts of angels and of men

After listening to the divine words of Our Divine Saviour encouraging us to love and honor the most amiable Heart of His Blessed Mother, we  
(3).2 Mac. 1, 3.

110 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

shall now contemplate the operations of His adorable Heart towards the maternal Heart of Mary, whereby He teaches us even more effectively than by His eloquent words. Oh, who could worthily describe the least spark of the Divine Heart of Jesus, that furnace of love, towards the Heart of His admirable Mother?

Our Lord has so loved and honored her maternal Heart that He has exalted it above all the hearts of the universe, and made it the most august empire of His glory and the glorious triumph of His love. He has so loved and honored her Heart as to constitute it a Heaven higher and more brilliant than all the heavens in which He is glorified and loved more ardently than in the empyrean heaven.

God has loved and honored His Mother to such an extent that from the first instant in which He gave her blessed Heart its being, He worked in it countless great miracles, imparting the most abundant communication of His own divine perfections, and rendering it most worthy, noble, perfect, mighty, wise, holy, just, merciful, kind, liberal; He has made it the richest, happiest, most glorious, most amiable and most admirable of all hearts.

To understand this perfectly, you must recall that St. Dionysius teaches us that divine love reflects the divine attributes in the hearts of the angels as in so many beautiful mirrors, according to the nine Orders of the blessed Spirits. (4)

Now what Divine Love accomplishes in angelic hearts, Mary's only Son, so filled with love and tenderness for His beloved Mother, has certainly accomplished in her Heart also but in a far more excellent manner. He gathers all the perfections of His divinity, divided as it were among the Orders of the angels, and brings them together in the Heart of the august Queen of all angels. It is fitting that, having chosen Mary to be His Mother, and having become her Son, Our Lord should establish such a perfect resemblance between Mother and Son. The Divine Son seeks to render her similar to Himself in His divinity, just as His exalted Mother caused Him to resemble her in His humanity. As the Eternal Father unceasingly communicates all the divine attributes to His Only-begotten Son with such fullness that He is called the figure and type of His substance and the image of the invisible God, similarly the Son makes His Mother's virginal Heart participate in all the perfections He Himself received from His Heavenly Father, with such plenitude that her most blessed Heart bears a marvellous resemblance to all the excellent qualities found in our adorable Saviour.

(4). De Caelesti Hierarchia, cap. 3, § 1.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

111 -

Yes, the incomparable Heart of Mary, Mother of our Redeemer, is a most precious and radiant mirror in which Jesus, the eternal Sun, reflects Himself in perfect manner, with all His beauties and perfections, and thereby renders her holy Heart so admirable, so amiable and so praiseworthy that it should be, next to the God-Man, the principal object of our devotion on earth, even as it is the first object of veneration for the happy inhabitants of heaven.

## CHAPTER 11

**SOME ESSENTIAL DIVINE PERFECTIONS(1) MIRRORED  
IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

Among His countless words in praise of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Ghost honors His spotless Bride with the glorious tribute of proclaiming that she is clothed with the Sun: "A woman clothed with the Sun." (2) What is this Sun? It is the Sun of Divinity and of the divine perfections, according to the explanation of Several holy Fathers. Our Lady is not merely clothed with and surrounded by this Sun; she is completely filled and penetrated by it. St. Andrew of Crete praises the incomparable Virgin Mary with appropriate dignity when he calls her "the compendium of God's incomprehensible perfections." (3)

Now if this is true of the Blessed Virgin's sacred person, it is still more true of her holy Heart, the noblest part of her being, the source and sanctuary of the virtues of humility, obedience and charity which elevate her to the sublime and divine state that she personally revealed to St. Brigid. (4) Her glowing Heart is the perfect expression and marvellous compendium of all the attributes of the Divine Essence. It is the beautiful mirror in which the ardent love of Jesus Christ for His most amiable Mother reflects so excellently all the perfections of His divinity and His humanity.

In the first place, His divine love most perfectly draws its own image in His Mother's amiable Heart. Next to the infinite love burning in the immense furnace of the adorable Heart of Jesus, there never was and never shall be a love so strong, exalted, extensive, ardent and pure, as the love which always possessed, filled and inflamed the virginal Heart of

(1). The essential perfections or attributes of God are those which belong to the integrity of the Divine Essence or Nature. Other attributes expressing a relation between creatures and God, such as Creator, Redeemer and Rewarder, are not essential because these relations are not in God but outside Him. Cf. Wilhelm-Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology* (London, 1890), P. 179.

(2). Apoc. 12, 1.

(3). *Compendium incomprehensibilium Dei perfectionum*. Ora. 2 de Assumpt.

(4). Revel. lib. 1, Cap. 42.

**THE HEART OF GOD THE SON**

113-

His Mother. This all compassing love in turn stamps upon her a perfect image of all the other divine attributes.

Her admirable Heart is, first of all, a living image of divine *Unity*. God is alone and unique in the infinite eminence of all His grandeurs. He is the only mighty, (5) the only good, (6) the only wise, (7) merciful (8) just, (9) immortal and blessed Being, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. (10) Likewise there is in the whole universe only one Heart of the one Mother of God, unique in dignity, excellence and perfections. It surpasses in power, wisdom, goodness, Mercy, piety, love, charity and every other virtue and eminent quality the most perfect heart of any angel or saint.

The unique Heart of Our Lady never knew any love other than the purest love of God. It never suffered from the multiplicity of superfluous thoughts, aimless desires and vain affections which usually fill and divide the miserable hearts of the children of Adam. Her heart held one thought, one purpose, one will, one intention, one single affection and one desire only: to please God and to fulfil in all things and everywhere His adorable will. Thus did this heavenly Spouse wound, ravish and possess

completely the Heart of her adorable Bridegroom, as He Himself declares: "Thou has wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of thy neck," (11) that is, by loving and seeking me in all things, and in having in thy Heart but one thought, intention and affection, to do everywhere and at all times the things that are most pleasing to me.

The admirable Heart of our great Queen bears a true resemblance to divine *simplicity*. Duplicity, disguise, deceit, falsehood, curiosity, singularity, worldly wisdom, mundane prudence, the self-love which prompts so many faulty thoughts and reflections concerning ourselves and our actions, these and all other things contrary to holy simplicity never had the least part in the Heart of the heavenly Dove. She was always filled, possessed and animated by the spirit of truth, sincerity, candor and simplicity, that her Son bade us follow when He said: "Be ye . . . as simple as doves." (12)

The incomparable Heart of the Mother of God enjoys marvellous participation in and resemblance to the *infinity* and *incomprehensibility* of

(5). 1 Tim. 6, 15.

(6). Luke, 18, 19.

(7). Rom. 16,27.

(8). Apoc. 15, 4

(9). 2 Mach. 1, 25.

(10). 1Tim. 6, 15-16.

(11). Cant. 4, 9.

(12). Matt. 10, 16.

114 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

God Himself, because the almost infinite dignity of the Mother of God ennobles and raises to the highest degree even the smallest details concerning her. This is particularly true of her incomparable Heart, the source of innumerable blessings and the principle of all that is great in her, loaded with numberless gifts and heavenly graces. St. Bernardine of Siena tells us that when Our Lady became the Mother of God she was raised to an almost infinite dignity, which rendereth her like unto God, as she is the Mother of the Son whose Father is Almighty God. This miracle was accomplished by the well-nigh infinite graces, and perfections bestowed upon her, graces so excellent and sublime that only God can know perfectly their boundless extent. (13)

Mary's admirable Heart also received an abundant communication of the *immensity*, of God, a singular faculty to express His immeasurability. Let us listen to St. Bonaventure. "O Mary," says the Seraphic Doctor, "I behold in thee an immense grandeur and capacity. Tu Maria *immensissima*. I see in thee three kinds of immensity. The first is the immensity of thy blessed womb, which enclosed Him who is immense and infinite, whom the Heavens and the entire universe cannot contain. The second is the immensity of thy mind and heart, for thy virginal Heart is more vastly immense than thy sacred womb. The third is the immensity of thy grace and charity, because thy Heart being immense, replete with grace and charity, the charity and grace that fill it must necessarily be immense." (14)

Yes, Mother of Fair Love, thy charity knows no bounds or measure; it not only reaches all ages, all places and everything that God has made, but it is so vast and great that it would encompass a countless number of worlds!

The most constant Heart of the Queen of Angels is likewise an excellent representation of divine *stability* and *immutability*. It remained always steadfast, firm, unalterable and resolute in its

perfect love of God and all the holy dispositions which render a heart entirely pleasing to God.

"O my Jesus, I beseech Thee, by the invariable love which the

(13) Per quamdam quasi infinitatem perfectionum et gratiarum. Tanta fuit perfectio ejus ut soli Deo cognoscenda reservetur. Serm. 5 de Nativ- B. Virg. cap. 12; and Serm. 4 de Conceptione B. Virg. art 1, et 31

(14). Tu ergo immensissima Maria, capacior es caelo: quis quem caeli capere non poterant, tuo gremio contulisti. Tu capacior es mundo: quia quem totus non capit orbis, in tua se clausit viscera factus homo. Si ergo Maria tam capacissima fuit ventre, quanto magis mente? Et si capacitas tam immensa fuit gratia plena, oportuit utique quod gratia illa quae tantum implevisse potuit capacitatem, esset immensa. In Speculo, cap. 5.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

115 -

maculate Heart of Mary has always borne and will forever bear to Thee, deign so to establish and strengthen our hearts in Thy holy love that we may truly my with St. Paul: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . Neither death nor life . . . nor any . . . creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (15)

The holy Heart of our great Princess is a beautiful representation of the *eternity* of God, not only because her affections were always entirely free from temporal attachments and securely fixed upon eternal things, but also because Mary was filled with the spirit of prophecy, which is a participation in the Eternity that renders all things present in the sight of the divine Majesty of God. God communicated this divine perfection to many Saints, so we cannot doubt that the Queen of all Saints also participated highly in this privilege, as she possessed eminently all the gifts and graces that God has bestowed on other Saints. St. Albert the Great (16) says that whoever loves the most amiable Mother of God, must hold it for an infallible rule that whatever there is of goodness and beauty in all the other Saints is to be found in Our Lady in a still higher degree; nay, that it is through her intercession that the other Saints have received their great endowments. Therefore does the Holy Ghost give Our Lady the name and title of Prophetess saying: "I went to the prophetess." (17) St. Basil (18) and many other saints refer these words to Mary.

The blessed Heart of the Queen of Heaven displays a perfect imitation of the *plenitude* and *self-sufficiency* of God, who bears the name of *Saddai*, meaning precisely self-sufficient. (19) Almighty God has need of nothing, being filled with every good. The Son of God, speaking to His Father, exclaims: «Thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods.» (20) In like manner, the virginal Heart of the Mother of God, loving God alone, being always free and empty of every alien affection, was constantly filled with God much more perfectly than the Ephesians, to whom St. Paul wrote that he bowed his knees to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ to obtain for them the grace that they might «be filled unto all the fulness of God.» (21)

(15). Rom. 8, 35, 38 and 39.

(16). Pro infaillibili regula debemus habere, qui Mariam diligimus, quod quidquid unquam bonitatis, in aliquo Sancto fuit, vel pulchritudinis, hoc in ipsum per excellentiam excreverit, et per ipsam per eos. In Bibliis B. Mariae, ad cap. 1 Cantici Canticorum.

(17). Isa. 8, 3.

(18). In cap. 8 Isa.

(19). See Meditations on Various Subjects (New York, 1947), P. 114.

(20). PS. 15, 2.

(21). Eph. 3, 19.

The blessed Heart of Our Lady never desired, sought or found any delight or satisfaction outside of God. Her Heart always enjoyed imperturbable rest and peace because being filled to capacity with the plenitude of God, it remained always fully satisfied and incomparably happier and content than the heart of a man possessing a million possible worlds.

Consider well, dear reader, how perfectly the Admirable Heart of your Queen fulfils the mandate to "seek but one thing" and to make God her portion and her heritage for ever. To be happy, give and offer your heart constantly, exclaiming with Mary, St. Thomas and St. Francis: "My God and my All."

### CHAPTER III

#### PURITY AND SANCTITY OF GOD MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

IN THIS Chapter I shall show how Mary's Heart bears a striking resemblance to divine purity and sanctity. The most pure and holy Heart of Our Lady is a living image of those two adorable perfections, which are one and the same, for St. Dionysius tells us that sanctity is perfect purity,<sup>(1)</sup> purity meaning freedom from the slightest imperfection.

The most holy Heart of Mary is indeed an excellent image of divine purity and holiness. Not only was her most pure and holy Heart always far removed from every kind of sin, but it was entirely free from attachment to created things, and intimately united to God by its pure and holy love for Him together with the eminent practice of all the other virtues which Mary's Heart possessed in so high a degree. The Queen of Virtues is called by St. John Damascene "the abode and the sanctuary of all virtues." (2) Even though Our Lady dwelt for years in this world full of filth and abomination, poisoned by the venom of sin, and among wicked and perfidious Jews, her most holy Heart never contracted the least stain or blemish, was never attached by an inordinate affection to any creature nor even to God's gifts and graces. The Blessed Virgin remained always intimately united to God, as though nothing else existed save God and herself. Thus were the divine words most perfectly fulfilled in her divine Heart: «Let my heart be undefiled in thy justifications,»<sup>(3)</sup> that is, let my heart be immaculate by its union and adherence to 'my divine Will, which justifies, sanctifies and even deifies the hearts that love it and perfectly follow it.

The most holy Heart of the Queen of all Saints remained forever immaculate, preserved in eminent purity and holiness, and entirely filled with the purity and sanctity of God Himself. Her being was

(1). De divinis Nominibus, cap. 72, sec. 2.

(2). Virtutum omnium domicilium. De fide orthodoxa, lib. 4, Cap. 15.

(3). Ps. 118, 80.

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

transformed and submerged in divine purity and holiness, to the surpassing extent that her Heart merited to obtain the world's salvation. As St. Anselm expresses it: "The pure sanctity and holy purity of Mary's devout Heart, surpassing by far the purity and sanctity of all other creatures, merited for her the sublime dignity of becoming the Restorer of the world wrapped in perdition."<sup>(4)</sup>

If you would find a place in the sanctuary of Mary's admirable Heart, which so perfectly mirrors the purity and sanctity of the Most High, you must purify your heart and realize the meaning of the words: "This is the will of God, your sanctification." (5) These words are not meant just for souls specially consecrated and set apart. You must apply them to yourself, you who bear the name and imprint of Christ and membership in His mystical Body. The sanctification of your spirit, heart and body is more than a commandment; it is a privilege, a participation, granted to you through the purity and sanctity of the heart of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer and your own Mother.

(4). Para enim sanctitas et sanctissima puritas piissimi Pectoris ejus, omnem omnis creaturae puritatem sive sanctitatem transcendens, incomparabili sublimitate hoc promeruit, ut Reparatrix perditis orbis benignissimi fieret. De excell. B. Virg. Cap. 9.

(5). I Thess. 4, 3.

## CHAPTER 1V

### STRENGTH AND POWER OF GOD MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

THE principal and most common appellations given to God in Sacred Scripture are the words strong and mighty. He says of Himself: "I am the most mighty God" (1) and "I am God Almighty." (2)

If you should ask how these two attributes differ from each other, I would answer that in God power and strength are one and the same perfection; yet there is some difference between their effects. It belongs to all- powerfulness to work great and admirable wonders and the characteristic of strength is to accomplish all things easily, without pain or fatigue.

Let us now see the strength and power operate in the Heart of our august Queen. I visualize their image engraved on her pure Heart most perfectly. Consider the power which the Heart of the Mother of the Almighty exerts over Him Who has chosen to obey her as His Mother: "And he was subject to them." (3) The maternal authority and power God has given Mary over Himself will never be separated from her divine maternity, for the Son of Mary will never relinquish the nature He assumed in His Beloved Mother's womb and never will He withdraw the privileges He once conferred upon her.

If the heart of the faithful Christian, who believes in Jesus Christ, finds everything possible according to His holy word: "All things are possible to him that believeth," (4) what can be impossible for the maternal Heart of Mary who conceived the Son of God in her sacred womb, gave Him birth, nourished Him, took care of Him in childhood, accompanied Him in all labors and sufferings, and loved Him more than all the hearts of Heaven and earth put together?

"If all things are possible to him who believes, how much more must

- (1). Gen. 46, 3.
- (2). Ibid., 35, 11.
- (3). Luke 2, 51.
- (4). Mark 9, 22.

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

this be true of her who loves Him?" says Gerson. "And of her who bore Him," adds St. Bernardine of Siena.

If the Apostle St. Paul says that he can do all things "in him who strengtheneth me," (5) what must be the power of the maternal Heart of the Queen of Apostles bearing eternally within itself Him who is called in Sacred Scripture, "Christ, the power of God?" (6) Her Heart is filled and animated by the power and strength of the Most High. Cannot we then say that her virginal Heart is all-powerful in Him who is her strength and power, as He is her soul and her spirit?

Hers is the Heart of the valiant woman spoken of by Solomon, always inspired with Vigorous and manly virtue, through which she accomplished all things with sovereign perfection and without the least defect. INS valiant woman's Heart bore the sharpest pain and the most violent anguish with marvellous constancy and unshakeable fortitude. Her in. trepid Heart critsbed the infernal dragon's head, that is, sin, prefigured by Holofernes, and the powers of hell fear the Immaculate Heart even as an army in battle array (7) because Our Lady fought courageously against all God's enemies and obtained a glorious victory.



But what is more, she vanquished, so to speak, the Almighty Himself. For I hear an angel saying to Jacob: "Thou shalt no longer be called Jacob, but thy name shall be Israel," which means according to St. Jerome and the Septuagint "strong against God." (8) This interpretation agrees with the Angel's own explanation, for after having said: ... Thy name shall be Israel," he adds; "for if thou hast been strong against God, how much more shalt thou prevail against men?" Jacob had overcome Only an angel, but that angel represented God; hence he was told he had overcome God Himself.

Jacob's holy daughter, the worthy Mother of Christ, has, in a way really overcome God Himself. How often has she not, through the efficacy, of her prayers and merits, and by the power of her love, disarmed the anger of God and arrested the torrent of His indignation, which would otherwise have flooded and destroyed the world because of its innumerable crimes? How many times has Our Lady besought divine vengeance to lay aside the thunderbolts ready to be hurled against criminal mankind? How often has her Heart's incomparable charity clasped the hands of God's terrible justice and stopped Him from punishing men as they deserve? "How powerful is her love," says Richard of St. Victor,

(5). Phil. 4, 13

(6). I Cor. 1, 24

(7). Can. 6, 3

(8). Gen. 32, 28.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

121 -

"since it overcomes the Almighty." (9) Yes, the love and charity of Mary's Heart are powerful, and have as it were vanquished God Himself!

History is filled with instances where Our Lady has shown her incomparable power on behalf of those who invoke her protection, manifesting publicly to armies and nations the strength that she also extends to each Christian in his own inner struggle against sin. But her strength is for those who invoke, love, honor and venerate her heart.

O Glorious Queen of the World, make us sharers in the divine power which fills thy holy Heart and give us strength against the enemies of thy Divine Son, who is all and does all in thee!

(9). De gradibus Caritatis. O quam potens est amor ejus, qui vincit Omnipotentem. (St. John Eudes does not give the complete reference.)

## CHAPTER V

### WISDOM AND TRUTH OF GOD MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

DIVINE wisdom and truth are communicated to the holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary in no lesser degree than Divine power and strength.

If the Holy Ghost assures us that the soul of the just Man is the seat of Divine Wisdom, we can well say that the Heart of Mary, Mother of Jesus, is the throne of this same Wisdom, the highest and most magnificent throne that it ever had or shall have on earth and in heaven.

The Heart of Mary is not merely the throne of Wisdom, but its living image, for it is the Heart of the Mother of Him whom Sacred Scripture calls "the wisdom of God." (1) In Christ are all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God, and He certainly dispensed them in an incomparably higher manner to His Mother than to King Solomon and all the sages and wise men of the universe.

Mundane prudence and the wisdom of the flesh never found admittance into her wise Heart, which was and still is an inexhaustible treasure and bottomless abyss of angelic prudence, holy science, heavenly light and wisdom divine, because her luminous Heart always was and ever shall be the abode of the Eternal Sun and of Uncreated Wisdom, Who has always dwelt therein. It is the city mentioned by the Prophet Isaias: "One shall be called the city of the Sun." (2)

St. Bernardine of Siena expressly states that Our Lady was so completely filled with the light of Divine Wisdom from her mother's womb that from the initial moment of her existence she possessed a perfect general knowledge of the Creator and of all irrational, rational and intellectual creatures (3) Our Lady knew all these things in God, as in their first and universal cause, for God was the single object of her gaze as well as of her love. She saw God in all things, and all things in God. She beheld God in all creatures, as the principle, end, center, exemplar, author and preserver of every created being, and she saw every creature in God as

(1). 1 Cor. 1, 21-24

(2). Isa. 19, 18.

(3). Serm. 13 de Exalt. BY. in gloria.

### THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

123 -

participating in His Sovereign Being and divine perfections. God loves all that is, and hates nothing that He has made, according to the divine word: "Thou lovest all things which thou hast made," (4) so also the Holy Heart of the Mother of God was always filled with affection and even respect for all God's creatures. She looked upon the reasonable and intellectual beings as images and semblances of God; she considered the irrational and insentient beings as marks and vestiges of God; in a word, she saw in all creatures the expression of the wisdom of God and participations in His Divinity. If the Heart of the Mother of the Eternal Sun was thus bathed in divine splendors from the beginning of her life, judge of her progress and her end. As her heart ever grew in grace and love, so also it increased in light and wisdom.

"Mary is rightly represented as clothed with the sun," says St. Bernard, "for she has penetrated into the profound abyss of divine Wisdom more deeply than we can think or believe, to such an extent, indeed, that she seems to have become immersed in that inaccessible light, so far as it is possible for a creature who does not have a personal union with God." (5)

Since our incomparable Mother is in heaven, entirely absorbed in the ocean of eternal wisdom and knowledge, and as God has made her partaker of His empire and associated her in His divine kingship, establishing her Queen and Empress of Heaven and earth, and communicating to her His own dominion over every creature, so has God filled her Heart with the light of His adorable wisdom, that she may know all the subjects under her authority, and rule and govern every creature according to the necessities of each and the dispositions of the Divine Will.

Our Lady possesses a special knowledge of those who are most devoted to her; she knows God's designs concerning them, the road they should follow to reach God, the state and dispositions of their souls, all the accidents that befall them, all their possible perils, the pains they suffer, interiorly and exteriorly. She knows the temptations that assail them, the evil Schemes of their enemies and all their corporal and spiritual needs, so that she may assist, protect, defend and strengthen her faithful followers, obtain from her divine Son the help they need most, and be herself the best of mothers to them. From this you can estimate the happiness and advantages enjoyed by those who make themselves worthy to be numbered among the true children of Our Lady's loving Heart.

(4). Wis. 11, 25

(5). Jure ergo Maria tole perhibetur amicta, quae profundissimam divinae Sapientiae, ultra quam credi valeat, penetravit abyssum: ut quantum sine personali unione creaturae conditio patitur, luci illi inaccessabili videatur immersa. Serm. in Signum Magnum.

124-

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Such are mine of the effects wrought by Divine Wisdom in this admirable Heart. We shall now contemplate in it the workings of the Eternal Truth of God.

Divine veracity stamps its image most excellently on the Blessed Virgin's Heart. As God is paramountly the God of all truth and calls Himself the Holy and True One, (6) so is the Heart of the Mother of God filled with truth. Only of the Heart of Mary can it be said, speaking of simple creatures, that truth always filled it, because it was the only Heart ever completely faithful to its divine role and exemplar, the Heart of God Himself. Give me all the hearts of the children of Adam, and I shall repeat of them all the words of the Holy Spirit: "Their heart is vain," (7) for none will be found who were always truthful and faithful to God. Only of the Heart of the Mother of Him who is essential and uncreated Truth, could it be said from the first to the last moment of her life: "The Heart of Mary is holy and truthful," because it always conforms to God's eternal decrees. "Whatever was done in her," says St. Jerome, "was all purity and simplicity, sanctity and truth." (8)

Furthermore, as God is infallible in His judgments and knowledge and can commit no error, knowing and judging all things in His own truth, (9) so also He gave the Blessed Virgin Mary a knowledge of the truth which enlightened all her judgments. Her Heart was ever filled and possessed by the spirit of truth, which guided her with the infallible light of faith that can truly be called a participation of divine truth.

Finally, as all the actions and words of God are imbued with Truth itself, in like manner were the words and actions of God's Mother always truthful, that is, they were always conformable to the holiness, perfection and truth of the deeds and words of God. This was because they stemmed from a Heart most holy, perfect, and truthful, and the Son of God Himself teaches us that man's heart is the principle of all his thoughts~ words and actions, be they good or bad. (10)

All these considerations make us understand that the Holy Heart of Mary is a living portrait of the wisdom and veracity of God, given to us that we may invoke her guidance against the folly, deceit and falsehood of the flesh and of the world.

- (6). Apoc. 3, 7.
- (7). Ps. 5, 10.
- (8). Serm. de Assumpt. B. Mariae.
- (9). Ps. 95, 13
- (10). Luke 6, 45

## CHAPTER VI

### GOODNESS AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

SACRED theology distinguishes in God three kinds of goodness, which are fundamentally one and the same: natural goodness, moral goodness and goodness of benevolence or bounty, which is sometimes called benignity. Natural goodness is none other than the perfection and beauty of divine nature, containing the infinite excellences of the Godhead. Moral goodness comprises all the moral virtues that God possesses so eminently and in so high a degree that they are infinitely beyond what a created spirit can think or express.

The goodness of benevolence or bounty is God's infinite inclination to communicate Himself and it proceeds from His natural goodness. As a vessel brimming with a precious liquor tends to overflow, so a being filled with perfection has a natural inclination to communicate its fulness. God is an immense ocean, filled to overflowing with infinite good and divine perfections, and He possesses an unutterable and incomprehensible propensity to communicate them. This He does in two ways, with an outpouring of liberality worthy of His divine magnificence, within and outside Himself. Within Himself His perfections flow in a natural and necessary communication of the divine nature and all its inherent marvels from the Father of His Beloved Son, and from both to the Holy Ghost. Outside Himself this benevolence is a free communication, whereby God confers, not indeed His nature and His essence, but His image, semblance, shadow, or mere reflection of His being on creatures in the order of nature, of grace and of glory.

In the order of nature God communicates His being to all existing things, His life to all living things, whether their life be rational or merely sensitive and vegetative. His power is communicated to all things possessed of power, His wisdom to all intellectual beings, His goodness to all things good and kind. The beauty of God is transfused to things that are beautiful, His light to luminous bodies, His firmness and stability to things firm and stable, His immortality to immortal souls, God also

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

imparts His happiness and felicity to such as possess not only being, but well-being, which consists in a measure of natural enjoyment or satisfaction. God communicates Himself and His divine perfections in general to all things pertaining to the natural order, through His creation, preservation and government of all beings according to their nature.

In the order of grace Almighty God communicates Himself much more abundantly to rational and intellectual creatures, through the adorable mystery of the Incarnation and all the other mysteries of His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer. Through the Sacraments He has instituted in His Church, especially the Holy Eucharist, and all the other spiritual channels, He pours grace into our souls, provided there be no obstacle on our part.

In the order of glory God communicates Himself most fully and perfectly to all the souls in heavenly bliss, clothing them in His radiant glory, surrounding them with His felicity, enrapturing them with His holy joys, and making them partakers of all the goodness He Himself possesses.

Finally, as the Sun, to quote St. Dionysius, (1) enlightens everything that can participate in its light, which is marvellously diffused, unfolding throughout the world the glittering of its rays, in the highest as well as in the humblest spheres, so that nothing visible can escape the sovereign

grandeur of its brightness, so too does the divine Essence extend Its beauty to all beings, as their principle, preserver and end, as the universal cause, the common and infinite good, whence all things derive their being and well-being, wherein they are established, enclosed and preserved.

The superlative Goodness communicates Its adorable perfections to the holy Heart of Mary with much greater abundance and plenitude than to all other creatures put together. Next to the Heart of God, there never was and never shall be a heart so good, liberal, benevolent, magnificent and so replete with kindness as the most admirable Heart of Mary.

The Heart of Mary is so full of goodness that St. Bernard thus speaks of her: "Why does a human weakness fear to come unto Mary? Nothing in her is austere, nothing frightful, for she is filled with sweetness. Go over the Gospel story with the greatest attention; if you find therein the least mark of harshness or severity on Mary's part, the least sign of indignation, you may well fear to appear before her. But if, on the contrary, you find (as you surely will) her virginal Heart full of love, piety, sweetness and goodness, then give thanks to Him who in His infinite mercy has provided such a mediatrix for us." (2)

(1). De divinis Nominib. Cap. 4, sect. 4.

(2). Serm. de verbis Apoc. Signum Magnum.

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE SON     127 -**

"Her Heart is so alive with pity that she never rejects any Suppliant coming to her with humility and confidence," says Raymund Jourdain.<sup>(3)</sup> It is this loving confidence that we express as often as we recite that beautiful prayer, attributed by many annotators to St. Bernard, and by others to St. Augustine: "Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help and sought thine intercession, was left unaided." (4)

Her Heart is so filled with bounty that she readily grants whatever we ask of her. St. Bernard says: "O blessed Mary, whoever loves thee honors God; who serves thee pleases God; who invokes thy holy name with a pure heart, will infallibly receive the object of his petition." (5) "Who has ever invoked Mary without being heard?" says Pope Innocent III (6) The venerable Abbot Blasius adds: "She rejects no one but lends a favorable ear to the petitions of all." (7) "Heaven and earth would sooner perish, than Mary refuse her help to such as invoke her seriously and with affection," reiterates St. Bernard, adding: "Let him be silent in praise of thy mercy, O most Blessed Virgin, who having invoked thee in his necessities, should remember not having received thy help." (8)

Her Heart is so good and merciful that she extends her kindness not only to the good but also to the wicked, not only to the faithful but to sinners as well. "In this life, thou art a help to the just and unjust," says Raymund Jourdain. "Thou dost aid the just man and the sinner; the former by keeping him in the state of grace, wherefore the Church calls thee the Mother of Grace; the latter by bringing them back to divine Mercy, for which thou art named the Mother of Mercy." (9)

Our Lady's Heart is so kind and gentle that she helps not only those who implore her aid, but even the careless souls who neglect to invoke her. Listen again to St. Bernard: "Why should we marvel to see her stretch a helping hand to such as beseth her, if she assist even them who do not pray to her?" (10)

The holy Abbot Blasius has written: "Mary spurns no one; to nobody does she refuse her aid. She comforts and relieves all who seek her assistance;

(3). Raymund Jourdain was provost of Uzes in 1381 and later Abbot of Celles in the diocese of Bourges. This passage is taken from his Contemplations on the Blessed Virgin.

- (4). The Memorare is usually attributed to St. Bernard.
- (5). St. Bernard quoted by Pelberto, lib. 4, Part 1, art. 2.
- (6). Serm. de Assumpt.
- (7). In Speculo Spirit. cap. 12.
- (8). Serm. 4 de Assumpt.
- (9). Contempl. B.M. Part 5. cont. 2.
- (10). Serm. 4 de Assumpt.

128 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

ance; she opens her bountiful Heart to all who implore her intercession; she readily succors all who have recourse to her charity and, by an excess of goodness, she often shows her kindness to persons who do not think of her and have no devotion, gently and effectively drawing them to God by means of the graces she obtains on their behalf. Thus did Divine Bounty constitute Our lady as a supreme gift to mankind, that all might have recourse without fear and with complete confidence." (11)

Her Heart is so merciful that she loves even those who hate her. Mary always renders good for evil because she willingly sacrificed her own beloved Son to save the reprobates who crucified Him.

Other Fathers of the Church express the same thoughts and assure us that the almost boundless charity of the Heart of Mary extends to all places, times and things in general, through a most abundant communication and eminent participation of God's infinite goodness and likewise of His divine providence.

As this adorable providence governs and regulates all things created, from the greatest to the least, both in general and in particular, so also does God's most powerful and merciful Mother, Queen of the Universe, bestow the affections and care of her royal Heart on all things within her realm and subject to her rule. She leads all created things to the last end for which God made them, namely the glory of His Divine Majesty. But her special care is the guidance of rational beings, above all, of Christians, and most particularly of her own devout children, who strive faithfully to honor, serve and imitate her.

Her maternal Heart protects and cherishes her devotees in a unique manner, having her eyes ever intently fixed upon them. She preserves and guards them as the apple of her eye, and assumes the guidance and conduct of their entire life and actions. She leads them by the hand in all their ways, removing from their path the obstacles and hindrances which might make them stumble, or retard their progress. She obtains the assistance and the means whereby they will receive strength and advance more rapidly. She bears their scull in her arms and on her virginal breast through the dangerous crises where their peril is greatest. She assists them most lovingly in the dark passage from this life into the next world, protecting them valiantly from the efforts and snares of the enemies of salvation. She receives their souls in her sweet and gentle hands at the moment of death, and lovingly folds them in her most charitable Heart. She finally bears them upward to Heaven with unutterable joy and presents them with all-surpassing kindness to her beloved Son.

- (11). In Paradiso animae, cap. 18.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON 129 -

If such is the miraculous goodness of Mary to those who love and venerate her, how can there possibly be any Christians who hold back from devotion to the center and principle of her benignity, her Admirable Heart?

Praise, honour and glory be forever to the Most High, who has thus caused the Heart of this incomparable Mother to reflect to mankind the perfect image of His goodness and all-merciful providence!

131 -

## **PART FIVE**

### **Further Divine Perfections Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary**

133 -

#### *Part Five*

#### *Further Divine Perfections Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary*

### **CHAPTER 1**

### **MERCY OF GOD MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

DIVINE Mercy is a perfection directed towards the miseries of creatures, tending to alleviate them and even to free them from created things when such a liberation enters into the designs of Divine Providence, which does all things with measure, number and weight.(1)

This adorable mercy extends, like goodness itself, to all God's works: "His tender mercies are over all His works." (2) God's mercy overshadows the works of nature, the works of grace and the works of glory.

Mercy supervises the works of nature, because God has created out of nothing all things contained in the natural order. It overshadows the works of grace, because man had fallen into the horrible abyss, and divine mercy not only drew him from its depths but reestablished man in a state of grace so Godlike and noble that from being a member of Satan (as he was by his crime) he became a member of Jesus Christ.

God's mercy permeates the works of glory, because God was not content simply to raise man to the supernatural and sublime state of Christian grace, making him thus partaker of the divine nature. The Creator further designed to withdraw man from the baseness, miseries, imperfections and perils which surround him here below, and to elevate him to Heaven, even to the throne of God, to grant participation in His ever

(1). Wis. 11, 21.

(2). Ps. 144, 9

134 -

### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

lasting glory and the enjoyment of His eternal happiness. God has willed to share all His possessions with man, His creature.

Among the effects of divine Mercy, we must enumerate three principal realities, which in turn embody numberless effects. The first is the Incarnation of the God-Man; the second, His Mystical Body, namely Holy Church; the third is the Mother of the God-Man, namely the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. These constitute three admirable masterpieces of divine mercy.

In order to save us from the deepest possible abyss of misery and malediction, and to raise us to the highest conceivable degree of happiness and grandeur, God willed that His Divine Son should



become man, mortal and capable of suffering like ourselves; that He should descend to earth, to abide and converse with us, and teach us a heavenly and divine doctrine by His own sacred lips. God willed His Son to give us a most excellent and holy law, and to teach us to observe it by His own divine example. God willed that His Only-begotten Son should suffer and perform great miracles for our sake, while in this world; that He should die on the cross, be buried, rise again the third day and remain forty days longer on earth; that He should found a Church, establish therein a sublime priesthood, an admirable sacrifice and seven divine sacraments; that, having ascended into heaven, He should send His Holy Spirit to govern His Church, to rule her in all things and to abide with her forever.

All this, namely the numerous episodes and mysteries of the God-Man, His thoughts concerning our salvation, the words He spoke in preparation for this great mission, the thanksgiving He offered, the sufferings He endured, every drop of blood He shed, the sacrifices He offered and continues to offer daily and hourly in His Church, all the Sacraments established by Him, all the enlightenment and sanctification that He accomplished in human souls, under the Old as well as under the New Law, by virtue of His mysteries, sacrifices and sacraments, and whatever other graces communicated to men, all this, I repeat, emanated from the manifold operations of the divine attribute of mercy.

Beyond this, God not only willed to become man that men might become partakers of the divine nature, but He willed that His only Son should become the Son of Man that men might become sons of God. God willed that His Son come into this world by being born of the seed of Adam and of a daughter of Adam that we might have the God-Man for our brother and the Mother of God for our mother. Thus we have the same father and the same mother as the Son of God Himself. We are

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE SON**

135 -

His brothers, and as He is our mediator with His Father, so His heavenly Mother is a mediatrix between Himself and us.

In order to render His admirable Mother paramountly able to exercise her double office of Mother and Mediatrix, so that she might protect, favor and assist us with greater efficacy in all our needs, Divine Mercy constituted her, first of all, most agreeable and holy. Secondly, Mercy gave her dominion over everything in heaven and on earth. Thirdly, it gave her the mildest, sweetest and most loving heart save that of the God-Man. To the Heart of Mary God communicated in great abundance His merciful inclinations and established in it the throne and reign of His Mercy more gloriously than in the heart of any other creature, save the sacred humanity of Christ.

Divine Mercy reigns so perfectly in Mary's Heart that she bears the name of Queen and Mother of Mercy. And this most loving Mary has so completely won the heart of God's mercy that He has given her the key to all His treasures and made her absolute mistress of them. St. Bernard says: "She is called the Queen of Mercy because she opens the abyss and treasure of divine mercy to whom she chooses, when she chooses and as she chooses." (3)

Divine Mercy holds such complete sway over Mary's Heart and fills it with so much compassion for sinners and for all persons in need that St. Augustine addresses her thus: "Thou art the sinner's only hope," (4) after God. "My dearest children," says St. Bernard, "her heart is the ladder by which sinners go up to heaven; this is my reliance, this the only reason of my hope." (5) Euthymius, one of the ancient Fathers who lived over Seven centuries ago, adds: "O most merciful Virgin, deign to cast thy pitiful eyes on thy poor servants, for, after God, we have placed all our hope in thee who are our life, our glory, and, as it were, our substance and our being." (6)

Holy Church, animated and guided by the Spirit of God, exhorts us to salute and honor this prerogative of Mary in that admirable prayer: "Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope, all hail!" And the same Divine Spirit puts into Mary's mouth the words which Holy Church repeats in her Office: "In me is all grace of the way and of the truth; in me is all hope of life and of virtue." (7)

(3). Serm. 1 super Salve.

(4). Serm. 18 de Sanctis.

(5). Serm. de Aquaeductu.

(6). In Adoratione venerandae Zonae Deip. cap. 8.

(7). Ecclus. 24, 25.

136 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

St. John Damascene tells us that Our Lady is the only relief of the afflicted, the sovereign comforter of anguished hearts;<sup>8</sup> and St. John Chrysostom declares her to be a boundless mean of mercy (9).

Would you know in what further manner divine mercy lives and reigns in the Heart of the Mother of Mercy? Listen to St. Bonaventure: "Great was Mary's mercy towards the wretched while she was living in exile here below; but immeasurably greater still now that she is happily reigning in heaven. She manifests this greater mercy through innumerable benefits, now that she possesses a clearer insight into the numberless woes of mankind. She does not require past merits, but grants the petitions of all men, out of charity, and opens the bosom of her clemency to everyone. She relieves every need and necessity with an incomparable affection and tenderness of heart." (10)

Her gentle Heart~ is so filled with mercy that it overflows on all sides and spreads itself in heaven, on earth and even in hell. Let us again listen to St. Bernard proclaiming this truth: "Who can comprehend, O Blessed Virgin, the length, the width, the height and the depth of thy mercy? Its length extends to the last day in the life of those who invoke thee; its width encompasses the whole world; its height reaches to heaven, there to repair the losses of the heavenly Jerusalem; its depth has penetrated hell to obtain the deliverance of them that sit in the darkness and shadow of death." (11)

The virginal Heart of the Mother of Grace is filled with such exceeding mercy that she exercises it not only in favor of sinners who wish to be converted, but also towards many persons who never think of their eternal salvation. She implores her Blessed Son to inspire them, to excite in their hearts sentiments of fear of God and terror at the thought of His judgments. She asks Him to chastise them in divers ways, to raise in their midst persons leading holy and exemplary lives, whose example will draw them to Himself, and to use all other means of obtaining their conversion, or at least, if they will mend their ways, to prevent them from multiplying their sins, that their damnation may be less terrible.

But what is even more, the Heart of Mary is so full of mercy that, using the extraordinary privileges God has granted to her alone, and out of her incomparable goodness, she often saves from eternal perdition souls who in the ordinary course of divine justice would have been cast into hell. Such is the mind of that ancient and excellent author, Raymund

(8). Ora. 2 de dorm. Deip.

(9). In Horto Ani.

(10). In Spec. B.V. lect. 10.

(11). Serm. 4 de Assumpt. B.V.

Jourdain, who succeeded in hiding his name, but not the extent of his learning and holiness: "The Mother's mercy often Saves many whom the justice of the Son would have otherwise condemned."  
(12)

Hence St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, addresses these beautiful words to Mary: "O purest, best and most merciful Lady, help and relief of the faithful, powerful comforter of the afflicted and assured refuge of sinners, forsake us not, but keep us ever under thy protection. if thou forsake us, to whom shall we have recourse? What would become of us without thee, most holy Mother of God, who are the spirit and life of Christians. Even as respiration is an infallible sign of life in our bodies, so is thy holy name, when it is constantly on the lips of thy servants, on all occasions, at every time and in all places, not only a sign, but a veritable cause of life, happiness and protection." (13)

(12). Contempl. B.V. in Prologo.

(13). Orat. in ador. venerandae Zonae B.V.

**CHAPTER 11****MEEKNESS, PATIENCE AND CLEMENCY OF GOD  
MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

God's meekness, patience and clemency are three divine perfections which are joined with mercy to form one and the same perfection, although their effects are different.

Mercy regards the misery of creatures in general, to relieve and to deliver them from its fetters. The first and greatest of miseries, the source of all wretchedness is sin. When man is so unhappy as to offend God mortally, he at once becomes the object of God's wrath which would crush him the very instant he consents to sin, as he infinitely deserves to be. But divine meekness prevents the destruction and arrests the torrent of God's just anger, ready to pour upon the sinner. If man perseveres in his crime, he deserves to be cast upon divine vengeance, but divine patience interposes and persuades God to suffer the sinner to await his repentance with admirable goodness.

These are the effects of divine meekness and patience. God's clemency is manifested by remitting entirely or in part the punishment due to sin.

Whoever is in mortal sin deserves the eternal punishment of hell, divine clemency often sends temporal affliction to those who are in this miserable state, to oblige them to struggle out of it, and thus become delivered from eternal suffering. If they will be converted at the very instant they feel sentiments of true remorse, divine mercy effaces the guilt of sin from their souls.

Although the actual guilt is thus effaced, it remains true that divine justice still pursues the sinner to exact the penalty his offences have deserved, but divine clemency commutes first of all the eternal penalty into a temporal punishment.

Furthermore, God's marvellous clemency seeks to deliver the sinner from even this temporal punishment, or at least to diminish it, and sends further afflictions, by means of which sinful man may satisfy divine justice.

**THE HEART OF GOD THE SON**

139 -

This sweetest clemency offers him still other means of paying his debt to the justice of God, for example, jubilees and indulgences. It induces the repentant sinner to assist with devotion at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the supreme means of satisfying all our obligations to God, and at the same time it urges him to receive the Blessed Eucharist frequently with holy dispositions and to perform various other good works.

If the sinner dies before he has tendered full satisfaction, his imperfectly purified soul is sent to Purgatory to complete its purification, which is yet another effect of divine mercy.

If it is true that the sufferings of Purgatory are greater than we can describe or imagine, divine clemency has nevertheless found several means of mitigating and shortening them. It hastens the deliverance of suffering souls by the application of indulgences, and by the prayers, fasts, alms and sacrifices of the faithful on earth, as well as the suffrages of the Saints in heaven.

These are some of the effects of the meekness, patience and clemency of God.

Now these three divine perfections live and reign in the Heart of the Mother of Mercy, communicating their own divine inclinations most excellently. After the Heart of God Himself there never was and never shall be a heart so full of meekness, patience and clemency as the noble Heart of Mary.

While she dwelt on earth, she beheld the world filled with idols and idolators. With the exception of a very small number, men generally were armed against God, trying, if possible, to dethrone Him, to put Him under their feet and annihilate Him. They would set His enemy in His place and sought to procure for the usurper the adoration and honor which belong to God alone. As the Most Blessed Virgin Mary loved God with a love so great that we cannot describe it, she experienced an indescribably great sorrow at the sight of the crimes committed against His Divine Majesty.

But who can appreciate her greater grief over the atrocious torments inflicted on her beloved Son by the perfidy of the Chosen People? She knew Him to be Innocence and Sanctity incarnate; yet she saw Him persecuted and tormented as though He were the greatest of criminals. She watched Him bound and tethered like a thief, dragged through the streets of Jerusalem like a scoundrel, beaten, bruised, mocked, spit upon, clothed in the white garment of a fool, given up to the mockery, insults and outrages of a band of insolent soldiers, reviled, spurned in favor of Barabbas, scourged and torn with whips from head to foot, crowned

140 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

with thorns, exposed to the gaze of an enraged crowd crying: "Away with him; away with him: crucify him." (1) She saw her dear Son condemned to a cruel death, carrying the heavy Cross to be the instrument of His torture, stripped, nailed and fastened to the Cross with great nails that pierced His gentle hands and feet. She watched His adorable lips, in the torment of thirst, given gall and vinegar to drink, His sacred ears filled with curses and blasphemies, all the members of His body dislocated so that one could count His very bones: "They have numbered all my bones." (2) She beheld the body of the God-Man, her Son, covered with wounds, experiencing inconceivable pain, His blessed soul lacerated with anguish and torment. Finally, she watched Him die the cruelest and most shameful death that ever happened.

Now what did she do, the Mother of Sorrows, as she beheld her treasure, her most innocent Lamb torn, flayed and slain? She loved Him with a peerless love. Did she cry out against His pitiless Murderers? Did she lament of the wrong and injustice wreaked upon Him? Did she implore the Eternal Father's justice? No. She remained silent; not a word was heard from her lips; only her stifled sighs, her tears alone were seen. Her most gentle Heart fought against the entry of any sense of injury or movement of impatience, or aversion or bitterness towards her cruel tormentors. Her Heart abounded with meekness, patience and clemency, so that she imitated her Son, Jesus, and sought to excuse the men who with such distorted rage were killing Him, repeating in her Heart the words He uttered with His lips: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (3) She offered for their salvation the very Blood they shed, the sufferings they inflicted upon Him, the cruel death they perpetrated. She was prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice herself together with her Son, to obtain mercy for those wicked men.

Nor is that all. The glorious Virgin now reigning in heaven can see much more clearly the numberless multitude and frightful enormity of the sins committed against God. She sees this earth of ours which should be a paradise since the God of Heaven honored it with His presence and made it His dwelling place; yet it is filled with sinners and enemies of God, who blaspheme and dishonor Him without ceasing, even more than the devils and the damned in hell. For the devils, being deprived of liberty, cannot add to their sins, whereas living sinners heap crime on

- (1). John 19, 15.
- (2). Ps. 21, 18.
- (3). Luke 23, 34.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

141 -

crime, impiety . on impiety, murder upon murder, abomination upon abomination: "Blood hath touched blood." (4)

Our Lady knows that her Son, the Son of God, came into the world to save all men; that salvation cost Him infinite labor, ignominies, tears and blood to deliver mankind from the bondage of the devil and hell, and reconcile them to His Father. And yet she sees men turning their back on God, denying and forsaking Him, to side with Satan and cast themselves headlong into hell. She Sees innumerable atheists and blasphemers making every effort to exterminate the Holy Church founded by her Jesus Christ through the shedding of the last drop of His Blood, and to render His sacred name despicable, abominable and odious to the entire world: "They have set me an abomination to themselves." (5)

Our heavenly Mother perceives all these crimes and all the wickedness most clearly, and her inconceivably great love for God and for her Son is wounded beyond anything we can imagine, even though she is glorious and incapable of suffering. She is Queen of Heaven and earth, and God has given her sovereign power over all created things; therefore she would not lack the power, if such were her will, to avenge most justly the many atrocious insults offered by men to their God and Saviour. But far from doing this, she permits herself to be induced by her very patient and gentle Heart to use the power of her merits and intercession in order to halt the just fury of divine vengeance, and to arrest the torrent of God's wrath ready to burst on the hapless heads of sinners. She obtains from His divine Majesty that He punish them not as enemies but as children, not like a severe judge but as a merciful father, not to exterminate them but to correct and convert them.

True the Blessed Virgin Mary does not entertain the same sentiments for all sinners, nor does she treat them all alike. She distinguishes between those in Hell, whom she knows to be irreconcilable enemies of God, and those on earth, whom she considers still capable of being reconciled to His divine Majesty. Hence her Heart is filled with very great and just indignation towards the wretched creatures in hell, for she is most perfectly united to God, and therefore shares in all His adorable inclinations. She loves what God loves and hates what He hates, approves what He approves, and condemns what He condemns. As the damned will forever be the object of God's wrath: "They shall be called the people with whom the Lord is angry forever," (6) so shall they forever

- (4). Osee. 4, 2
- (5). Ps. 87, 9.
- (6). Mal. 1, 4.

142 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

be the object of the anger of God's Mother. Her love and charity for God and the friends of God are greater than the ardor of all angels and saints together, so also is her hatred of God's irreconcilable enemies greater than that of all the denizens of heaven.

But towards sinners who are still in this world, which is a place of mercy where our all-bountiful Mother has established the throne and empire of her mercy and clemency, her Heart is so filled with sweetness and benignity that the venerable and holy Abbot Blossius declares: "The world does not hold any sinner so detestable that this pious Virgin should not be disposed to open to him the

arms of her clemency and her most merciful Heart. Provided he seek her assistance, she will always have the power and the will to reconcile him to her Son.,' (7) Blossius says further: "As long as the time of grace endures, this merciful Mother cannot avert her eyes from miserable sinners who invoke her with a sincere desire of conversion. With the Heart of a Mother and a sister, she continually offers up her prayers to God on behalf of men, and takes special care of their salvation. No one who shall invoke this Mother of grace with devotion and perseverance, can possibly perish forever." (8)

"O sweetest and most holy Virgin, look down with the eyes of thy mercy on all the afflictions and all the afflicted that fill the earth. Behold the many poor people, the many widows and orphans, the sick troubled with so many diseases, the captives and prisoners, the thousands who are cursed and persecuted by the malice of men, the defenceless persons oppressed by the strong and the mighty, the seafarers and pilgrims struggling against perils on sea and land, the missionaries exposed to countless dangers in their task of saving endangered souls. Look down upon the number of afflicted minds, of anguished hearts, of souls tormented by manifold temptations, and of souls suffering the frightful penalties of Purgatory. But above all, have pity on the countless Souls that are in the state of sin and perdition and are groaning under the tyranny and the bondage of hell.

"Finally, O gentlest of Virgins, take pity on the great number of wretches who people the universe, whose innumerable miseries are so many voices crying to thee: O Mother of Mercy, comforter of the afflicted, refuge of sinners, open the eyes of thy clemency to see our desolation. tion, the cars of thy bounty to hear our supplications. 'To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.' Yes, Eve's miserable children, banished

(7). In Sacell. anim. cap. 51.

(8). Blossius, loc. cit.

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE SON      143 -**

from the house of their heavenly Father, groaning and weeping in this valley of tears, have recourse to thine incomparable benignity. Hear our sighs and our cries; behold our weeping and our tears. 'Turn then, O gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus! "

### CHAPTER III

#### JUSTICE OF GOD MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

MERCY and justice resemble two sisters, inseparable and holding each other by the hand. Wherever mercy is, there also is justice; where justice goes, mercy follows. Hence King David sang to God: "Mercy and judgment I will sing to thee, O Lord." (1) He mentions them together and does not separate these qualities.

We have studied how divine mercy reigns and triumphs in the gentle Heart of Mary; we shall now contemplate divine justice establishing therein the throne of its glory. "In this perfect Heart," says Richard of St. Lawrence, «mercy and justice gave each other the kiss of peace.» (2)

In God there are two kinds of justice: the first, is distributive; the second, vindictive justice.

"Distributive justice," says St. Dionysius, "gives to each one what belongs to him, according to his rank and merit. It allots and dispenses to each thing the proportion, beauty, arrangement, good order and all other things proper to it within the bounds and limits that are just and equitable." (3)

The chief characteristic of vindictive justice is infinite hatred of sin and a desire to destroy it in the souls of men, thereby delivering them from its cruel tyranny.

Now these two types of justice have ever held sovereign sway in the most just Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the first place, she always rendered to God and to all God's creatures, in a most faithful and perfect manner, what she owed to them. To God, she accorded adoration, fear, dependence, gratitude, honor, glory, praise, love and the sacrifice of all she possessed and of her very self. She observed all the Mosaic laws very devotedly and with exact obedience. She exercised respect, veneration and humility towards her parents, St. Joachim and St. Anne, towards

(1). Ps. 100, 1.

(2). De divin. Nomin. Cap. 8, § 7.

(3). De laudib. B.M., lib. 2, part 2.

#### THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

145 -

the persons who had charge of her while she dwelt in the Temple of Jerusalem, and towards St. Joseph, her most worthy spouse. She punctually obeyed even the edicts of Emperor Augustus, though he was a pagan idolator. She held her own self in very low esteem and in great contempt, knowing she was a creature drawn from nothing and a daughter of Adam, who would have come under the curse common to all his children, if God had not preserved her from it. In a word, she faithfully practised the words of the Holy Ghost even before they were spoken by St. Paul: "Render therefore to all men their dues. Tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom: fear, to whom fear: honor, to whom honor. Owe no man anything, but to love one another." (4) This last is a debt which no one can ever finish paying.

In the second place, divine justice had so completely filled her Heart with such an unfathomable hatred for sin that this holy Virgin was always ready to undergo the sufferings of as many hells as God's omnipotence could create rather than commit the least venial sin.



What is still more admirable, however, is that, having the same Heart and mind as the Eternal Father, according to the inspired words: "He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit," (5) Our Lady united her will to His concerning the Passion of her Son, and gave her consent to the painful death of her dearly Beloved so that He might destroy sin. This sacrifice demonstrates a hatred of sin greater than suffering the torments of all imaginable bells to cooperate in its destruction; for it cannot be doubted that if Our Lady had given her choice, she would have preferred all such sufferings for herself rather than see the treatment inflicted on her beloved Son at the time of His cruel and ignominious Passion.

If the Holy Hurt of Mary is filled with such terrible hatred of sin that she consented to the cruel death of her beloved Son, because she saw Him loaded with the sins of men; if she readily sacrificed Him to divine justice in order to crush the mortal enemy of God and men, who can doubt that she still hates the infernal monster wherever she finds it? She hates sin to the point of sometimes uniting herself to divine vengeance in order to destroy it in souls, especially in those souls who are their own enemies to the extent of supporting evil and opposing its destruction. They force their sweet Mother, as it were, to relinquish the tenderness of her maternal love and to participate in the severity of divine justice in order to punish the obduracy of a rebellious soul hardened in malice.

O most holy Virgin, since thou hast but one Heart and one spirit with thy divine Son and since thou hast no other sentiments Save His, thou

(4). Rom. 13, 7-8.

(5). 1 Cor. 6, 17.

146 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

dost love what He loves and thou dost hate what He hates. Hence, as Christ has an infinite hatred for sin, thou also dost hate it beyond all thought and words. Thy hatred for the infernal monster is equal to the love thou hast for God.

O Blessed Mother, thy love of thy Heart for God is infinitely greater than that of all the hearts of the angels and saints. Consequently, there is in thy Heart more hatred against God's enemy, sin, than in the hearts of all heaven's citizens. Make us sharers, O Mary, in this love and hatred so that we may love our Creator and Saviour as thou hast loved Him, and that we may hate sin as thou hast hated it.

## CHAPTER IV

### ZEAL OF GOD MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

EVERYTHING in nature, grace and glory, all the effects of power, wisdom, goodness, mercy and justice of God, all the mysteries, actions and sufferings of the God-Man, all the sacrifices, sacraments and functions of God's Church, in a word, all things in heaven, on earth and even in hell, are like so many voices proclaiming God's ardent zeal for His own glory and for the salvation of souls.

In the first place, God does everything for Himself and for the glory of His divine Majesty: "The Lord hath made all things for himself." (1) Being the first principle and the last end of all things, it were impossible for Him to act otherwise. This zeal for His own glory fills Him with an infinite hatred of everything that is contrary to it, that is, every kind of sin, especially vanity, presumption and pride. Whereas the humble render honor and glory to God in all things, the pride are like thieves who would take for themselves the honor and glory which belong to God alone. This same zeal for His honor leads God to derive His glory from all created things, even from the greatest evils. He would never permit such evils to exist if He did not have the power to turn them to His greater glory. As St. Augustine expresses it: "He has deemed it preferable to derive good from evil, than to prevent evil altogether." (2) Finally, the zeal of the Son of God for His Father's honor induced Him to assume human nature, to be born in a stable, to live thirty-four years on earth amidst tribulations and sufferings, and to die on the Cross, that He might atone for the insults offered by sinners to God the Father and to glorify Him in a manner worthy of His infinite Majesty.

In the second place, God's ineffable goodness and immense love for the souls created to His image and likeness enkindles in His Heart a most ardent zeal for their salvation. It is this zeal that induces Him to

(1). Prov. 16,4.

(2). In Enchiridio, cap. 26 and 27

### 148- THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

avail Himself, in order to save souls, of His Divine Essence, His power, wisdom, goodness, love, charity, mercy, justice and all His other perfections. The three Divine Persons, their thoughts, words and actions, the life, passion, precious blood and death of the Son of God, the angels, the saints, the entire Church with the sacraments she administers, all God's works, all He is, everything He has, everything is employed to procure the salvation of souls.

Now this divine zeal likewise inflames the virginal Heart of the Mother of God in a wonderful manner. The Holy Heart of Mary was ever on fire with such zeal for the glory of God and the Salvation of souls that she never allowed anything contrary to the honor of the divine majesty to come near her. Not only were her actions performed with sovereign perfection for God's glory alone, not only did she employ all the powers of her soul and body to serve and honor Him, but she was ever ready to sacrifice to this end her life and her very being, and to suffer all conceivable torments.

What is more, she sacrificed her well-beloved Son. Why did she offer Him up to God? For His glory and the salvation of souls. She immolated Christ Her Son to destroy everything contrary to the honor of the divine Majesty and the eternal salvation of men, to render to God a glory worthy of His infinite grandeur, to repair the offence given to God by the sins of the children of Adam, to deliver all souls from the tyranny of hell and to enable them to glorify God eternally in heaven.

St. John Chrysostom, Theophilactus, Oecumenius, St. Bernard and Rupert comment on these words of Moses in the thirty-second chapter of Exodus: "Either forgive them this trespass or strike me out of the book of life," by explaining that this holy prophet, Moses, inflamed with zeal for the salvation of his brethren, asked God to deprive him of eternal felicity and to impose this penalty on him forever that the people might be delivered from damnation. (3)

(3). St. John Eudes is here the echo of Cornelius a Lapide who, in his commentary on Chapter 32 of Exodus, 31, 32, after having quoted Rupert's commentary on the passage, adds: "Therefore Chrysostom commenting on Rom. 9, teaches that Moses and Paul, going beyond the heavens and the very angels, despised all invisible things, and out of love for God not only requested, but really and seriously desired to be deprived of the enjoyment of God and ineffable glory." Unde S. Chrysost., in c. (ad Rom. Docet Moysen et Paulum ... caelos et Angelos supergredientes, omnia invisibilia sprevisse, ac pro Dei amore ab ipsa Dei fruitione, beatitudine et ineffabili gloria excidere non tantum petisse, sed revera et serio optasse. Thus St. Chrysostom, Theophil., Oecumen., on chapter 9 of the epistle to the Romans; Cassian, Collat. 32, chapter 6; Bernard, Serm. 12 in Cant. These are precisely the references given here by St. John Eudes.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

149 -

Explaining the words of St. Paul: "I wished myself to be anathema from Christ, for my brethren," (4) St. John Chrysostom and many other holy doctors say also that we must understand this text to refer to the eternal torments, but separated from sin. In other words, the zeal of the holy Apostle for the salvation of his Brethren was so ardent that he desired for their sake to suffer the eternal punishment of hell, provided there was no sin on his part. "He wishes to be lost forever," says Chrysostom, "that many, nay all, may love and praise Christ ... .. He desires to suffer eternal torments," says Cassian. "Because we are so far removed from such charity," adds Chrysostom, "we cannot understand these words." "We should not marvel," observes Origen, "to see the servant desiring to be anathema for his brethren, since the Master deigned to become malediction for his servants, 'being made a curse for us.'" (5)

Cornelius a Lapide, in his commentaries on this thirty-second chapter of Exodus, relates that Blessed Jacopone, of the Order of St. Francis, possessed the most ardent desire of suffering in this world all imaginable sorrows, afflictions, pains and hardships, and after this life he would fain have been thrown into hell to suffer eternal torments out of love of Our Lord and in satisfaction for his own sins and to atone, if possible, for the sins of all mankind, including the damned and the demons. (6)

We read in the tenth chapter of the life of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, a Carmelite nun, that God showed her a place (which she calls the Lion's Lake) where she saw a numberless multitude of demons having a most frightful appearance. She was told that she was to enter the lake and remain there five years, suffering atrocious pains, in order to help in the salvation of many souls. She readily consented, and actually entered this Lion's Lake, which was a veritable hell. There the malice and rage of the demons inflicted the greatest torments on her, both interiorly and exteriorly, during the space of five years.

These prayers, desires and sufferings of Moses, St. Paul, Blessed Jacopone and St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, are irrefutable proofs of a great love for God and a supernal charity towards men. But what is this compared to the peerless zeal of the most charitable Heart of the Mother of God? It is but a spark compared to a burning furnace. Divine zeal is only the ardor of divine love, or divine love in its greatest ardor; therefore it follows that the measure of this holy love is likewise the measure of the zeal, and that a heart is filled with zeal in proportion to its love of God. Now it is certain that the Heart of Mary, the Mother of God, was

- (4). Rom. 9; 3  
 (5). Gat. 3, 13. St. John Eudes is still echoing Cornelius a Lapide.  
 (6). Corn. a Lap. loc. cit.

150 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

always filled with greater love of God and men than the hearts of all the prophets, patriarchs, apostles, martyrs and other saints whence it follows that her Heart was inflamed with a zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls far greater than the hearts of all the saints put together.

Our Lady can well say with the Prophet David and several other mints, but more truly and perfectly than any of them: "My zeal hath made me pine away; because my enemies forgot thy words. My eyes have sent forth springs of water: because they have not kept thy law." (7) "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up," (8) I that is, zeal for the salvation of souls, created by God for His eternal indwelling.

So it is that the Mother of Fair Love accomplished more for the salvation of souls and the glory of God by sacrificing her Beloved Son to His Heavenly Father when she stood at the foot of the cross, than was done or could have been done by all the saints together, even if each had suffered all the torments of hell for that end.

We can now judge of our obligation to honor the Maternal Heart of our Mother most admirable so filled with affection and zeal for our interests. But do not say that we have a true devotion to this heavenly Virgin, if our hearts do not share the holy inclination of her Heart, if we do not love what she loves and hate what she hates. Our Lady's love is the greatest for all things that contribute to the honor of God and the salvation of souls, and her hatred deepest for everything opposed to God.

Let us enter into these sentiments, and employ our mind, heart, thoughts, affections, words, actions to glorify the divine Majesty in every way, and to procure the salvation of souls, above all, our own. Consider that salvation as the great and only business of God, of the God-Man, of the Mother of God, of all the angels, of all the saints and of the entire Church.

- (7). Ps. 118, 139 and 136.  
 (8). Ps. 68, io.

## CHAPTER V

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY MIRRORED IN THE  
ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

AMONG the several names given to God in Sacred Scripture, none occurs more frequently than that of *Lord*. It is the name His Divine Majesty constantly assumes when speaking to men. "I am the Lord." (1) He wishes to impress upon our minds and in our hearts a most high esteem, a profound respect and a complete submission towards the supreme authority of His adorable Sovereignty.

What then is this divine Sovereignty? It is a perfection that gives God absolute and, infinite power over all the works of His hands. He can give life or death when He pleases, in the place and manner He chooses; He can hurl us into the abyss of nothingness, or withdraw us therefrom. He can throw us into hell and deliver us from it. "The Lord killeth and maketh alive, he bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again." (2) In a word, God can dispose of all His creatures, from the least to the greatest, as He pleases, and no one may ask Him: "Why dost Thou act thus?"

Having chosen to make the Queen of Angels and men the most noble image and the most perfect picture of His divine attributes, God likewise chose to communicate to her His adorable sovereignty in a very sublime degree.

God is called *Lord*, and He wishes Mary to be called *Lady*. He is universal Lord of all things, and He wills her to be sovereign Lady of the universe. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords," (3) and she is the queen of queens and sovereign of sovereigns. He has absolute power to do whatever He wishes; and having given Mary a Mother's authority over His Son, who is God Himself, He has consequently given her marvellous power over everything that is subject to her Son. In other words, God possesses the dominion of a God over all things created by Him, and can dispose of them as He pleases. Mary, on the other hand, has the

(1). Exod. 29, 46; lev. 19, 32.

(2). 1 Kings. 2, 6.

(3). Apoc. 19, 16.

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

power of the Mother of God over all things that depend on her Son, and she can do with them what she chooses.

I hear Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, saying: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth," (4) and I hear Mary, the Mother of God, exclaiming: "My power is in Jerusalem." (5) God has given me power over the great city of Jerusalem, its suburbs, villages and dependencies, that is, over the entire Church, Triumphant, Militant and Suffering, as well as over all the other parts of the world, which are, as it were, the suburbs, villages and appurtenances of this marvellous city. "In every people and in every nation I have had the chief rule," (6)

But let us listen to the voice of the holy Fathers, or rather to the Holy Ghost speaking through their lips. "When Mary became the Mother of the Creator, she was established sovereign Lady over every creature," says St. John Damascene. (7) And he adds: "The Son of Mary put all things under the sway of His Blessed Mother." (8) "O most Holy Virgin," exclaims St. Anselm, "God Almighty has wished to make all things possible to thee, as they are to Himself!" (9) "Having made her the Mother of His Son," says the commentator Eusebius Emisenus, "God raised her to the dignity of Queen of

Angels and men, and gave her sovereign author. authority, after Himself, in heaven and on earth." (10) "Nothing is capable of resisting thy power," observes St. Gregory, Archbishop of Nicomedia, "nothing can withstand thee. All things comply with thy commands, all things obey thy way; thy Sovereignty is over everything." (11) "God has given her absolute power in Heaven and on earth," remarks St. Bernard. "He has placed our life and our death in her hands." (12)

Other writers assure us that the power of the Blessed Virgin Mary has no limits, when she wishes to help those who invoke her with good dispositions. "Her help is omnipotent." (13) Her intercession with her Son possesses never-failing virtue. St. Peter Damian says that when she appears before the dread tribunal of the Divine Majesty, her Son does not regard her as His servant, but as His Mother, having all power

(4). Matt. 28, 18.

(5). ECCLUS. 24, 15.

(6). Ibid. 24, 9-10.

(7). Maria rerum omnium conditarum Domina effecta est, cum Creatoris Mater extitit, et super omnes creaturas primatum tenuit. De fide orthod. lib. 4, cap. 15

(8). Oral. 2 de Assumpt.

(9). De excel. Virg. cap. 12.

(10). Homil. in fer. 5, 4 Temp. .Advent.

(11). Orat. de oblat, B.V. in templo.

(12). Serm. 1 in Salve.

(13). Cosmae Hierosolymit. Hymn. 6.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

153-

over Him. He therefore receives her prayers, not as petitions, but as commands. "For how would it be possible, O Blessed Virgin," adds the Saint, "that He whom thou didst bring forth, even though He is almighty, should resist the maternal authority He has given thee over Him?" (14)

Another Father of the Church (15) says: "The Son of Mary is pleased exceedingly to have His Mother ask for anything on our behalf, for He desires to give her whatever He vouchsafes to grant us through her intercession. He is most happy to be able thus to show her some gratitude for all He has received from her in His Incarnation." St. Bonaventure tells us that the very name of Mary is, after God, all-powerful. (16)

We should not marvel at this. The Archangel Gabriel said to her: "The Lord is with thee," (17) and Mary contracted a new alliance with the Son of God, who thus became her own. Their union is so intimate that they have but one flesh, one mind and one will. "One is the flesh of Mary and of Christ, one their mind, their will and their energy." Mary's Son is the sovereign Lord of Heaven and earth; the Mother of Jesus Christ is the absolute mistress of earth and heaven, and her sway is over all things. "Christ is the Lord, Mary the Lady; she has been placed over every creature." "Whoever prostrates himself before the Son to adore Him, bends the knee to honor the Mother and implore her help." Thus speaks the learned and devout Arnold of Chartres, who lived in St. Bernard's time, being his disciple and friend. (18)

Let us listen again to St. Peter Damian: "He who governs all things with Sovereign authority subjected Himself to His Mother. A simple maid can give orders to Him whom all things obey." (19)

"All things," says St. Bernardine of Siena, «are subject to the divine power even the Virgin Mother. All things and God Himself are subject to Mary» (20) For it is written that her Son obeyed her: "And he was subject to them." (21)

"Behold two great prodigies," writes St. Bernard, "which must fill Heaven and earth with admiration. It is a marvellous thing to witness God's supreme Majesty lowered and humbled to the point of obeying a woman; there is no other example of such a prodigy of humility. And

(14). Serm. de Nativ. Mariae.

(15). Theoph.

(16). In Cantico 4.

(17). Luke 1, 28.

(18). Tract. de laud. B. Virg.

(19). Homil. 46, de laud. B.V..

(20). Serm. 61 art. 4, cap. 36.

(21). Luke 2, 5 1

154 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

it is most admirable to behold a woman raised to such greatness that she is endowed with the right to command God Himself; so marvellous a dignity knows no peer." (22)

"Every creature," says St. Peter Damian, "should remain profoundly and respectfully silent, trembling at the sight of so wonderful an object, and not daring to look up to the sublime height and immensity of such great dignity and so exalted a power." (23)

By all these pronouncements see that we have a Queen and a Mother who, after God, is all-powerful in her person, in her name and in her prayers. She holds sovereign sway over every creature, and wields a marvellous power over the Creator Himself.

Thus does the Sovereign Lord of all things communicate His adorable Sovereignty to the great Queen of the Universe, and consequently to her royal Heart. For if she be Queen, her Heart is King; if she be Sovereign, her Heart is Sovereign like unto herself; if she have all power in heaven and on earth, so does her Immaculate Heart.

O admirable Heart of my Queen, what honor is due to the eminence of the exalted dignity! What praise thy profound humility commands, when it caused God to exalt thee so, high! Thou didst humble thyself beneath all things, and God not only raised thee above every creature, but *conferred on* thee a marvellous power over Himself. May He be blessed forever!

O most amiable Heart of my Mother Mary, I am filled with joy, and I give thanks to God for having so abundantly communicated His divine Sovereignty to thee, and having made of thee the Sovereign of all Hearts. But I feel unutterable sorrow in seeing that the hearts of the children of Adam usually prefer to be subject to Satan's horrible tyranny, rather than to allow thee to reign over them. Whence comes this calamity? From sin, its cause. The enormous ingratitude and abominable wickedness of the human heart proclaim by their countless crimes that they refuse to be governed by thee, O detestable sin, how frightful must thy malice be, if thou canst withstand the omnipotent Heart of the world's Sovereign Lady!

Mother of Mercy, take pity on such great misery. Thou seest, alas, that the earth is crowded with miserable hearts slaved by Satan, hearts that do not feel the extreme misfortune in which they are plunged! Mother of Grace, I offer thee all these slaves of hell; by thy most compassionate Heart, I beg thee to take pity on them. Break their chains asunder; implore thy Beloved Son, Who came into the world to enlighten all men,

(22). Serm. 1, sup. missus.

(23). Sem. 2 de Nativ.

that He deign to give sight to the blind, and to remove from the sinners their hearts of stone, replacing them with hearts obedient to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

Mother of Fair Love, I also offer thee the hearts of those of thy children. who are faithful, who love and honor thee as their cherished Mother. Preserve and increase the precious treasure which is theirs, that they may move thee more and more, and become more worthy to be the true children of thy Heart.

Queen of my heart, suffer me to offer my own miserable heart to thee. I beseech thee, by the ineffable goodness of thy admirable Heart to employ the entire strength of the power God has given to thee, to crush and destroy in my heart at any and every cost, all that displeases thy divine Son. Establish in me the Sovereign empire of His Heart and thy own. May *these two* Hearts, which are one and the same, reign within me unceasingly, sovereignly and forever, for the greater honor and glory of the Most Blessed Trinity.



## CHAPTER VI

### PEACE OF GOD MIRRORED IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

THE Peace of God is another divine perfection completely realizing its faithful image in the admirable Heart of the most holy Mother of God. But before studying the reflection, let us gaze at the original and consider this adorable perfection of the peace of God Himself.

What is the peace of God? It is a divine perfection consisting, according to St. Dionysius, in the ineffable union of God with Himself.(1)

God is unutterably united with Himself, first of all, by His incomprehensible love for His Divine Self. Secondly, by His infinite sanctity, which raises Him immeasurably above anything that could affect His peace, if this could ever be affected. Thirdly, by His admirable simplicity, which renders all His perfections one single united perfection, which is the equivalent of the divine essence itself.

Fourthly, the infinite peace of God is maintained by the union which reigns between the eternal Persons, who share one spirit, one heart, one will, one purpose, one Power, one wisdom, one goodness, and the same essence. This essence is eternal, impassible, invariable; hence nothing that happens in heaven, earth or hell can ever trouble its peace. God's peace is God Himself, who is ever tranquil and unutterable. He is the first and Sovereign principle of peace and entertains an unspeakable horror of all discord and division. He sent His only Son, the Prince of Peace, into the world to extinguish all our enmities with His Precious Blood, "killing the enmities in himself,"(2) to reconcile us to His Heavenly Father, as well as to our brethren and to ourselves, and to be Himself our peace: "For He is our peace." (3) Our Saviour accomplished this

(1). De ipsa divina pace ... quomodo, Deus quiescat in se et intra se sit, et totus secum sit supra quam unitus ... neque dicere, neque cogitare ulli eorum qui sunt fas est, neque possibile. De divin. Nominibus. Cap. 11, 1.

(2). Eph. 2, 16.

(3). Ibid. 14

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

157 -

by destroying sin, the only source of division, and pacifying all creatures in heaven and on earth: "He made peace through the blood of his cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven." (4) Such is the peace of God which St. Justus called the silence of God.(5)

Now this adorable peace of God has impressed an excellent image of itself on the Heart of the Mother of Peace. In the first place, sin, the sole enemy of peace and the only cause of discord, never possessed the slightest power over the most holy Heart of Mary.

Secondly, divine grace, which always reigned within her Heart, kept the passions, senses, and all other faculties of the body and soul of the Mother of Grace under the rule of reason and the laws of God's spirit.

Thirdly, the most profound humility of Mary's Heart endowed her with a passionate love of suffering and humiliation, and enabled her to endure them in peacefulness.

Fourthly, the extraordinary love of her admirable Heart for holy poverty induced her to bear with equanimity the sorrows and discomforts which invariably accompany it.

In the fifth place, her ardent love of the Cross made her find refreshment even in trials and tribulations. In the sixth place, the invincible patience which strengthened her in the troubles, tempests and changes of our miserable earthly life, gave her complete possession of the most profound peace.

In the seventh place, the inconceivable charity towards mankind, which filled her gentle Heart, allowed no sentiment of aversion or enmity to sway her, even towards those who betrayed, sold and crucified her dearly beloved Son. Nay more, she herself offered Christ to the Eternal Father in expiation of their crime, and to re-establish an everlasting peace between God and man. That is why the Holy Ghost inspires her to say that she "found the precious treasure of peace that man had lost through sin." (6)

In the eighth place, her virginal Heart never having followed any will but the will of God, she always possessed God's own peace in a most eminent degree.

Finally, divine peace so completely filled and permeated this peaceful Heart that it became a haven of peace, and a source of tranquillity for

(4). Col. 1, 20.

(5). Cf. Pachymer. Paraphras, sancti Dionysii: Migne, Patrol, gr. latine tant. edita, tom. 2, P. 579.

(6). Cant 8, 10.

158-

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

all who, troubled and shaken by the storm of adversity, passion and temptation, have recourse to her incomparable benignity with humility and confidence. O Queen of Peace, grant that our hearts may bear an image of the holy peace that reigns in thine!

## CHAPTER V11

**GLORY AND FELICITY OF GOD MIRRORED  
IN THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

THE glory of God is a perfection consisting in His most clear knowledge of His divine perfections, the sum of which, being perfectly understood by His divine intelligence, constitutes the essential glory of His adorable Majesty.

Felicity is another divine perfection, consisting partly in God's knowledge, partly in His love of Himself. The union of these two spiritual activities constitutes the incomprehensible and ineffable bliss of His Divine Majesty. The divine Eternity of God maintains Him at every moment in full possession of all the grandeurs, glories, joys and felicities He has ever enjoyed or ever will enjoy while the ages course along.

Now I not only find an image of these divine attributes in the Heart of the Virgin Mother, but I behold therein this marvellous glory and incomparable felicity, in a certain sense, as they are in God Himself.

To understand this, we must remember that it is characteristic of love, more especially of supernatural and divine love, to transform the lover into the object of his love, as the fire changes iron into fire, leaving it its nature and essence of iron, but endowing it with the qualities and perfections proper to fire. As it is quite certain that there never was and never shall be a love equal to that which inflamed Mary's virginal Heart, we cannot doubt that divine love so completely transformed her, even while she remained on earth, that she had but one mind, one heart, one will and one love with God Himself. She loved only what He loves, hated nothing but what He hates. She had no interests save His, no glory or honor, no contentment or happiness save only God's. Thus did the glory and felicity of God ever abide in her Heart.

But did not all the ignominies and sorrows she suffered here below, especially at the time of her Son's Passion, bereave her of this bliss and glory? Nay, rather they increased it. Do you not know that the Holy Ghost, speaking of the Passion of the Son of God, calls it the day of His

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Heart's rejoicing: "In the day of the joy of his heart." (1) Speaking of His Passion Our Lord Himself calls it His Father's glory and His own. Thus St. Ambrose, (2) St. Hilary, (3) St. Augustine and other doctors explain the words spoken by Our Saviour on the eve of His death: "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee." (4) The Passion of the Son of God represents, in fact, the greatest glory of God, for it most abundantly repaired the injury done to God by all the sins of the world, and glorified the Creator in a manner worthy of His infinite grandeur. When the Church sings: "We give thee thanks for thy great glory," she means to thank God for the Passion of His Divine Son as well as for His own essential glory.

Now we know that the Mother of Jesus had no sentiments other than those of her Son, and she realized that nothing in the world can give greater glory and honor to God than sufferings and humiliations endured for the sake of His love. Hence, just as her Son calls His ignominious and most bitter Passion His glory and joy, so did she find her greatest glory and most perfect joy in supreme humiliation and the most poignant sorrows, for her honor and happiness consisted in the things which give the greatest honor to God and please Him best.

We should not believe, however, that this contentment of hers prevented her from suffering. Not in the least, for it is certain that no one on earth, after her beloved Son, suffered as much as she. But in Christ, joys and sorrows were joined together in such fashion that the joys possessing the superior part of His soul did not destroy the sorrows that ruled the inferior part. So when the Mother of Jesus was crucified and reviled with her Son, the bitter anguish and inconceivable torments she endured in her senses and in the inferior part of her soul did not prevent her from enjoying in her spirit and in her Heart, a profound peace and an unutterable contentment, for she knew that such was God's will and His good pleasure.

Thus did the glory and felicity of the Most High dwell in the Blessed Heart of the glorious Virgin while she was on earth, but in Heaven, her incomparable Heart is so completely lost and absorbed in the infinite glory and boundless joy of the Divinity, that this divine joy and implore. mortal glory transform it entirely and fill it with greater glory and happiness than the hearts of all the angels and saints put together.

O most holy Mother, my heart is transported with joy to contemplate

- (1). Cant. 3, 11 .
- (2). Hexameron, Cap 2.
- (3). De Trinitate, lib. 3.
- (4). John 17. 1.

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE SON**

161 -

thine own Heart so overwhelmed with grandeur and unspeakable felicity, which never shall end. I would dare to say with the grace of thy beloved Son, that if my heart possessed all these gifts instead of thine, I would, if possible, strip my heart and give them to thee. Yes, I would sooner be annihilated forever than to see thy holy Heart lose any of the treasures wherewith Divine Goodness has so profusely adorned it.

## CHAPTER V111

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY: COMPENDIUM OF THE LIFE OF GOD

LIFE and vision, in a Christian soul, constitute the same principle. According to God's Word, Christian life and vision are one and the same thing, since faith, which is the light and vision of the just man, is also his life, as it is written: "The just man liveth by faith." (1) Eternal life consists in knowing God, as His Son Jesus Christ teaches us when He addresses His Heavenly Father, saying: "Now this is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God." (2) Since the life of God abides in His knowledge and love of Himself and of His divine perfections, so the life of the children of God consists in knowing and loving the Eternal Father. Those who know God by the light of faith, and love Him with a supernatural love, are alive with God's own life, and God is living within them. He is the life of their hearts and of their souls.

God always lived thus in the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and her immaculate Heart always lived in God and partook of God's life in a much more excellent manner than any other human heart.

The life of God consists in the very sublime and clear knowledge that His boundless wisdom gives Him and in the infinite love He bears Himself. Now the Blessed Virgin's Heart is filled with God's wisdom and love more than all other hearts; consequently it expresses and represents God's life better than any of them.

Two kinds of life exist in God: the interior life known only to Him, self, and the exterior or visible life, which manifests itself in the humanity of His Son, in His saints, especially while they are still on earth, and in all living creatures. In like manner, there are two kinds of life in the Heart of the Mother of God: the interior life, hidden in God and visible to Him alone, and the exterior, visible life, manifested in the body and external actions of Our Lady, having its origin in her Heart. Both these lives are entirely holy and deserving of eternal honor.

(1). Rom. 1, 17.

(2). John 17, 3.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE SON

163-

To this we must add that God is not only life, but the source of life, animating the natural and the supernatural life of all living creatures, and therefore the Heart of the Mother of Life is not only alive with God's life, in which it participates in an eminent degree which knows no equal, but it is itself a principle of life.

God, however, lives in our hearts with different degrees of perfection, He does live in those who love Him tepidly, and serve Him with weakness, cowardice and negligence, but His life in these souls is imperfect, languishing and half dead.

God also lives in those who love Him more ardently and serve Him with greater fervor. Here His life is nobler, more vigorous and more perfect. If these hearts remain firm and stable in the ways of divine love, they shall be numbered among those of whom it is written! "Their hearts shall live forever and ever." (3)

In other hearts God not only lives but reigns perfectly. Who are these souls? They are those

who have destroyed self-love and self-will, those who in this world and in the next are desirous only of pleasing God in all things. Their sole satisfaction and joy consists in doing His adorable will at all times and in all places.

Such is the virginal Heart of the Queen of Heaven, in which God always lived and reigned most sovereignly, to which He granted Mary perfect resemblance to His own life. For so great a gift, may His divine Majesty be eternally praised and blessed.

"O most holy Mother, how my heart rejoices to contemplate thy Heart living so noble, holy and perfect a life, a life never in the least impaired by sin, a life most admirably united with the life of the adorable Heart of Jesus. Would that all hearts and tongues would cry with me: Hail Jesus and hail Mary! Glory to the amiable Hearts of Jesus and Mary! Live all hearts who love and honor these admirable Hearts! May their hearts live forever and forever!

O Mother of my life, let my heart die to every life and live of thy life. Let my life be animated by the spirit and inflamed with thy love, that together with thee, it may forever bless, love and praise Him Who is life essential, the first and sovereign principle of all life, whose infinite desire it is to communicate it to all men!

(3). PS. 21, 27.

165 -

## **PART SIX**

### **Third Foundation of the Devotion: The Heart of God the Holy Ghost**

#### **Inspired Scriptural Texts Referring to the Admirable Heart of Mary**

167 -

## **Part Six**

### ***THIRD FOUNDATION OF THE DEVOTION: THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST(\*)***

#### ***Inspired Scriptural Texts Referring to the Admirable Heart of Mary***

## **CHAPTER I**

### **"ALL THE GLORY OF THE KING'S DAUGHTER IS WITHIN"**

Infinite goodness compels God the Holy Ghost to disclose to us the inestimable treasures hidden in the marvellous Heart of Mary and to proclaim them through Sacred Scripture, the inspired word of God. The first significant text that I shall point out is taken from the forty-fourth psalm: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within", (Ps. 44, 14) where the Holy Ghost reveals that the admirable Heart of Mary is a source of benefactions without number and of every kind.

To explain this truth, I shall stress three thoughts that are most glorious for the magnificent Heart of our great Queen and founded on these divine words: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within," and from her Heart.

Who is this daughter of the King? We know full well that she is the Queen of Heaven and earth, the daughter of the King of kings. But why does all her glory proceed from her Heart? It is because her Heart is the source and principle of all the grandeur, excellence and prerogatives that adorn her, of all the eminent qualities that exalt her above every creature, namely her position as eldest daughter of the Eternal Father, as

(\*) This section has been considerably shortened.

168 -

## **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

Mother of the Son, as Spouse of the Holy Ghost, as the Temple of the most Holy Trinity, as Queen of angels and men, as the Mother of Christians, and as Empress of the Universe. It also means that this most holy Heart is the source of all the graces that accompany the privileges bestowed on her, of the holy use she made of those graces, and of all the sanctity of her thoughts, words, works, sufferings and of the other mysteries of her life. It means, finally, that her Heart is the source of the eminent virtues she practised on earth, of her perfect exercise of the faculties and powers of her soul and of her body, and of the glory and felicity she now enjoys in heaven.

How is her Heart the source of all these things? In the following ways. We know that the humility, purity, love and charity of her Heart have rendered her worthy to be made Mother of God, and consequently have enriched her with all the advantages and privileges that belong to so high a dignity. We know further that the Heart is the Seat of love and charity, and that love and charity are the principle, rule and measure of all the sanctity on earth, and therefore of all glory in Heaven. Hence, God, Eternal Truth, tells us in the Gospel that, as the heart of man is the origin of all evil, so it is also the source of every good. The Son of God teaches us that from the heart proceed evil thoughts, homicides, and blasphemies, (1) Our Saviour further tells us that the heart of the good man is a treasure from which He draws all sorts of good things, and the heart of the wicked man a treasure from which He draws all evil things. (2) We may conclude therefore that the supremely good Heart of God's most loving Mother is the source of all that is great, holy, glorious and admirable in her.

I say further, and this is the second of the three thoughts I promised you, that Mary's Heart is the source, after God, of all the excellence, Sanctity, glory, felicity and other great and precious marvels to be found in the Church Militant, Suffering and Triumphant.

The reason of this is clear. We all agree that every grace and blessing possessed by the Church, all the treasures of light, holiness and glory that abide in her, on earth as well as in Heaven, are due to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "All graces," says the learned and devout Abbot Rupert, "every gift that the world has received from Heaven, are as streams which issue from that sacred fountain, as fruits belonging to that holy tree." (3) "It was decreed by God in His eternal counsel," writes St. Bernard, "to give nothing to anyone except through Mary's hands.

(1). Matt. 15, 19.

(2). Luke 6, 46.

(3). Emissiones tuae paradisi. In illa verba Cant.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

169 -

Through her He was pleased to give us every good. Yes, indeed, because through her He gave the first principle of every good, Jesus Christ, Our Lord." (4)

But how did Mary make herself so holy and so pleasing to the divine Majesty, that He should choose her to be the intermediary of this infinite gift, from which are derived all the other gifts ever made to His Church? It was by the sanctity of her most humble, pure and charitable Heart.

Let us acknowledge, then, that her Heart is the origin of everything noble, rich and precious in all the holy souls which form the universal Church in Heaven and on earth. We can therefore say of her marvellous Heart, and with greater reason, what St. John Chrysostom says of the heart of St. Paul, when he calls it the fount and principle of numberless graces: *Fons et principium innumerorum bonorum.* (5)

Shall we stop here? No, we must go further and explain the third truth that I promised you, which is that the Heart of the Mother of the Saviour is, in a certain sense, the fountain and source of all that is holy, and admirable in the life and the successive mysteries of our Divine Redeemer Himself.

Was not this represented by the river described in the second chapter of Genesis, which came out of the fountain created by God at the beginning of the world. (6) This fountain is a figure of the Holy Heart of Mary, and Jesus, the Son of Mary, is designated by the river springing from the fountain. Do we not hear Eternal Wisdom, that is, the Son of God, saying: "I came out of paradise," out of the Virginal Heart of Mary, which is the true paradise of the new Adam, "like a channel of a river,"



(7) that is, like the river that flowed out of the earthly paradise.

Let us acknowledge, then, that her admirable Heart, being the fountain from which that great river originated, is the miraculous Source of all the treasures and of the great and priceless wonders contained in that divine stream. We must conclude that Our Lady's Heart is the fountain and principle of numberless goods: *Fons et principium omnium bonorum*. St. Irenaeus asking why the mystery of the Incarnation did not take place without Mary's consent, answers that it was because God sought her to be the principle of every good. (8) What does he mean by that, if not

(4). *Totum not habere voluit per Mariam*. *Serm. de Aquaeductu*.

(5). In *Act. 22*, *homil. 55*; et in *Rom. 141*, *homil. 32*, in fine.

(6). See Part II, chapter 5.

(7). *Ecclus. 24, 41*. '

(8). *Quia vult illud Deus omnium bonorum esse principium*. S. Irenaeus citatus apud Salazar, in *cap. 31*, *Proverb. vers. 29. num. 179*.

170 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

that the Sort of God wished the Heart of His Blessed Mother to be the source and origin of all the blessings and graces derived from the Incarnation, and that He wished to become man only by her consent? "She is the perennial fount of every good," declares St. Andrew of Crete. (9)

O most loving Heart of Mary, O abyss of miracles, who can tell the unfathomable marvels that God has worked in and through thee! O boundless Sea, God alone can know the inestimable riches hidden in thee! O Heart most Holy, thou art Heaven's own heaven, for, after the Heart of the Eternal Father, thou art the most magnificent and glorious abode of Jesus, who is Himself the highest Heaven: "The Heaven of heaven is the Lord's." (10) In Next to the Heart of Jesus, thou art the highest throne of glory and majesty of the Blessed Trinity. What honor and praise should be rendered unto thee! Oh, may every human and angelic heart recognize and honor thee as its Sovereign after the adorable Heart of our Saviour!

Dearest Jesus, what thanks we owe thine infinite goodness for having given thy Blessed Mother to us, and for having endowed her with a maternal Heart so full of love and tenderness towards her most unworthy children! Grant, dear Saviour, that we may have truly filial affection for so good a Mother, and may the hearts of her children bear the image and likeness of the love, charity, humility and all the other virtues that reign in the Heart of their most loving Mother!

(9). In *Sem. de Dm. B. Virg.*

(10). *Ps. 113, 16*.

## CHAPTER 11

### "A BUNDLE OF MYRRH IS MY BELOVED TO ME"

"A BUNDLE of myrrh is my beloved to me; he shall abide between my breasts." (1) These words are taken from the first chapter of the Canticle of Canticles, which is referred entirely to the Blessed Virgin Mary by many serious and learned authors. We can therefore say that it is the book of the Virginal Heart of Mary and of her ardent love. It is a book filled with inspired words, revealing that her incomparable Heart is ablaze with love of God and filled with charity for men.

"My beloved is like a bundle of myrrh to me: he shall abide between my breasts," and in my Heart. Who utters these words? The Most Blessed Virgin Mary. Who is the Beloved of whom she speaks? It is her only Son, her well-beloved. Why does she call Him a bundle of myrrh? Because she beholds Him crucified and plunged in an ocean of contempt, insults, ignominies, anguish, bitterness and most atrocious torments. This fills her maternal Heart with so much bitterness, pain and suffering that she can truly call her desolate Heart a sea of anguish and tribulation, according to the words which can be applied to both Jesus and Mary: "Great as the sea is thy desolation." (2) Thy sufferings, O Jesus, are immense, boundless and bottomless like the sea. And thy dolors, O Mother of Christ, are so exceeding great that all the afflictions and desolations of the world are as nothing compared to thine, as the waters of all fountains and rivers seem but a drop beside the boundless ocean.

To understand this truth perfectly, one would have to comprehend the immense and ardent love of her Son that constantly inflamed the ineffable Heart of our Saviour's Mother. For a mother's sorrow over the sufferings of her son exists in proportion to her love for Him, and the love of our Redeemer's Mother was, in a sense, measureless. The Eternal Father had made her share in His divine Paternity and chosen her to be the Mother of His own Son; He therefore communicated to her something

(1). Cant. 1, 12.

(2). Lam. 2, 13.

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

of His own inconceivable love, a love befitting the sublime dignity of her divine maternity.

How great is the love of the incomparable Mother for the most perfect of Sons. This Mother holds the place of father as well as mother towards her Son, and her Heart is miraculously filled with paternal as well as with maternal love towards Him. His love is so great, that if the love of all the human fathers and mothers that ever have been or shall be were concentrated in a single heart, it would be but a small spark compared to the furnace of Mary's love for her beloved Son. He is an only son, the sole object of His Mother's affection. He is an infinitely lovable and loving son and she loves Him without measure. He possesses all that is beautiful, rich, desirable, admirable and lovable in time and eternity. This son is everything to His mother; He is her son, her brother, her father, her spouse, her treasure, her glory, her love, her delight, her joy, her heart, her life, her God, her Creator, her Redeemer and her all.

From this we may fathom the love of such a mother for such a son, and consequently the most torturing and painful martyrdom of her maternal Heart when she sees Him bathed in blood, covered with wounds from head to foot, and so filled with pain in body and Soul, that the Holy Ghost, speaking through Isaias, calls Him the "Man of Sorrows," (3) the man entirely transformed into sorrow.

We shall therefore not be surprised to hear St. Anselm thus addressing the Mother of Sorrows: "All the torments which the martyrs underwent are as nothing, O Virgin, when compared to the immensity of the dolors, which transpierced thy soul and thy most loving heart." (4) O sweetest Heart of Mary," exclaims St. Bonaventure, "Heart transformed by love, how art thou now changed into a Heart of sorrow, satiated with gall, myrrh, and absynth?" (5) "O admirable prodigy," he adds, "thy heart and mind are plunged in thy Son's gaping wounds, while thy crucified Jesus dwells and lives in thy inmost Heart." (6)

We should not be surprised, therefore, at the revelation to St. Brigid, that the Blessed Virgin would have died of sorrow during the Passion of her Son, if He had not miraculously preserved her. And Mary herself,

(3). Isa. 53, 3.

(4). Quidquid crudelitatis inflictum est corporibus Martyrum, leve fuit, out potius nihil comparatione tuae passionis, O Virgo, quae nimirum sua immensitate transfixit cuncta penetralia tua, tuique benignissimi Cordis intima. De excell. Virg. cap. 5.

(5). O suavissimum Cor Amoris, quomodo conversum es in Cor doloris, in quo nihil nisi fel, acetum, myrrha et absynthium. Stimul. Amor. cap. 3

(6). O mira res, tota es in vulneribus Christi, totus Christus crucifixus est in intimis visceribus Cordis sui, Ibid,

## THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

173 -

speaking to the Same St. Brigid, says: "I can presume to say that my Son's sorrow was my sorrow, because His Heart was my Heart." (7) O my Queen," says St. Bonaventure, "thou art not only standing by the cross of thy Son, juxta crucem, but thou art on the cross suffering with Him: In cruce cum Filio cruciaris. He suffered in His body and thou didst suffer in thy Heart, and the wounds scattered over His body were gathered together in thy Heart." (8)

Finally, just as the love of Mary's maternal Heart for her Son Jesus Christ is past all that can be imagined, so the most painful martyrdom of her amiable Heart is beyond what thought can conceive or words express.

Nullus dolor crudelior,  
Nam nulla proles charior.  
Non est amor suavior,  
Non moeror est amarior.(9)

(7). Revel. lib. I, cap. 35.

(8). Stimul. Amor. cap. 3.

(9). "No sorrow is more cruel than hers, for no Son could be more dear than hers. If her love is most sweet, so is her pain the bitterest of all."

### CHAPTER III

#### "I SLEEP, AND MY HEART WATCHETH"

"I SLEEP, and my heart watcheth." (1) It is the glorious Virgin Mary who speaks, or rather the Holy Spirit who utters *these words* through her virginal lips and reveals to us five mysteries most gloriously perfected in her blessed Heart..

The first of these mysteries is the death of Our Lady's Heart to whatever is not God, through self-denial. This is signified by the words: "I sleep." The second mystery expressed by the words: "I sleep," is the admirable contemplation of her Blessed Heart. The third mystery contained in the same words is the most intimate and perfect union of the most holy Heart of Mary with the adorable Will of God, whose commandments were so dear to her, that not only did she desire everything He wanted, not only did she shirk from whatever He forbade, but she found her entire rest, contentment, felicity and joy in observing the commandments of God.

Blessed are the hearts who strive to imitate this entire and perfect conformity of the admirable Heart of the Mother of God to His divine Will. This adorable Will being our end, our center and our sovereign good, those who obey it with all their hearts shall never fail to find in it peace, rest, felicity, and a real paradise for their souls. Outside of God's will one experiences only anguish, troubles, embarrassment, torture and a veritable hell.

The fourth mystery designated by the words: "My heart watcheth," contains a truth according to the highest honor to Our Saviour's Mother, namely, that her Son Jesus is her true Heart, for it is of Him that she speaks when she says: "My Heart watcheth." It is as though she said: «While I devote myself to contemplating and to loving the grandeurs of God and His adorable mysteries, and while I perform the duties and obligations of my divine maternity, my Son Jesus, being my Heart, is ever occupied in watching over all that concerns my body and my soul. His

(1). Cant. 5, 2

#### THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

175 -

infinite love for me makes Him take unceasing care to Protect me from the snares of the enemies of my Soul. He enlightens me with His own divine light; He guides my steps along the path to Heaven; He grants me all the graces I need to lead a life worthy of the Mother of God, and He constantly inflames me with the sacred fire of His divine love.»

The fifth mystery marked by the words: "My Heart watcheth," embodies the vigilance of the most holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. What is watchfulness? If we consider it first in God, before considering it in her marvellous Heart, we shall find that watchfulness is a perfection which constitutes, as it were, the strength and vigor of the divinity of God, and makes Him incapable of experiencing weakness or fatigue. It is like the torch of His divine Essence, in whose radiance He forever contemplates Himself. It is the eye of His bounty, mercy, justice, zeal, and all His other divine perfections. The Royal Prophet, David, indeed proclaims the watchfulness and care of divine Providence when he says: "Behold he shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel," (2) but he remains ever watchful and attentive to protect His people.

Now this adorable vigilance has established its throne and its reign most excellently in the noble Heart of the Mother of God. Consider that the Holy Ghost causes her to say: "I sleep, and my heart watcheth."

These words teach us that even when her virginal body was taking its necessary sleep and rest, her Heart never slept but kept constant vigil. Yes, her Heart, so full of love for God, watched day and night to study His adorable Will, and to accomplish it most perfectly. Her Heart, filled with tenderness for her divine Son, attended faithfully to His every need and necessity, providing for Her all-precious Child, with the utmost care fulfilling all the duties of a loving Mother to so perfect a Son. Her Heart, filled with esteem and peerless veneration for each successive event unfolding in the admirable life of the Redeemer, watched over His development, His miracles and mysteries, His actions, sorrows, words and gestures, so that she might gratefully adore and praise the manifestations in the name of all mankind, and preserve them as an infinitely precious treasure which would one day enrich the Church and encompass her true children with numberless blessings.

The Heart of our Lady, inflamed with love towards men, was always attentive to fulfil the obligations of charity, the queen of virtues and was ever watchful so as not to miss one single occasion of practising it.

Finally, the holy Virgin's Heart exercised perpetual vigilance over her own thoughts, words and actions, over her passions and inclinations, over all her interior and exterior senses, and over all the powers of her

(2). Ps. 120, 4

176-

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

soul, that she might drive far away from herself anything that could possibly displease God and to use her faculties as perfectly and as virtuously as possible.

O most charitable Mother of God, by thy powerful intercession, grant that we may imitate the most holy watchfulness of thy faithful heart so that we may be numbered among those who merit the happiness to see the face of God in blissful eternity, to behold the glory of the God-Man and the grandeur of His Mother in that blessed company of souls who never weary of praising, loving and glorifying the most Holy Trinity together with Jesus, Mary and all the angels and saints. To the Triune God be honor, glory and empire for all eternity.

## CHAPTER IV

### "MY BELOVED TO ME, AND I TO HIM"

"MY BELOVED to me, and I to him." (1) "I to my beloved, and my beloved to me." (2) "I to my beloved, and his turning is towards me," (3) with His mind, His heart, His affection and His whole being.

It is not without mystery that the Blessed Virgin Mary repeats the *three foregoing* verses under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, speaking in the sacred Canticle, which is so mysterious and full of eternal verities. The preceeding three verses admit of nine explanations, each revealing to us the incomprehensible love of the Almighty for the peerless Virgin and the ardent love of her virginal Heart for God, Her Creator.

1. The all-surpassing love of God for Mary causes Him to become entirely hers: "My beloved to me;" by His thoughts, words and actions. By His thoughts, because she has been from all eternity the first object of His love, after the sacred humanity of His Word, and the first and worthiest subject of His thoughts and designs: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways." (4) By His words, because St. Bernard declares that the whole of Sacred Scripture was written "for Mary, about Mary and on account of Mary." (5) By His works, because everything that God has done in the world of nature, grace and glory, and everything He has accomplished in the God-Man and through Him is more for the sake of this admirable Virgin, than all other creatures together as He loves her alone above all His creatures.

Similarly, the ardent love of Mary's privileged Heart obliges her to belong entirely to God: "I to my beloved," by her thoughts, words and actions. By her thoughts, she never entertained a single thought which was not centered in God or for God. All her thoughts were so holy and so inflamed with divine love, that they became like so many fiery darts

(1). Cant. 2, 16.

(2). Ibid. 6, 2.

(3). Ibid. 7, 10.

(4). Prov. 8, 22.

(5). De hac, et ob hanc, et propter hanc omnis Scriptura facta est. Serm. 1 in Salve.

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

wounding the Heart of His divine Majesty. As we have seen already, this is the explanation given by many great authorities to the words: "Thou hast wounded my heart . . . with one hair of thy neck." (6) By her words, she carried out most perfectly what St. Peter the Prince of the Apostles says: "If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God." (7) By her actions, the Blessed Virgin Mary performed all things for God's glory, in faithful obedience to the inspired counsel: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (8)

2. The ineffable love of God the Creator for Mary causes Him to belong entirely to her, "My beloved to me," by His power, His wisdom and His goodness. He is hers in a much nobler and more glorious manner than His possession by all creatures together, for the Father communicated His power to Mary so fully that she alone is mightier than every other power in the universe.

The Divine Son makes her participate in His wisdom with such plenitude that, next to His own Sacred Humanity, His Mother possesses all the treasures of God's knowledge and wisdom more

excellently than every other human or angelic intellect.

The Holy Ghost pours His love and charity into Mary's virginal Heart with such abundance that He makes of it a boundless and bottomless ocean of mercy, liberality and benignity, flooding heaven, earth and purgatory, with its sweet graces and comforts.

On Mary's part, the inconceivable love of God flaming in her Heart, consecrates her entirely to His divine Majesty by holy use of her memory, her intellect and her will under its inspiration. From the first instant in her life she gave and consecrated her whole memory to the divine Person of the Eternal Father, her intellect to the adorable Person of her Son, and her entire will to the most lovable Person of the Holy Ghost. From the first moment until the end of her mortal life she never used the three faculties of her soul except for the honor and Service of her Creator.

3. Mary belongs to Jesus, "I to my beloved," as to her Creator, Preserver and Redeemer, who saved her, not by delivering her from sin, which never had any part in her, but by preserving her from every sin, original and actual. Jesus belongs to Mary, "My beloved to me," because she formed Him in her blessed womb with her own pure blood. She preserved, nourished and brought Him up, and when Herod's fury sought to destroy the Holy Child, she saved and delivered Him.

(6). Cant. 4, 9.

(7). 1 Pet. 4, 11.

(8). 1 Cor. 10, 31.

#### **THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST 179 -**

4. The Son of God is Mary's Son from all eternity, in the fullness of time, and for all eternity: "My beloved to me." From all eternity, He regarded her as His chosen Mother; in the fullness of time, because she became the instrument for the accomplishment of the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation; for all eternity, because Christ will forever regard, honor and love her as His most worthy Mother. For the same reason, Mary is the Mother of her Beloved Son from all eternity, in the fullness of time and for all eternity, "I to my beloved."

5. Mary belongs to Jesus, "I to my beloved," according to nature, grace and glory because everything she possesses in nature, grace and glory comes to her from her Divine Son; and Jesus belongs to Mary, "My beloved to me," according to nature, grace and glory, because, in the Incarnation, she gave Him His nature as man. She gives Him daily the life of grace in His members: "Mother of grace; life is given to us through the Virgin." *Mater gratiae; vitam datam per Virginem.* She has also given Him the life of glory in His members, because after Him she is the Source of all graces upon earth and of all glory in Heaven.

6. The Eternal Father belongs to Mary: "My beloved to me," as the only creature to whom He communicated, so to speak, His Divine Paternity, that she might become the Mother of His own Son. The Son belongs to Mary, as to the only one He has chosen to be His Mother. The Holy Ghost belongs to Mary as to the Bride He chose that He might work in her His admirable masterpiece.

Mary, on her part, belongs to the Eternal Father, "I to my beloved," as to Him with whom she is one, in a certain admirable manner, as she shares with Him the virtue of His divine and adorable fecundity, being the Mother of the Only-begotten Son whose Father He is. She surrendered to the Almighty her Heart and her will, her most pure blood and her virginal substance, to bring forth the God-Man, of whom it can truly be said that He was begotten of His Father's substance before all ages and born of the substance of His Mother in the fullness of time.

Mary belongs to the Son of God, as the only one who gave herself to Him to be His Mother, when she uttered the words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word.» (9)

Mary belongs to the Holy Ghost, for she gave herself to be His Bride, that she might become the Mother of God made man without ceasing to be a Virgin, after hearing the divine words spoken by the angelic Messenger: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." (10)

7. The intellect of the Eternal Father belongs to Mary, "My beloved  
(9). Luke 1, 38  
(10). Ibid. 1, 35

180 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

to me," for He produces His Word, He engenders the Son in His adorable bosom and gives Him to Mary, to cause Him to be born of her chaste womb, to make of Him the flower and fruit of her virginal bosom and of her holy Heart.

The will of the Only-begotten Son belongs to Mary, because together with His Father, the Son generates the Holy Ghost, and gives the Divine Spirit to Mary, that He may, in a most excellent manner, become her Spirit and her Heart, and that she may, in a certain sense, have but one Spirit and one Heart in common with the Father and the Son.

The charity of the Holy Ghost belongs to Mary, for in her only, from her, with her and through her, has He performed the most stupendous miracle of His love, the incarnation of the love of all loves, who is Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, just as the Eternal Father imparts to the incomparable Mary the first and unique fruit of His intellect and of His adorable bosom, so also, as soon as this ineffable fruit has been formed in her virginal womb, does she offer, give and sacrifice Him to the Creator who gave Him to her: "I to my beloved."

As the Son endows Mary with the fruit of His will, who is the Holy Ghost, so does she give Him all the inclinations and desires of her will, so perfectly and entirely that He always disposes of them absolutely and in the manner most pleasing to Himself, for the Mother of God never possessed the slightest will other than that of her all-glorious Son.

And as the Holy Ghost accomplishes in her alone the greatest wonder of His love, namely, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, so also did this Spirit of love and charity establish in her Heart the empire of the holy love and divine charity so perfectly that they have ever reigned and will reign there more absolutely than in all other hearts save that of Christ.

8. The Mystical Body of Christ belongs to Mary: "My beloved to me." By this is meant that the Church Triumphant, Militant and Suffering belong to Mary, or better still, Jesus Christ combating against hell on earth, Jesus Christ triumphant in heaven, and Jesus Christ suffering in Purgatory in His members, belongs to Mary because Our Divine Saviour gave His holy Mother all things together with Himself.

Mary likewise belongs to the Church Militant, Triumphant and Suffering, "I to my beloved," for His Son Jesus Christ has given her to the Church Militant, that she might be the general of her armies. He has given His Mother to the Church Triumphant as a resplendent Sun filling the hearts of



the blessed in heaven with incredible joy, second only to the joy they experience from the beatific vision of the face of

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST**

181 -

God. Christ has given her to the Suffering Church as a mother of mercy and comforter of the afflicted, who is ever spreading comfort and refreshment among those scorching flames of divine justice. Mary herself assured St. Brigid that every pain suffered in Purgatory was rendered more bearable by her intervention.

9. The Heart of the Divine Father belongs to Mary, as the heart of the most loving of fathers to the most devoted of daughters: "My beloved to me." The Heart of the Redeemer belongs to Mary, as the heart of the most affectionate of sons to the worthiest of all mothers. The Heart of the Holy Ghost belongs to Mary, as the heart of the most perfect spouse to the most dearly beloved of all bridegrooms. The Heart of Mary likewise belongs to the Father of Mercies, "I to my beloved," as the heart of the peerless daughter to the best of fathers. The Heart of Mary belongs to the Son of God, as the heart of the most loving mother to the incomparable son. Finally, the Heart of Mary belongs to the Holy Ghost, as the heart of a bride, who is a furnace of the holiest and most ardent fire that ever existed, to a spouse who is Himself uncreated and essential love, a God of love, infinite, eternal and immense.

Thus does Mary's Beloved belong entirely to her and in every way, and thus does Mary belong to her Beloved. Immense and infinite thanks we render to thee, O my God, for all the marvels of Thy love towards Thy beloved daughter, Mother and Bride! Everlasting praise to thee, beloved Daughter of the Father, most worthy Mother of the Son, dearest spouse of the Holy Spirit, for all the love and all the glory that thy admirable Heart has rendered and will forever render to the most Blessed Trinity.

O Mother of fervent love, deign to obtain by thy holy prayers, that, as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost have given themselves to us in an excess of unspeakable love, they may also take full and irrevocable possession of our bodies, our hearts, our souls and of all that is in us, to the end that there may remain in us nothing that is not totally consecrated to their love and glory, alone and forever!

## CHAPTER V

### "PUT ME AS A SEAL UPON THY HEART"

CHRIST gave all Christians this command: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a Seal upon thy arm," (1) that is, impress upon yourself inwardly and outwardly the image of my interior and exterior life. "For love is as strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell," which means, as I have died a most cruel death to turn your love back to me, so if you love me, you must likewise die to sin, to yourselves, to the world and to all things, in order to live only in me and for me. As my infinite love for you would have made me suffer even greater torments if such had been necessary to save you from hell, so also, if you love me, you must be ready to suffer the pangs of hell rather than offend me!

Such is the command of the Son of God to every faithful soul, but no one has ever kept it perfectly except the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Would you see how she observed this command of her Son? Notice that our Redeemer does not tell her: "Put my seal on thy Heart and on thy arm;" but He says: "Put me, myself, as a seal upon thy heart and upon thy arm. As I am the perfect image of my heavenly Father and the divine character of His substance, make thy Heart also a living image of myself; make it live of my life; make it be animated by my spirit, filled with my sentiments, inflamed with love and charity for me, and adorned with all virtues. Put me also as a Seal on thy arm, which means, let thy exterior person be an image and likeness of my own exterior, of thy modesty, humility, meekness, affability, mortification of my senses and holiness of all my outward bearing."

The Blessed Virgin Mary accomplished all these things most excellently and with an inconceivable love. "Love is as strong as death," and stronger still, for it vanquished the Almighty Himself and caused the Immortal One to die, Him who is beyond the scope of death. The Heart of the glorious Virgin Mary was so filled with love for God that she would rather have suffered every conceivable torment and death, than to do, say or think anything displeasing to His divine Majesty. (1). Cant. 8, 6.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

183 -

"Love is as hard as hell." Witness the infinite love our Saviour bears us, a love so admirable that He revealed to St. Brigid: "I am charity itself; and if I could endure as many deaths as there are souls in hell, I would do it most willingly and with perfect charity. I am ready to suffer for a single soul the very passion and death that I suffered for all mankind." (2) I read in a trustworthy author (3) that, when our most merciful Redeemer is obliged, by His justice, to chastise sinners, His infinite love for His creatures would make Him endure pain comparable to those of hell, if He were still capable of suffering.

So also was the Blessed Virgin Mary filled with love for her Creator and with charity towards souls, that she would gladly have suffered the pains of a thousand hells rather than consent to the least sin, and that she would willingly have undergone even more sorrow and suffering, if possible, in this world or in the next, in order to cooperate in the salvation of a single soul. We have also seen many saints inspired with this same readiness.

With much reason, therefore, does the Holy Ghost say, speaking of the love and charity of the Mother of God: "The lamps thereof are fire and flames." (4) All her thoughts, words and actions were like fiery flames leaping from the furnace of her Heart and flaring up to highest heaven, where they

kindled an even greater love in the hearts of the seraphim themselves.

But let us return to the divine words of the only Son of Mary to His Blessed Mother: "Put me as a seal . . ." and let us see how they show us a most glorious privilege of our-admirable Mother. What greater favor can a ruler bestow on one of his subjects than to entrust his seal to him, saying: "Behold my seal; I place it in your hands together with my entire governing power, that you may use it as you see fit in scaling letters of every sort and kind."

This is the signal favor with which the King of Kings honors His glorious Mother when He says to her: "Put me as a seal upon thy Heart, as a seal upon thy arm," as though He were saying: "Thou hast had a very great share indeed in the sufferings and ignominies of my Passion; in like measure do I now wish to make thee participate in my dignity and kingly power.

Jesus speaks thus to the admirable Heart of Mary: 'I give myself to thee, O my peerless Mother not as a lifeless and material seal, but like one that is living and divine. Put me as a seal, yet, put me myself as a

(2). Revel. lib. 1, cap. 48.

(3). Ghisler. in cap. 8 Cant. in Expositio. 2 v. sexti.

(4). Cant. 8, 6.

184 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

seal on thy Heart and on thy arm, that all thoughts, intentions, desires and affections emanating from thy Heart may have the same virtue and effect as those proceeding from my own Heart; as also that thy hand and arm may possess, in a way, as much strength and vigor as my own, to sustain, defend, protect, assist and favor thy children and all who shall have recourse to thee. Finally I place my seal and my regal power in thy hands, that thou mayst dispose of them as thou wishest and as I would dispose of them myself, namely, to grant petitions, to make liberal gifts, to dispense graces, for whatever end thou mayest choose. It is I who shall do whatever thou dost, and wherever thou dost place thy seal, I shall place mine."

After all this, do not be surprised if the Fathers of the Church declare that the admirable Mother of our Saviour possesses all power in Heaven and on earth, and that God grants her every request. "All power is given to him in Heaven and on earth," says St. Peter Damian.' (5) "The all-merciful and almighty God hath raised thee so high," asserts St. Anselm, "that thou art become all-powerful with Him." (6)

Infinite and eternal thanks be given to thee, my dearest Jesus, for having granted thy holy Mother so great a power. We are bound to express as much gratitude to thy infinite goodness, as though thou hadst granted the power to each one of us in particular, for thou hast given it to Mary that she may help, defend and assist us in all corporal and spiritual necessities.

O Mother of perfect love, behold my miserable heart, together with the hearts of all my brethren; take full and entire possession of them; destroy whatever is displeasing, unite them to thine and make them, after the example of thy admirable Heart, glow as ardent lamps of fire and flame.

(5). De excel. Virg. cap. 12.

(6). 'Te pius et omnipotens Deus ita exaltavit, ut tibi secum omnia possibilia esse donaret. St. John Eudes does not give the reference to the works of St. Anselm.

## CHAPTER VI

**«MARY KEPT ALL THESE WORDS, PONDERING THEM  
IN HER HEART»**

Devotion to the admirable Heart of Mary is by no means new, for it springs from the adorable Heart of the most Holy Trinity, and it is as old as the Christian religion and the gospel itself. St. Luke the Evangelist bears witness to this in one chapter of his gospel by making twice a particular mention of her most holy Heart. In the nineteenth verse of chapter two he says: "But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart;" and in the fifty-first verse: "And his mother kept all these words in her heart."

The devotion, therefore, has its origin and foundation in the holy Gospel itself. The Holy Ghost inspired the Evangelists and willed that one of them should speak with such particular honor of the virginal Heart of the Saviour's Mother, representing it as the sacred depository and faithful custodian of the ineffable mysteries and inestimable treasures contained in the life of Our Lord. This must have been written that we might likewise honor her august Heart, so worthy to be honored forever.

To incite us to this devotion, let us consider this inspired text: "But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart:" To understand the full significance, we must remember that, according to God's language, *verba*, does not signify *words only*, but *also deeds* as will be seen in the following passages: *Ecce ego faciam verbum in Israel*; (1) *Quia postulasti verbum hoc*; (2) *Videamus hoc verbum quod factum est*. (3) In like manner, we must understand the words: *Maria conservabat omnia verba haec*. Mary kept all these words, that is, all these things, for there is a great difference between the words of men and the words of God. The words of men are gone with the wind, and usually produce no effects:

- (1). 1 Kings 3, 11.
- (2). 3 Kings 3, 2
- (3). Luke 2, 15.

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

"They say, and do not." (4) But God's words are facts: "He spoke and they were made." (5)

Mary kept all these things in her Heart, that is, all the marvellous events of our Saviour's life. "This holy Virgin," writes St. Ambrose, "always carried in the depths of her heart the mysteries of God and the Passion of her Son and whatever else He did." (6)

She kept these things as wonderful tokens of the love of her dear Son for His heavenly Father and for mankind. She kept them as sacred relics preserved and cherished for most special veneration. She kept all these things as a store of precious fuel to augment divine fire brought upon earth by her divine Son and to inflame the hearts of men with fresh love. She kept them because they were the foundation stones on which our adorable Saviour willed to build His Church.

Mary kept these things in her Heart as living miracles and incomprehensible works of the all-powerful goodness of God, with which evangelical history was to be filled. She kept them as precious mysteries and secrets consoling and divine, representing the new alliance of God with men under the covenant of the New Testament. She kept them also as the precious inheritance and rich share of God's chosen children, joint heirs with the Son of God.

Our Lady kept all these words in her Heart as the source and foundation of the divine graces to be spread throughout the world, and of the immortal glories which were to shine forever in heaven. She guarded them as the boundless treasure of Divine Mercy with which she could enrich all the denizens of heaven and earth. She kept them to be the bread and wine placed on the table of the Heavenly Father to His children, as a priceless manna brought down from heaven by her beloved Son that mortal men might feast on the bread of angels.

Mary, the General of the great King's army, kept these words as celestial weapons for her to place in the hands of her soldiers and thus help them to overcome the enemies of God and of their own salvation. She kept them also as sacred torches to lighten the path of mankind shrouded in the gloom and shadows of death.

She kept them as medicine to heal our souls from all types of evil and as a powerful remedy to fill mankind with all kinds of good. She kept them as inexhaustible records of Divine Wisdom, in which we might find the divine lore of the mints. She kept them as the very Heart of

(4). Matt. 23, 3.

(5). Ps. 32, 9.

(6). In ista verba: Tuam ipsius animam.

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST**

187 -

Jesus, her Son, and therefore, as her own Heart. The heart of man is the source of his life, and the treasury of his secrets, plans and aspirations, so likewise Sacred Scripture, containing as it does the word of God, is the source of the life Our Saviour wills to have in His members, and the treasury of His designs and secrets. St. Augustine (7) and St. Gregory (8) both refer to Holy Writ as the Heart of God.

Our Lady kept all these words, not merely in her memory and her intellect, but in her heart, in corde suo, in that heart which is the most worthy sanctuary of all virtues, and the ocean of grace and holiness; in that Heart that is a furnace of love and charity, and the Paradise of the most Blessed Trinity. In that Heart she kept all the mysteries, marvels and every event of the life of her beloved Son, our Redeemer, to be the object of her love and of all the sentiments, aspirations and affections of her soul.

She kept them, not in part, but entirely, omnia. In the first place, Our Lady knew that no part of the Saviour's life could be termed small, that everything in Him was great, divine and admirable and that each one of His footsteps, each breath, each flutter of his eye-lids, each very least thought of His, deserved the eternal adoration of angels and men. In the second place, Mary knew that the love of her Son Jesus Christ for mankind is so great that He counts every hair of their heads: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered;" (9) all their thoughts, all their steps: "Thou indeed hast numbered my steps;" (10) and that He takes into account the least action performed for love of Him, in order to reward each deed with an eternal glory. He keeps them in His Heart as a precious treasure and guards them as the apple of His eye, according to the divine words: "The alms of a man is as signet with him, and shall preserve the grace of a man as the apple of the eye," (11) which means, "As a man having a purse full of diamonds would guard each stone jealously, so does God keep the alms given or the favor shown to a poor man, even if it were only a glass of water."

Hence the eyes of the Blessed Virgin Mary were constantly fixed on her beloved Son, and she was ever vigilant and attentive to the smallest detail of His life. Not one of these heavenly pearls and divine diamonds was lost, for she understood their infinite value, and that they would be

- (7). In Ps. 21.
- (8). In 1 Reg.
- (9). Luke 12, 7.
- (10). Job. 14, 16.
- (11). Ecclus. 17, 18.

188 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

the focus of the eternal happiness, praise and adoration of all the denizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. She hid there these treasures and preserved them in her virginal Heart, where, after the adorable Heart of the Eternal Father, they were more worthily, holily and gloriously guarded than in the hearts of Seraphim, and they worked hidden effects of light, love and sanctification more admirable than in the breadth of the empyrean heaven. Those inestimable treasures shall forever remain in Mary's Heart; there angels and saints shall contemplate, adore and glorify them throughout eternity.

But why did the glorious Virgin keep all these things so worthily and so holily in her Heart? Why? Because of her ardent love for her Divine Son and for us. She kept these mysteries in her Heart to adore and glorify them incessantly in the name of all men for whom they were fulfilled, men who nevertheless remained indifferent. She kept them that they might one day be adored and glorified throughout the world, and become like so many inexhaustible fountains of grace and blessings for all the souls belonging to the household of God.

She kept all these words so that she might reveal them to the Evangelists to be written in the holy gospel and thus they would become the center of the faith and religion of all Christians. She kept these words, finally, to repeat them to the holy Apostles, who were to make the treasures of Mary's Heart known and revered throughout the entire world.

Let us now see what is meant by the words: *Conferens in corde suo*. Mary kept all these things, comparing them one with the other. St. John Chrysostom and several other Fathers say that the Blessed Virgin Mary, having read what the Prophets had foretold concerning the Saviour, compared their prophecies with the events that were happening before her own eyes, admiring and honoring the marvellous conformity of the latter with the former. St. Bernard is of the opinion that the comparison concerned the admirable parallel of prediction and fulfilment of the angelical salutation, the conception of the Son of God in her chaste womb, her painless child-birth, the adoration of shepherds and kings, the flight into Egypt, and all the other mysteries of the Redeemer which Occurred in His Blessed Mother's presence. Thus did Mary keep in her Heart and compare everything she saw in her beloved Son and whatever she learned from His divine lips in their familiar intercourse. It was revealed to St. Brigid that while the adorable Infant Jesus lived with His holy Mother, He manifested many divine secrets, not merely to enlighten and guide her, but also to enable Mary to teach and enlighten others. Hence the martyr St. Ignatius, in a letter addressed to Our Lady calls

## THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

189 -

her *Apostolorum doctricem*, "Teacher of the Apostles." (12) Other writers call her Heart the "library of the Apostles," the treasury of wisdom "where they learned," says St. Jerome, "many things they would never have known otherwise." (13)

After all this, what should be our gratitude to our heavenly Mother's most loving Heart for having preserved such great treasures for us? Should we not reverence it as a sacred depositary and faithful guardian of the infinite riches Our Saviour has acquired for us by His Blood? ought we not to

honor her Heart as a living and eternal Gospel, containing the admirable Heart of our Redeemer written in letters of gold by the Holy Ghost Himself? How great should our veneration be for this holy ark of the New Testament, containing a heavenly manna unknown to the children of the world, the bread of life, which can be found and tasted only by those whose hearts are consecrated to the love of Jesus, the Son of Mary and of Mary, Mother of Jesus.

(12). Only one letter of St. Ignatius the Martyr is extant. The expression *Apostolorum doctricem*, is not found in it. Cf. Migne, *Summa aurea*, Vol. 2, col. 694, and vol. 10, Col. 928.

(13). Serm. de Assumpt.

191 -

## **PART SEVEN (1)**

### **Inspired Catholic Tradition Concerning the Admirable Heart of Mary**

193 -

#### *Part Seven'*

#### *Inspired Catholic Tradition Concerning the Admirable Heart of Mary*

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS AND ASCETICAL WRITERS**

Having listened to the Holy Ghost, whose divine Heart is the third foundation of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God, revealing to us through Sacred Scripture many marvellous truths which should inspire us to render fitting honor and praise to Mary's admirable Heart, we must next hearken to the Spirit of God promulgating this devotion through the writings of the Fathers and authoritative writers of the Church.

First, there are twelve Fathers and ascetical writers: St. Augustine, St. Leo the Great, St. John Chrysostom, St. Anselm, St. Peter Chrysologus, St. John Damascene, St. Bernard (who with other members of the Cistercian Order received most signal favors from our Lady) St. Bonaventure and St. Bernard, two illustrious sons of St. Francis, St. Lawrence Justinian, Richard of St. Lawrence, and venerable Louis of Grenada, (son in religion of the great St. Dominic, who preached so extensively the devotion to the Holy Rosary.)

Our first quotation is from the pen of St. Augustine. In a sermon on the Annunciation he brings out our great obligation to the loving Heart of Mary in return for her admirable consent to the Angel's request.

"O most happy Mary, who can render thee adequate thanks for the

(1). Part Seven is an abridged translation of Parts Seven and Eight of the original French work.

194 -

### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

help thou hast given to a lost world by *thy consent* (2) to Gabriel's demand? What praise can be presented by our fallen nature, which found the beginning of the deliverance through thee? Accept, we *beseech thee*, our thanks, humble and weak though they be; accept our resolutions and excuse our sins by thy prayers. *Receive what* we offer thee, give us what we ask thee, pardon what we fear, thou who art the sole hope of our happiness." (3)

Another testimony of the ardent devotion of St. Augustine to the Admirable Heart of Mary is found in his book on the Mother of God: *Materna propinquitat nihil Marine profuisset, nisi felicius Christum Corde, quam carne gestasset.* "The divine maternity would not have profited Mary if she had not first borne Jesus Christ in Her Heart more happily and advantageously than in her womb." (4)

St. Leo the Great, who lived in the same century as St. Augustine, also speaks of the Holy Heart



of Mary. He preached the glory of Mary's virginal Heart in the city of Rome, as is proved from the following words from his Sermon on the Birth of Christ: "A royal virgin, of the race of David, is chosen to be the Mother of the Infant-God and to *conceive Him* in her Heart *before bearing Him* in her womb." (5)

St. Anselm, the illustrious Archbishop of Canterbury and worthy son of St. Benedict, clearly reveals his love and devotion to the Mother of God in his writings, especially in a book called: *The Excellence of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. One passage in this work makes a special mention of the loving Heart of Mary. After the saintly Archbishop has pronounced a beautiful eulogy on the glorious Assumption of Our Lady, he speaks thus: "What praise and thanksgiving do men and all other creatures owe the Blessed Virgin Mary! The most pure holiness and the, most holy purity of her pious Heart, which surpasses incomparably the holiness and purity of all other creatures, *merited that God choose her to be the restorer of the world which was lost.*" (6)

St. Anselm is right in attributing the resurrection and restoration of man and of all things to the most pure and holy Heart of the Mother

(2). The significance of these words of St. Augustine may be inferred from the words of Richard of St. Lawrence: *Ex Corde beatae Virginis processerunt fides et consensus, per quae duo initiata est salus mundi*. "From the Heart of the Blessed Virgin came the two things that marked the beginning of the salvation of mankind, namely faith and consent which Mary gave to the mystery of the incarnation." De laud. B.M. lib. 2, partit. 2.

(3). Sermon. 2 de Annunt.

(4). Cap. 3.

(5). Sermon. de Nativ. Domini.

(6). De Excell. Mariae, cap. 9.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

195 -

of the Sovereign Restorer. It was by the purity and holiness of Mary's Heart that she drew God the Son into her holy womb so that we might have a redeemer.

St. Peter Chrysologus, Bishop of Ravenna, to console and strengthen his flock in the midst of the many disasters and calamities of war, strove to imprint in their hearts the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, exhorting them to have recourse to her mercy and to supplicate her to be their shelter and refuge in the misery that encompassed them. Those who followed the Saint's advice felt the effects of the inconceivable goodness of Mary, of whom this holy Bishop speaks beautifully in a sermon on the Incarnation. Here are his very words:

"He who is not surprised and amazed in considering the perfections of Mary's soul, ignores the greatness and wonder of God. Heaven is filled with awe at the sight of the majesty of God, the angels tremble with respect, all nature is overwhelmed at the brilliance of this power. Yet a virgin receives this God of infinite grandeur in her heart, where she gives Him a holy and worthy dwelling-place. And in return for so pleasing a lodging He wills that she exact from His goodness peace for the earth, glory for heaven, life for the dead and salvation for all who are lost." (7)

Can anything more glorious be said of the Heart of the august Mother of God? The Heart of Mary is the Sacred palace of the Sovereign Monarch of the universe. It is the holy house of the Eternal Wisdom which the Holy Ghost expresses in these words: "Wisdom hath built herself a house, she hath hewn her out Seven pillars. She hath slain her victims, mingled her wine, and set forth her table. She hath sent her maids to invite to the tower, and to the walls of the city. Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me. And to the unwise she said: Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have

mingled for you." (8)

What is this house that Eternal Wisdom, the Son of God, has built to dwell in? It is the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. What are the seven columns? They are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which support and sustain this heart and render it unshakeable to all the assaults of the devil. The victims are Mary's thoughts, affections, desires, which she sacrificed to His divine Majesty. The wine that Divine Wisdom mingled with water is the divinity of the Son of God and His humanity, united in the womb of Mary by the holiness of her Heart, which drew Him from the eternal bosom of the Father.

St. John Damascene, the great defender of holy images against the impious Emperor Leo and the iconoclasts, wrote several excellent essays

(7). Serm. 140 de Annunt.

(8). Prov. 9, 1-5.

196-

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

on the devotion to the Mother of God from which the following lines are taken:

" . . . Thy lips were fashioned only to praise Jesus Christ and to be pressed against His. Thy mouth and thy tongue cannot taste anything but the heavenly bread and wine of the words of God, whose sweetness can fill and inebriate thee. Thy pure and immaculate Heart is always turned towards thy beloved, and is applied only to contemplate Him, to desire Him, to Seek Him and to aspire after Him . . ." (9)

St. Bernard, the glory and ornament of the Cistercian Order, expresses his ardent love for Mary's maternal Heart in these beautiful words:

"Open, O Mother of Mercy, open the door of thy merciful Heart to the prayers that we offer to thee with sighs and tears. Thou dost not reject the sinner even when he is corrupt with sin, if he comes to thee and begs thy intercession with a contrite and humble heart. It is no wonder that thy heart is filled with the greatest compassion, since the incomparable work of mercy ordained by God was accomplished in thy sacred womb in which God hath been pleased to dwell. He hath built a house of the immaculate substance of thy virginal flesh, a house supported by seven silver columns, a house in which He placed a golden bed, thy Holy Heart, on which He took His peaceful rest. The seven columns are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and thou art the unique and holy woman in whom the Saviour of the World finds perfect and pleasing repose. In thy pure womb and in thy loving Heart He pours all the treasures of his power and love. Hence the Holy Spirit derives unfeigned pleasure from thee, O admirable Mary, when He wills to consecrate thy womb by the fulfilment of His divine mysteries. This adorable Spirit is a consuming fire, which inflames thy most holy soul, and consequently the loving Heart, which is filled with the splendor of His Divine Majesty." (10)

The virginal Heart of His heavenly Mother so charmed his soul that St. Bernard expresses a loving complaint in one of his works: "O Ravisher of Hearts, thou hast ravished my heart; when wilt thou give it back to me?" (11)

The Order of St. Francis has always counted Sons outstanding for their writings and sermons on the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Among these sons St. Bonaventure was most prominent for the fervor of his devotion to the Queen of Heaven. His special love for Mary is shown in the psalter composed in her honor, containing 150 psalms modeled on the psalms of David, in one of which he calls the

(9). Orat. de Nativ. B. Virg.

- (10). Serm. panegyric.  
 (11). In medit. sup. Salve.

## THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

197 -

Heart of Mary the source of salvation. *Omnis salus de Corde Mariae scaturizat*. (12)

St. Bonaventure in other treatises on the devotion to Mary portrays the symbolic pictures of her august Heart. In his commentary on the second chapter of St. Luke he calls Mary's Heart the Ark of the Covenant. As the Ark contained a portion of manna which God sent down from heaven so the Heart of the Saviour's Mother kept all the mysteries of her divine Son, all the words of life and the sacred truths that He brought down from heaven to be the sweet and precious manna of our souls. (13)

St. Bernardine of Siena was another son of the Seraphic St. Francis. So ardent and tender was St. Bernardine's devotion to the Mother of God and to her amiable Heart that it is difficult to find his equal.

In a sermon on Mary's Immaculate Conception St. Bernardine shows the wonders of Our Lady's admirable Heart which will be an object of rapture for all the denizens of heaven. One marvel of the Heart of Mary is that it is the focus of a mirror towards which all the rays of the sun converge. In this mirror he sees a fire so ardent that it inflames everything placed in front of it. "Similarly," says the Saint, "all the vehement desires of all the hearts of Patriarchs, Prophets, and the other saints of the Old Testament concerning the coming of the Redeemer, united in the Holy Heart of Mary as in their center, kindle therein such ardent desires that no mind can conceive them and no words express them." (14)

St. Lawrence Justinian, Patriarch of Venice, gave manifest marks of his very special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. His book, *De triumphato agone Christi*, "The Triumphant Agony of Christ," represents Mary's sorrowful Heart as a clear mirror of Our Lord's Passion and as a perfect image of His Death: *Clarissimum passionis Christi speculum et perfecta mortis ejus imago*. This implies that he who could view the maternal Heart of the sorrowful Mother, as the angels see it, would also see the cords, the thorns, the nails, the spear, the wounds, the pain and all the torments that the beloved Son suffered in His soul and body.

Richard of St. Lawrence, zealous penitentiary of Rouen, four hundred years ago, wrote a work in twelve parts called *The Praises of the Glorious Virgin*, in which he mentions six things concerning Mary's Heart.

(12). Psal. B.V. Ps. 79.

(13). Virgini, fuit area continent divinatorum eloquiorum arcana. Et ideo per arcam Moysis designatur, de qua dicitur quod continebat tabulas legis divinae. in Cap. 2 Luc. Unde Cor.

(14). Serm. 4 de Concept B.V. art. 3. cap. 1.

198 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

The admirable Heart of the Mother of God is the source of salvation. (15) It is the first of all hearts, which was worthy to receive in itself the Son of God, who came out of the bosom of the Father into this world. (16) In the meek and humble Heart of Mary mercy and justice gave each other the kiss of peace. (17) The amiable Heart of Mary received the Same wounds as our loving Redeemer suffered in His body. (18) The Heart of our Mother was the armory and treasury of Sacred Scripture for the Old and New Testaments." (19) Lastly, Mary's admirable Heart is the book of life in which the

life of Jesus Christ was written in gold letters by the Holy Ghost, the finger of God. (20)

The white habit of the sons of St. Dominic shows that they belong in a special way to Mary, the Queen of Angels. After the principal aim of the Order, the glory of God, St. Dominic founded it to teach by word and example the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary as a powerful means of salvation.

From among the writings of St. Dominic's spiritual sons I have chosen a few excerpts from the Venerable Louis of Grenada on the loving Heart of the Saviour's Mother.

"The holy Gospel ends the account of the sweet birth of the Redeemer by a very expressive sentence in which it mentions the Heart of Mary thus: 'Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.' 'The story of this Gospel is truly a royal banquet and a table which God has set for the elect and has covered with thousands of kinds of delicious food. The Child, the Mother, the birth, the crib, the angels and the shepherds, all details are filled with miracles distilling drops of honey. Everyone may take what pleases him and eat what he likes. As for myself I confess that the last dessert, I mean the last sentence in that Gospel story, which pictures the Heart of Mary, is a dish of unspeakable deliciousness . . .

"O Queen of Heaven, O Gate of Paradise, Lady of the World, Sanctuary of the Holy Ghost, Throne of Wisdom, Temple of the Living God, Guardian of the Secrets of Jesus Christ, and Witness of all His works, what didst thy Heart feel in all these mysteries.... Who can understand what was in thy Heart? She was astonished to behold the Word of God, a babe without speech, to see the Almighty wrapped in swaddling

(15). De Laud, B.Y. lib. 2, partit. 2, P. 104.

(16). Ibid.

(17). Ibid.

(18). Ibid.

(19). Ibid., lib. 10, P. 593.

(20). Ibid., lib. 4, P. 309

## THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

199 -

ling clothes and lying in a crib. She was enraptured by the goodness of God, His generosity, His humility and His extraordinary devotion. She was astonished to see how greatly He loved man, how much He cherished them, did them honor, longed for their Salvation, ennobled and lifted them up to such a height by the mystery of His sacred humanity. "(21)

Further testimony is found in the writings of four learned writers, who are almost like four Evangelists in teaching us the devotion to the admirable Heart of Mary. I cite Joseph de la Cerda, Benedictine monk and professor of theology at the University of Salamanca; John Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris and French delegate to the Ecumenical Council of Constance; Nicolas Salicet, Abbot of the Cistercian Order; and Bartholomew de los Rios, of the Order of St. Augustine, whose works are entitled *Hierarchia Mariana*, "Hierarchy of Mary."

Listen to the Salutation to the Most Holy Heart of Mary, taken from the *Antidotarium animae*, "Antidotarium of the Soul" (22) of Abbot Nicolas, whose assurance that he garnered the prayers and salutation from the writings of the Fathers demonstrates the antiquity of the devotion to the admirable Heart of the Mother of God.

"I shall speak to thy Heart, O Mary, mirror of angelic beauty. I shall speak to thy most pure Heart, O Mistress of the World, I shall prostrate myself before thy holy temple and thank it with all

the powers of my soul. I shall salute thy immaculate Heart from the inmost recesses of my soul, thy Heart which was found worthy to receive the Only-begotten Son of God coming out of the bosom of His Eternal Father.

"Hail, unique sanctuary, which God consecrated by the unction of the Holy Ghost. Hail, Holy of Holies, which the Supreme Pontiff dedicated for his admirable and ineffable entrance on the day of His Incarnation. Hail Ark of Sanctity, which kept within itself the Sacred Scripture engraved by the finger of God.

"Hail, Golden Urn, filled with celestial manna. In thee is found a delicious banquet, in thee are all delights, in thee are the remedies and sources of grace.

"Hail, Virginal Heart, inviolable sanctuary and noble dwelling-place of the Blessed Trinity, in which Divinity met humanity in a kiss of love. Rejoice with an eternal joy.

"O Emerald Cup, whose brilliance will never fade, thou hast offered to our King, thirsting for our salvation, the delicious nectar of refreshing

(21). This excerpt is taken from the *Addition to the Memorial*.

(22). This salutation is in Latin in the original edition of the Admirable Heart. Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes*, v. 7, P. 295 If.

200-

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

faith, at the blessed moment when thou didst answer the salutation of the Archangel: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done unto me according to thy word.' May Thy soul exalt, O Mary, Mother of sweetness, and may every creature praise the happiness of thy most holy Heart from which comes the source of our salvation.

"O Furnace in which the Seraphim are inflamed! O Paradise of Delights! Oh, what pulsations of love, O Blessed Virgin Mary, did thrill thy Heart, when the vivifying Spirit of God, like a burning wind, breathed on thee. God drew thee to Him with thy whole soul.

"May thy most noble Heart be forever blessed, O Mary, thy Heart adorned with the gifts of celestial wisdom and inflamed with the ardor of charity. May thy Heart be blessed, in which thou didst meditate and cherish the sacred mysteries of our redemption, keeping them to reveal to us the opportune time. Praise and love to thee, O most loving Heart; honor and glory from all creatures forever and ever. Amen."

Among the Religious Orders existing in Holy Church, none has shown more zeal and ardor in the veneration and service of Our Lady than the illustrious Society of Jesus, whose constant work in this regard falls into three classes.

First are the Sodalties of Our Lady, established in all Jesuit colleges, which are schools of Christian virtue as well as learning, blessed Schools teaching the science of eternal salvation, which can never be wanting to those who cherish heartfelt devotion to the Mother of God.

Secondly, by their apostolic preaching the Sons of St. Ignatius have spread the knowledge and exaltation of the Admirable Mother of God throughout the world. Thirdly, many of the members, who number over three hundred authors of note in this one Society, have devoted their pens to proclaiming the glorious perfections of the Admirable Heart of Mary.

I have no intention of setting forth here all that these writers have penned concerning the

august Heart of the Queen of Heaven, for it would make this work too long. I shall merely mention twelve whom I consider to be as twelve apostles of the perfections of Mary's incomparable Heart. Here are their names: Francis Suarez, Osorius, one of the first disciples of St. Ignatius, St. Peter Canisius, Sebastian Buadius, Father John Eusebius of Nieremberg, Father John Baptist St Jure, Father Stephen Binet, Father Francis Poiré, Father Paul Barry, Christopher de Vega, Cornelius a Lapide and Father Honorat Nicquet.

If you ask me where these remarkable writers learned the Science of the saving devotion to the Heart of Mary, I can only reply that it sprang from the zealous heart of their illustrious Father, St. Ignatius, who bore

## **THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST**

201 -

constantly from the day of his conversion to the end of his life the image of the Admirable Heart of the Mother of our Saviour, which is preserved as a precious relic in the Jesuit College at Saragossa.

May Almighty God vouchsafe that the example of this great Saint inspire the hearts of the readers of this book to imitate his devotion to the most Holy Heart of the Glorious Virgin Mary!

## CHAPTER 11

### ECCLESIASTICAL APPROBATIONS

THE Holy Ghost has inspired and approved this devotion by specific ecclesiastical approbations. Pope Julius II, (1) memorable for his particular devotion to Our Lady of Loretto, promulgated three invocations to be recited at the sound of the Angelus-bell, the second being in honor of the bent of Mary.

"O most glorious Queen of Mercy, I salute thy virginal Heart, whose most perfect purity was never stained by sin."

Pope Clement X (2) solemnly authorized devotion to the admirable Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary in six formal bulls granted to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1674. The Pontiff dedicated every church and chapel of the Congregation to the Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary and also gave permission to institute Confraternities or Societies under the same name with special indulgences for the members.

Cardinal Louis de Vendôme, (3) legate of His Holiness Clement IX in Paris gave his approbation to the devotion to the Holy Heart on two separate occasions. Both acts of the Legate were confirmed by the Apostolic See and by Pope Clement IX.

Cardinal Peter de Bérulle, (4) Founder of the French Oratorians, has left us a wonderful treatise, *Grandeurs of Christ*, in which I have found deeply inspired passages in praise of the admirable Heart of the Mother of our Saviour. In one paragraph the saintly Cardinal speaks thus:

"... The state of the Mother of God gives Mary by nature and by

(1). Julius II was supreme pontiff from 1503-13.

(2). Clément X, elected pope at the age of 80, sat on the pontifical throne from 1670 to 1676.

(3). Cardinal Louis de Vendôme (1612-69) was appointed legate a latere to France by Clément IX. He died at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1669.

(4). Cardinal Peter de Bérulle (1575-1629) founded the Oratory of Jesus in 1611. The French Congregation of the Oratory was modeled on the one formed a few years before by St. Philip Néri at Rome. St. John Eudes was a member of the French Oratory from 1623 to 1643 when he left to found the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

### THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

203 -

grace the privilege to possess Jesus within herself and to possess the noblest part of Christ's being; to possess the spirit, the heart and the life of Christ so intimately that He is the spirit of her spirit, the heart of her heart, and the life of her life. O excess! O abyss! O excess of grandeurs! O abyss of marvels! O Mary, thou dost give life to Jesus Christ, and thou dost receive the life of Jesus Christ. Thou dost give life to Jesus, animating the heart and spirit of Jesus by thy heart and spirit. Thou dost receive from the heart and the body of Jesus living and dwelling in thee, life in thy heart and body and spirit together.'

Another of Cardinal de Bérulle's books entitled *Oeuvres de Dévotion* contains these very significant words on the mystery of the Incarnation.

« ... It is the mystery of the two noblest and most closely united Hearts that ever existed in

heaven and on earth. When Jesus Christ dwelt in Mary and was part of her being, the Heart of Jesus was very close to the Heart of Mary. When Mary was living in union with Jesus, He was her all, and the Heart of Mary is very near the Heart of Jesus and influenced her life. At that moment Jesus and Mary were but one living person. The Heart of the one did not live nor beat but by the Heart of the other. . . »

"O Heart of Jesus living in Mary and by Mary! O Heart of Mary living in Jesus and for Jesus! O sweet union of these two Hearts! Blessed be the God of love Who united them together! May He unite our hearts to these two Hearts, and may He make these Hearts live in unity in the honor of the sacred unity which exists in the three divine Persons."

Here are other words from this holy Cardinal on the same subject:

"We should always seek the Son of God, and we should always find Him; for he who seeks Christ will find Christ: *Qui quaeret invenit*. There are three dwelling-places in which to seek Him. First is the bosom of the Eternal Father! Oh! what an august abode! Oh! what a celestial repose! The second dwelling is His sacred humanity. The third is the Heart and the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin."

In addition to the foregoing, no less than fifteen archbishops and bishops have authorized the devotion, the office and the celebration of the special feast in honor of the Most Admirable Heart of the Mother of God.

These granting formal approbation are: Archbishop Peter d'Hardivilliers of Bourges, Archbishop Francis Harlay de Champvalon of Rouen, Bishop Claude de la Madeleine de Ragny of Amon, Bishop Simon Le Gras<sup>(5)</sup> of Soissons, Bishop Henry de Baradat of Noyon, Bishop Leonor (5). Bishop Le Gras was a relative of Mademoiselle Le Gras, foundress of the Daughters of Charity.

204 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Goyon de Matignon of Coutances, Bishop James du Perron of Évreux, Bishop Henry de Maupas of Puy, who endorsed the devotion in his dual capacity of Bishop and Doctor of Theology, Bishop Andrew du Saussay of Tool, also Prince of the Holy Roman Empire and Royal Councillor Bishop Francis de la Pallu of Heliopolis and Bishop Ignatius Cotelendi of Metellopolis, both Vicars Apostolic of China and Indo-China, where Bishop Cotelendi died in 1662, Bishop Francis de Nesmond of Bayeux and finally Bishop Francis de Montmorency-Laval, Bishop of Petraea and Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Canada, known as New France.

Bishop Laval's approbation reads as follows:

"Francis, by the grace of God and of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Petracca, Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Canada, called New France. The Holy Ghost has taught by Sacred Scripture and by the mouth of the Fathers the excellence of the Holy Heart of His worthy Spouse, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and has by the same means exhorted all the faithful to have a particular devotion and veneration for her Heart. This book,<sup>(6)</sup> written to enkindle in the hearts of its readers the devotion to the admirable Heart and the Holy Name of Mary, has no need of our approbation, since it is in perfect conformity with the designs and intentions of the Holy Ghost. Hence it is not our will to grant approval when writing this, but rather to give public testimony of the particular esteem we feel after having read it carefully and to express the desire that this devotion be profoundly engraved within the hearts of all Christians. May the most lovable Heart of the Mother of God, which is all aflame with love for His Divine Majesty, and with charity towards mankind, together with her most august Name, be praised and honored by all men. May the Feasts, with the Offices and Masses contained in this book, be



celebrated with fitting solemnity and devotion. This is the opinion that we hold of the book which we deem most worthy of being published. In witness thereof we have this testimony written by our own hand and sealed with our coat of arms:'

Paris, this 23rd day of December 1662.

Francis, Bishop of Petraea

Furthermore, seven esteemed Doctors of the Sorbonne have granted theological approbation to the devotion to the Admirable Heart of Mary in a joint submission.

"All the true children of the most holy Mother of God should be con

(6). This book is *Dévotion au très saint Coeur de la bienheureuse Vierge Marie* written and published by St. John Eudes in 1648. The Saint had given a complimentary copy to his personal friend, Bishop Laval.

#### **THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST 205 -**

vinced that her most holy Heart was never stained with any kind of sin; that it was always full of divine grace and animated, possessed and guided by the Holy Ghost; that it never existed for a moment without loving God; that its love for the Almighty exceeded that of all the hearts of men and angels; that the Heart of Mary was perpetually filled with charity, zeal and vigilance for our salvation as well as with mercy and compassion for our miseries; that it was inebriated a hundred-fold with the gall and myrrh and transpierced with a thousand arrows of sorrow because of us. We have been most willingly led to grant our approbation to this book entitled *Dévotion au très saint Coeur de la bienheureuse Vierge Marie* containing a proper Office and Mass in honor of her Heart, and the other prayers and exercises of devotion on the subject, which we the undersigned, Doctors of the Faculty of Sacred Theology in Paris, have read and in which we have found nothing that is not in conformity with Holy Scripture, the teaching of the Church and of the Fathers, and consider it capable of exciting those who read it to honor and imitate the most holy and most worthy Heart of Mary.

Given at Paris, this 31st day of January 1661.

M. Grandin

C. Gobinet

Anthony Raguier de Pousse

J. Desgardiers de Parlagès

Saussoy

Blouet de Than

L'Amy

## CHAPTER III

### EXAMPLE OF SAINTS AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS

THE Holy Spirit has also inspired many saints to show forth by word and example a most special devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It is true that every saint belongs to the court of the Queen of all Saints; nevertheless there are certain ones who stand out as being very closely associated with the royal Heart of Mary, their sovereign lady. First, of course, is St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse, incomparably dear to her holy Heart. Even her parents, St. Anne and St. Joachim, cannot dispute the first place of St. Joseph in her heart, having conceded it during their lifetime, when they entrusted the Virgin Mary to his care. Then comes St. John the Baptist, truly the eldest son of Mary in the life of grace. St. Gabriel the Archangel had the inestimable privilege of being the Guardian Angel of the immaculate Mother of God. And what can we say of St. John, the disciple most dear to the heart of Our Lord, to whom Our Saviour entrusted the life and heart of His Beloved Mother from the cross? St. Luke the Evangelist also belongs to the Heart of Mary because he was chosen by her to reveal the sublime secret to mankind, that "she kept all those words in her heart."

There are many saints who have consecrated themselves under the special designation of spouse of the Queen of Angels. Among these I name as examples St. Edmund of Canterbury, St. Robert, St. Stephen, St. Alberic, Founder of the Cistercian Order, St. Bernard, St. Dominic and his disciple Blessed Alanus, Blessed Herman the Premonstratensian, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernardine of Siena, and so many others whose names are inscribed in the Book of Life.

St. Mechilde and St. Gertrude, noted daughters of St. Benedict, in the revelation of their surpassing devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, have shown most clearly the beauties and mysteries of devotion to the loving Heart of the Mother of Our Lord and Saviour.

St. Thomas Becket, martyred Archbishop of Canterbury, had special devotion to the seven joys of the heart of Our Lady during her earthly

### THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

207 -

life, seven joys that accompanied the unfolding of the mysteries of redemption: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of Our Lord, the Adoration of the Magi, the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple, the Resurrection of Our Lord, and finally her own glorious Assumption into Heaven.

The contemplation of these joys of Our Lady gave much joy and devotion to St. Thomas of Canterbury; yet Our Lady appeared to him and revealed that she would extend special intercession, at the hour of death, to those who united to her Seven earthly joys the seven additional joys of her holy Heart in Heaven. St. Thomas composed a hymn proclaiming these seven heavenly joys, an inspiring canticle which is still sung and recited in many places; therefore this saint well deserves to rank among those specially favored by Our Lady because of devotion to her admirable Heart.

I have mentioned more than once the special tenderness of the Heart of Mary towards the Cistercian Order. Also belonging particularly to the Heart of Our Lady was St. Teresa, together with the entire Order of Discalced Carmelites. In addition to the writings of St. Teresa herself, I have seen a book published in Milan, by one of her followers, Venerable Father John of St. Joseph, which gives a most beautiful exposition of the ardent love and union of the Heart of the Mother of God with the

Heart of her Divine Child.

St. Philip Néri, founder of the Oratorians at Rome, inspired in the members of his Order devotion patterned after his own signal love of Our Lady, devotion expressed in the writings of Dom Francis Marchese. His anthology of numerous devotional practices in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary contains eight remarkably inspirational exercises for the Octave of the Feast of her most admirable Heart.

Among other members of religious orders who have merited distinction as votaries of the Heart of Mary because of their writings in her honor are John Tauler of the Dominican Order, Blossius the Benedictine and Lanspergius the Carthusian.

In the Life of Mother Mary Villani, a Dominican nun who died in Naples in the odor of sanctity on March 26, 1670, there is a signal proof of her devotion to the Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mother Villani described how the Holy Ghost seemed to inspire her to recite three Hail Marys in honor of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. At the first Ave she offered the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord; at the second Ave she honored the sweet Heart of the Blessed Mother by presenting the Heart of her Beloved Son in thanksgiving for the graces He bestowed upon the Heart of Mary; at

208 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

the third Ave she offered her own heart to the united Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Mother Villani's life records that this practice was rewarded by a vision of Our Lady, in which the Blessed Virgin expressed the joy it imparted to her and promised special protection for those who practised this devotion to her Heart and that of her Divine Son.

St. Francis de Sales is another great saint whose words glow with burning love for the Heart of Our Lady, a love communicated to his devout daughters in religion, the Religious of the Visitation. We also see the Ursulines, and the Congregation of Our Lady, bearing in their lives the mark of the charity inflaming the Heart of Mary, the Mother of Fair Love. There are many other religious and holy persons who celebrate every year, mine on the eighth of February, others on the first of June, the Feast of the Heart of the Queen of Heaven, the most compassionate, most generous, most magnificent of all hearts, a Heart that cannot fail to pour upon this world, and obtain in the next, the richest of blessings for those who persevere in its love and veneration.

The Priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary have a great cause for consolation and a very special obligation of thanksgiving to Our Lord and to His most holy Mother for being called and received into a Congregation belonging particularly to their most Holy Hearts. Five principal reasons emphasize this:

First, the Congregation is wholly consecrated to this admirable Heart, one of the chief objects of its establishment being to give special honor to this august Heart, which is regarded and revered as its Patron, and as the model held up to its members, so that they may learn to conform their own hearts to its sublime pattern.

Secondly, all the churches and chapels of the Congregation are dedicated and consecrated to the honor of the mine most holy Heart. Our Holy Father Pope Clement X in his Bulls has named them "The Churches and Chapels of the Heart of Jesus and Mary."

Thirdly, this Congregation was the first to hold solemn celebration of the Feasts of the

Admirable Heart of Jesus and Mary. It is not necessary to be concerned over the extreme unworthiness of him whom God has used to establish these feasts, who is the least of men, the first of sinners and the most unworthy of priests. Almighty God who created the world from nothing, and retrieved it without its having contributed to its own redemption, is wont to choose things most vile and low, which are nothing, to accomplish the designs of His Will. Did not God use *St. Julian*, a poor Cistercian, to induce Pope Urban IV to establish the Feast of Corpus Christi?

Fourthly, from the time Our Saviour and His Blessed Mother gave

## THE HEART OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST

209 -

birth to this Congregation in Holy Church, it has experienced the extraordinary effects of love of the admirable Heart. Those who have the happiness to be members of the Congregation should have holy confidence that the Blessed Virgin will cherish all of them in her maternal Heart as she has so repeatedly proved. If they raise no obstacles by their sins and infidelities, they will have a secure place, for the hereafter, in her loving Heart, which is a Heaven more vast and extensive than all the heavens, for it is the abode of Him whom the heavens cannot contain.

Fifthly, if St. Paul assures all his spiritual children that neither life nor death shall ever separate them from his heart,<sup>(1)</sup> how much more strongly does Our Blessed Mother give the same assurance to her true children, for whom her love is incomparably greater than that of St. Paul for his disciples. But, on the other hand, each one of us should strive to live so that we may exclaim like St. Paul: "Who shall Separate me from the loving Heart of my adorable Father Jesus and my heavenly Mother Mary? Shall it be tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? No, I am sure that, with the grace of God, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate my heart from the holy Heart of Jesus and of His most Blessed Mother, who is also mine, "

As for the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, their very great obligations to the most holy Heart of the all-glorious Virgin shall certainly prevent any one from surpassing them in the love they owe to her Heart, after the Heart of Jesus, the most lovable, loving and loved of all hearts. They dwell in an Order which originated at the same time as the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, and is likewise entirely consecrated to the admirable Heart of the Mother of Fair Love. In token of this, the Sisters wear a silver heart bearing an image of the Mother of our Saviour, and are called Religious of Our Lady of Charity, because they have been founded to work for the salvation of derelict souls, and salvation is the greatest object of the charity that abounds in the Heart of Mary. They should think most highly of their religious vocation and follow with the greatest care and affection the devotional exercises of their holy Institute. They should often consider the very ardent love of Mary's Heart for souls redeemed by the most Precious Blood of her divine Son so that their own hearts may experience the sacred fire of charity with which they ought to exert themselves in the task of saving the souls entrusted to them by Divine Providence.

(1). 2 Cor- 7, 3.

210 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

This chapter has presented a large number of mints and religious orders who belong very specially to the most august Heart of the Queen of Saints. Through their example the Holy Ghost preaches eloquently the devotion to the holy Heart of Mary. Let us offer to her admirable Heart the honor rendered to it by all these saints and holy persons and cultivate an ardent desire to imitate their zeal and ardor. Let us beg them to make us sharers in their devotion and to associate us in the glory and praise that is rendered to the most powerful and merciful Queen of all Christian hearts that love Almighty God.

211 -

## **PART EIGHT**

### **Fourth Foundation of the Devotion: Sanctity of the Admirable Heart of Mary**

#### **Exposition of Its Excellence**

213 -

*Part Eight (\*)*

#### *FOURTH FOUNDATION OF THE DEVOTION: SANCTITY OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY*

*Exposition of Its Excellence*

#### **CHAPTER I**

#### **HEART OF MARY, IMMACULATE AND SINLESS**

WITH good reason does Sacred Scripture call Mary the "Valiant Woman," for she is the marshal of the armies of God Himself and the principal enemy of the infernal serpent. The battalions of hell fear Mary far more than a small, weak body of foot soldiers would fear a powerful mechanized enemy force in battle array. She is as "terrible as an army set in array." (1) She has completely crushed the serpent's head. God's words to Satan after the fall of man, "She shall crush thy head" (2) mean that Our Lady would vanquish every kind of sin, mortal, venial, actual and original, the last being especially designated by the infernal monster's horrible head.

Mary would sooner have suffered all the torments of earth and of hell rather than to consent to the least venial sin, and a thousand times less to mortal sin. Thus did she completely overcome actual sin.

Concerning original sin, the holy Fathers, famous Doctors, learned theologians and sacred Councils have defended the honor of the Immaculate Conception and maintained that the Almighty God preserved Mary

(\*) Two chapters in the original work have been omitted in this edition.

(1). Cant. 6, 3.

(2). Gen. 3, 15.

214 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

from original sin. I cannot understand how there are today so many Catholics and even devout persons, who seem to want to place this most worthy glorious Virgin on a level with the other children of Adam, warring against their Creator from the first moment of their existence. It is impossible to understand why anyone would maintain that the most holy Mother of God, purer than the sun, was tainted in her conception with the stain of original sins. (3)

To deny the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady is to accuse of error the infallible word of Eternal Truth, Sacred Scripture, which calls Mary the one "dove" (4) without sin or rancor, the "all fair" (5) and the "immaculate one" in whom "there is not a spot." (6)

To hold that Mary was not preserved from original sin is to oppose the divine pronouncements of the Holy Ghost, the Councils of the Catholic Church, especially the Holy Council of Trent, which declared manifestly that there is no question of Mary being included in the decree of original sin. (7)

To assert that the Mother of God was conceived in sin is to prefer private opinion to that of the Apostles, in particular, St. Andrew, St. James the Less and St. James the Greater. The glorious Apostle St. Andrew at the hour of death, expressed himself as follows: "As the first Adam was formed out of the earth before it was cursed by God, so the second Adam was formed from the virginal flesh never sullied by the malediction of heaven." (8) The Apostle St. James the Less makes a special mention of the Mother of his divine Master, calling her "most holy, immaculate, blessed above all creatures, more honorable than the Cherubim, more glorious than the Seraphim, always blessed and altogether irreproachable. (9) St. Thesiphon, disciple of St. James the Greater, called the "mouth" of the great Apostle, has left us the doctrine taught by the Apostles themselves: "This Virgin, this Mary, this holy one has been preserved from original sin from the first moment of her conception. Never would the

(3). St. John here inveighs against Catholics of his day who refused to believe in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He builds up a veritable thesis, adducing proofs from Scripture, the Councils, the Fathers, the Religious Orders and the liturgical feasts kept in honor of Mary Immaculate. This chapter is of special interest because the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was not then defined as an article of the faith.

(4). Cant. 6, 8.

(5). Cant. 4, 7.

(6). Ibid.

(7). 7 Sessio 5, De Peccato Orig.

(8). *Abdia, in gestis* D. Andriae, 1, 4. Cf. Marraccius, *Apostoli Marian i*, cap. 4 in fine.

(9). Liturg. S. Jacobi in *Bibliotheca Patrum*, tom. I.

## SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY

215 -

Angel have Said to Mary, 'Hail, full of grace,' if she had been conceived in original sin." (10)

To refuse to believe in Mary's exemption from original sin is to show a lack of respect and submission to the Sovereign Pontiffs Alexander VI, Julius 11, Leo X, Paul V, and Gregory XV, who authorized the doctrine of Mary's pure conception, by recommending that a Feast be kept in its honor, and by approving its office. Some of these pontiffs even went so far as to forbid under pain of excommunication any opposition to this teaching either by word of mouth or in writing, in public or in private.

To uphold that Mary was not conceived immaculate is to believe that one has more light than the many Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops from all parts of the world, who favored the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. It is to place oneself above the Fathers of Holy Church and all the Religious Orders of St. Anthony, St. Basil, St. Benedict, the Orders of the Cistercians, the Carthusians, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Society of Jesus, the Barnabites, the Teatines, and others that testified great zeal and ardor in defending the Holy Mother of God from the stigma implied in fact that she was numbered among the children of wrath and malediction.

To contradict the belief of the Catholic Church is to condemn the famous Universities of Paris, Cologne, Maintz, Valencia, Salamanca, Coimbra, Barcelona, Seville, Cracow, and nearly all the other Universities of Christendom, that refused to grant the degree of Doctor of Theology until the candidate bound himself by oath to sustain the innocence of Mary's conception.

To withhold one's assent to Mary's privilege is to give the lie to five hundred doctors in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, England, Scotland, Poland, Portugal and Flanders, who assented to this truth by numerous beautiful and learned books. The Society of Jesus alone employed more than sixty of its members to defend the honor of their Heavenly Mother in this matter by their erudite and pious writings.

To maintain that Mary was not spotless in her conception is to ridicule the many miracles wrought by Almighty God, many of which are mentioned in the letters of St. Anselm. It is to show no fear of the terrible chastisements which Divine justice will inflict upon those who oppose this doctrine as may be seen in a book written by John of Carthagen, a Franciscan.(11) It is to give preference to the impiety of the detestable Calvin, so full of hatred for the Mother of God, rather than to the devotion of the Christian world to the holiness of Mary's conception. It is to

(10). Cf. Vega, Theol. Mar. Paul. 3, cert. 5, no. 258.

(11). Homilia de acra arcani, Deiparae, Lib. 1, Hom. 19, Sec. 4.

216 -

### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

give more favor to the demons who were created in the state of grace than to the Queen of Angels. It is to elevate Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, who were the cause of the loss of countless souls, above their daughter Mary, the Mediatrix of Salvation and the Restorer of grace.

Lastly, to impugn the dogma of Mary's preservation from original sin, is to reject the wisdom of the Catholic Church, which solemnizes the Feast of the Immaculate Conception with so much fervor throughout the world, setting oneself against a fact authorized by the Church and stated by St. Augustine in the following words: Quod per universum orbem commendat Ecclesia, hoc quin ita faciendum sit disputare insolentissimae insaniae est. "To question anything that is done throughout the whole world by the order and recommendation of the Church is the most insolent folly imaginable." (12)

O Blessed Virgin Mary, I humbly beseech thee, by thy immaculate conception and through thy pure Heart, to take full possession of my heart. Give it completely to thy Divine Son and beg Him to banish from it all sin and to establish in it forever the perfect reign of His divine love.

(12). Epist. 118.

## CHAPTER 11

### HEART OF MARY, OCEAN OF GRACE

IT is in the heart, that is, in the very depth and substance of the Christian soul, that sanctifying grace resides and exercises its powerful influence. There grace establishes the throne of its power, extending to the memory, the intellect and the will, affecting all the higher and lower faculties, and all the internal and external senses.

Granting this, I say that the admirable Heart of Mary is an ocean of grace. Yet it is not I who make this statement, it is the Archangel Gabriel, sent by God from Heaven to announce to the Queen of Angels that the divine Majesty had chosen her to be the Mother of His Divine Son. The Archangel greets Mary by telling her first of all that she is "full of grace." (1) Notice that he does not say she will be, but that she is full of grace.

Would you know how it is that Mary was full of grace even before the Son of God became Incarnate in her womb? You must consider two truths taught by several distinguished theologians.

The first is that Mary was filled with such eminent grace at the moment of her Immaculate Conception that, according to many learned divines, she already surpassed the chief of Seraphim and the greatest of Saints. From the beginning of her existence she possessed more grace than they enjoyed at the time of their greatest perfection.

The second truth is that the heavenly Virgin was never idle, but remained constantly turned towards God, ever exercising her love for His divine Majesty. She loved Him with her whole Heart, her whole soul and all her strength, according to the full extent of the grace that was in her, so that grace was doubled in her soul, if not from moment to moment, at least from hour to hour, and perhaps more often. She had therefore attained to an inconceivable and unutterable degree of grace when the Archangel Gabriel saluted her as being full of grace.

Now if this most Blessed Virgin was so full of grace before conceiving  
(1). Luke 1, 28.

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

the Son of God, what must have been the abundance and plenitude of grace poured by the Holy Spirit into her Heart and her virginal bosom, to make her worthy to give birth to the Son whom the Eternal Father begets from all eternity in His own adorable bosom, to make her worthy to be the true Mother of His Son? Surely, the dignity of Mother of God being infinite, the grace bestowed on the Blessed Virgin to prepare her to give being and life to God Himself must also in a way be infinite, for St. Thomas assures us it was proportioned to her sublime dignity.

If it is a great privilege to be Mother of God, and if no grander destiny can be conceived, then for a mere creature to form the Son of God of her own substance, what shall we say of the glory of having Him in her womb and making Him live by her virginal blood for a space of nine months! What abundance of grace did the Holy Ghost pour into her Heart to make her worthy thus to continue her office of Motherhood towards such a Son! *Who* could fathom what the adorable Infant, infinitely rich, generous and grateful, gave in return to the Mother from whom He constantly received during those nine months a new being and a new life, a life incomparably more precious than all the lives of angels and of men? To this we must add all the love and praises Mary incessantly tendered Him then. If Jesus



bestows an eternal kingdom upon those who give a glass of water to the poor for love of Him, what gifts, what treasures, what graces did He constantly pour into Mary's pure Heart, in which He did not encounter the least obstacle to the inexhaustible blessings which He ardently wished to communicate to her.

Mary performed the duties of a Mother towards her Son Jesus not only when she conceived and gave birth to Him in Bethlehem; but also when she nourished Him, carried Him in her arms and on her bosom, clothed Him, delivered Him from the fury of Herod, brought Him to the Temple of Jerusalem, led Him back to Nazareth and cared for Him as every good mother cares for her child.

If, according to St. Bernardine,(2) Mary merited by her consent to the Incarnation of the Son of God more grace than all the angels and saints together by all their acts of virtue, what graces and merits must our Saviour's most worthy Mother have acquired when she so often carried Him on her virginal bosom. What blessings she received during her familiar conversations with her Son, when she possessed Him on earth and listened to His divine discourses; but above all when, in the Temple on the day of His presentation, as well as on Calvary at the time of His

(2). Plus meruit gloriosa Virgo in suo consensu, scilicet conceptionis Filii Dei, quam omnes creaturae, sive Angeli, sive homines, in cunctis suis actibus, motibus et cogitationibus. Serm. 5 pro Festivitat B.M.V.

## **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY**

219 -

death, she offered Him to the Eternal Father as a sacrifice for the salvation of mankind.

If the Holy Ghost poured into this admirable Mother's Heart torrents of almost infinite grace to render her worthy of giving Him birth, what must He have done to dispose her to sacrifice her beloved Son in spite of so great sorrow and love? We can certainly state that as her Heart was then turned into an immense sea of sorrow, so did it also become an unfathomable and boundless; ocean of grace and holiness.

Who could conceive the almost infinite abundance of graces that filled the loving heart of the Mother of the Crucified Saviour when He visited her after His Resurrection? Measure, if you can, the extremity of this desolate Mother's sorrow when she beheld her Beloved Son actually die amid frightful torments, and you will understand the immense graces she thus merited, which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her after His Resurrection and on the day of His Ascension.

What treasures of grace enriched the most holy Heart of the Mother of God through the divine Sacrifice of the Altar at which she daily assisted with unutterable devotion, and by her daily communions made with inconceivable love during the fifteen years she remained on earth after her Son's Ascension!

After all this, be not surprised if I say that the Blessed Virgin's Heart is a means of grace, and if the mouthpieces of the Holy Ghost proclaim the grace of this glorious Virgin to be immense, even as the capacity of her Heart. "The grace of the Holy Virgin is immense," says St. Epiphanius. (3) "When I desire to contemplate the immensity of thy grace and of thy glory, my mind fails me and my tongue is dumb;" writes St. Anselm. (4) "The sacred Virgin is a treasure of life and all immense abyss of grace;" exclaims St. John Damascene. (5) "The grace wherewith Mary was filled," asserts St. Bonaventure, "was certainly an immense grace. For an immense vessel cannot be filled unless its contents are likewise immense. Now Mary is a most immense vessel, having contained Him whom the Heavens cannot contain. If she encompassed God in her bosom, how much more truly in her Heart? And if the immense capacity of her Heart was filled with grace, we must necessarily conclude that the

grace which filled such a capacity was itself immense." (6)

Immense and eternal thanks be to the sovereign Author of grace, who

(3) Gratia sanctae Virginis est immensa. in orat. de laud. Virg.

(4). Immensitatem gratiae tuae et gloriae, considerare cupienti, O Virgo, sensus deficit, lingua fatiscit. Lib. de Excell. Virg.

(5). Virgo, vitae thesaurus, gratiae abyssus immensa. Orat. 2 de dom. Virg.

(6). Specul. B.V. Lect. 5.

220 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

gave His blessed Mother so great and vast a Heart and filled it with such riches that it became an mean of grace and a sea of blessings for all true children of her most sweet and loving Heart O Admirable Heart, thou wast ever closed to sin of every kind and filled with the highest sanctity of which a human heart is capable; behold I now offer thee my heart. Deign to take full and eternal possession of it, suffer not that anything displeasing to God may enter my heart but implore His Divine Majesty to establish in it the perfect reign of His grace and of His love.

Not only is the admirable Heart of the Saviour's Mother an ocean of grace, containing and almost infinitely surpassing all the graces of the Church, Triumphant and Militant, but it is also their Source and origin. As the Eternal Father chose Mary from all eternity that through her we might receive Him who is the first author and principle of all grace, so did God likewise choose her, that through His handmaid we might receive all the graces proceeding from that first source. As God deigned to give us a Saviour only with the holy Virgin's consent, so also did He eternally decree to grant my gift or grace only through Mary. "God wishes us to have everything through Mary's hands," says St. Bernard. (7) "None is saved but through thee, O holy Virgin," Says St. Germanus of Constantinople. "None is delivered from evil but through thee; through thee alone do all receive the gifts and grace of God." (8) Hence does the Church salute and invoke her as Mother of grace: Maria Mater gradae. "it is no wonder," exclaims St. Bonaventure, "that the graces of all the saints overflow in Mary as the rivers flow into the sea, for the grace of graces was to be communicated to the whole Church by her, according to the Saying of St. Augustine: 'Thou art full of grace, O Mary, of the grace thou didst find in the Bosom of God, which thou wast found worthy to spread over the whole earth.' " (9)

Finally, St. Bernard, (10) St. Fulgentius, (11) St. Bonaventure, (12) and many other Fathers agree that it was necessary for the Mother of our Saviour to contain in herself all graces necessary and useful for her state, because every grace is given to men through her intercession.

(7). Nihil not Deus habere voluit quod per Mariae manus non transiret. Serm. de Nativ. B. Virg.

(8). Nullus est qui salvus fiat, O Sanctissima, nisi per te: nemo est qui liberetur a malis, nisi per te, o purissima; nemo est cui donum concedatur, nisi per te, a charissima. Specul. B.M.V. Lect. 3.

(9). Quid mirum est si omnis gratia in Mariam confluit, per quam tanta gratia ad omnes defluit? Ait enim, Augustinus. Gratia es plena, Maria, etc.

(10). In Serm. de Aquae ductu.

(11). In Serm. de laud. Mar.

(12). In Spec. lect. 3.

## SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY

221 -

O my God, how admirable is thy goodness towards the children of men! Under what obligation are we to serve Thee, to praise Thee and to love Thee in return for all the abundant and most excellent graces wherewith Thou hast enriched the glorious Virgin! We are as much compelled to gratitude as if

Thou hadst granted these graces to each one of us in particular, for Thou didst give them to Mary, not for herself alone, but for each one of us, that she might be made worthy to become the Mother of the Only-begotten Son, and to give Him to us as our saviour, our brother, our father, our head, our soul, our heart, our life and our all. May Heaven and earth and every creature therein, bless, praise and glorify thee for ever!

O Mother of perfect grace, thou wast the woman chosen to find the grace that all mankind had so unhappily lost. Through thee the God of grace and goodness restored to us what we had lost. To thee, after Jesus Thy Divine Son, must we have recourse in order to find the graces we need to serve Him and to assure our own salvation. Thy maternal Heart is the treasure and the treasurer of all these graces. In thy most loving and ardent Heart we cannot fail to find them. Hence dare we say to thee, with the beloved of thy Heart, St. Bernard: "O Mother of mercy, open the door of thy most tender Heart to the prayers and sighs of the children of Adam, thou who dost not despise the sinner however horrible his condition, if he but cry to thee and implore thy aid with a penitent and contrite heart."  
(13)

(13). Aperi itaque tu, Mater misericordiae, benignissimi Cordis tui januam suspensis precibus filiorum Adam ... Tu peccatorem, quantumlibet foetidum, non horres, non despicias, si ad te suspiraverit, tuamque interventum poenitenti corde flagitaverit. In Deprec. BY.

### CHAPTER III

#### HEART OF MARY, MIRACLE OF LOVE

SANCTIFYING grace is a great queen who never walks alone, but is always accompanied by the three theological virtues, the four cardinal virtues, the seven gifts and twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost and the eight evangelical beatitudes.

All these virtues and graces are found within the most august Heart of the Mother of God. As her Heart is the abode of sanctifying grace, it is likewise the palace of the virtues, gifts and beatitudes, these heavenly princesses who can never be separated from their queen. Her most holy Heart is an ocean of grace, encompassing all the grace merited for us by the Precious Blood of Our Saviour. As grace raises the holiness of her blessed Heart above all the sanctity of Heaven and earth, so all the virtues reigning in her Heart shine more brightly by far than in all other hearts of the Church Triumphant and Militant.

It would give me great pleasure to describe the marvellous perfections of each virtue, but lack of space obliges me to speak only of her most ardent love for God, her surpassing charity towards us, her most profound humility, and her perfect submission to the divine Will.

Let us begin with love, and say boldly that the admirable Heart of the Mother of Our Saviour is a living miracle of love. My intention is to show you the principle and origin of the love of God which consumes the Blessed Virgin's Heart, the qualities and perfections of that love, and its marvellous effects.

Would you know the origin and principle of this peerless love? Then raise the eyes of faith to the adorable Heart of the Father of all goodness, to the ineffable Heart of the Holy Ghost, who is the essential and uncreated love. There you shall behold the primal and eternal source of the greatest love that ever was or shall be in the heart of any creature save that of Christ.

The Eternal Father, having willed to communicate His divine Paternity to the Blessed Virgin by making her the Mother of His only begotten Son, made her participate in His own paternal love, that she might love

#### SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY

223-

His Incarnate Son with a love worthy of the Mother of God made Man. The Son of God, on His part, united His most holy Mother to Himself so intimately that, after the hypostatic union, there never was or can be a union so close as that which binds our Saviour to His Blessed Mother. Undoubtedly He communicated to her His love for His Heavenly Father, and thus prepared her to cooperate with Him in fulfilling that divine Father's will concerning the great work entrusted to Him, the work of the redemption of the world.

Then the Holy Ghost, having chosen this Virgin of virgins to be His Spouse, must have inflamed Her virginal Heart with a love worthy of so exalted a privilege; namely the love which the chosen Bride of God must experience for His divine spouse, who is Himself all love, and has transmuted, muted her with love, so that the Bride may become like unto the Bridegroom.

Such is the principle, such the source of the divine love burning in the Heart of the Queen of Heaven for the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Let us now mention the rare perfections that

enrich the Heart of Mary. Here are twelve principal characteristics that impart a marvellous lustre to the sublime love of Mary's Heart. Hers is a love most holy, most wise, most prudent, most strong, most ardent, most zealous, most constant, most vigilant, most patient, most faithful, most joyful and most pure.

As for the effects of the love that reigns in the Heart of the Queen of Heaven, it would be easier to count the stars of the firmament than to number them. Count, if you can, all the moments Our Lady spent on earth, and you will be counting as many operations of Mary's love for God, for she never ceased to love Him a single moment during the entire course of her life. Count all her thoughts, words and actions, the exercise of every faculty of her soul, and of all her interior and exterior senses, and you will likewise be counting as many effects of her love, for she obeyed most perfectly the command of her Divine Spouse. "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm." (1) Hence all her interior and external actions were stamped with the seal of divine love. Count all the acts of faith, hope, charity, justice, prudence, fortitude, temperance, humility, obedience, patience and all other moral virtues which she practiced during the years of her life, and you will again be counting as many manifestations of her love, because that love was the principle, the soul and the life of all her virtues. Count all the services she so lovingly rendered to her dearest Son, as His birth, during His childhood and throughout His entire life; all the steps she took in her journeys with

(1). Cant. 8, 6.

224 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Him and for Him; all the burdens, pains and anguish she bore for Him on account of her incredible love for Him; all the tears so abundantly shed for Him and you will still be counting further effects on her in comparable love.

But, to say much in few words, you should understand that perfect love possessed, filled and penetrated so completely the heart, soul, and all the faculties of the Virgin Mother that it constituted the soul of her soul, the life of her life, the mind of her mind and the heart of her heart. Thus love inspired and accomplished everything in her and by her. If she prayed, love prayed in and by Mary, if she adored God, love adored and praised Him in her and through her; if she spoke love spoke by her lips; if she was silent, her silence stemmed from love; if she worked, love motivated her action; if she rested, love caused her repose; if she ate or drank, it was in obedience to the words of the Holy Ghost, who is essential love: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (2) If she mortified herself, her decision was moved and guided by the same love, which kept her in a state of constant mortification.

Finally, the virginal Heart of Mary became so completely transfigured by love, that Suarez(3) boldly affirms that the effects and acts of its love were innumerable. Now if St Bernardine writes that the seven words spoken by the Blessed Virgin, as related in the holy Gospel, were seven flames of love, what shall we say of all the acts and effects of love which sprang from that glowing furnace, except that they were as many fires and flames of divine love, which would be capable of kindling all the hearts in the universe, if no obstacles were raised by the frigidity of sin? To this we must add the further words of St. Bernardine: "The Blessed Virgin's love for her Son was so great that she would have been willing to die for Him times without number." (4) Furthermore, it is quite certain that Our Lady's love was almost without limit or measure. Hence one must not hesitate to say she would have been ready to suffer as many deaths and as many infernal torments for her Son's sake as there are atoms in the air and grains of sand on the seashore. Now count all the acts of love mentioned by Suarez and by St. Bernardine, as well as all the deaths and infernal torments she would gladly have suffered, and you will count the effects of the love that consumes the marvellous Heart of the Mother of Fair Love.

Nor is this all. You must also count the numberless acts and the myriade.

(2). I Cor. 10, 31.

(3). In 4 Part. dispute. 18, sot 4, 5.

(4). The Saint does not give the reference for this quotation.

## **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY      225 -**

effects of love that were ever produced in Heaven and on earth by the hearts of all the Seraphim and other angelic Spirits, of all the holy Confessors, of all the holy Virgins and of all the Saints, and you will still be counting as many effects of the ineffable love that burns in the Heart of our Saviour's Mother. It is undoubtedly true that Quod est causa causae, est causa causati, that the effects proceeding from a cause must be attributed to the principle and origin of that cause. Now it is a doctrine of faith that Mary is the Mother of the God of love. We must conclude, therefore, that the love which burns in the hearts of all the angels, and saints, and all the acts and effects of love ever produced by them, having proceeded from the adorable Heart of that God of love, are to be reckoned among the effects of the admirable Heart of His holy Mother. "is is what St. Bernard has in mind when he tells us that God had decreed that we should receive everything through Mary. (5) And another holy Doctor adds: "Without Mary's petition and intercession, nothing comes down to us from Heaven." (6)

This is also signified by the words of Raymund Jourdain: "Whatever good and precious things the world possesses has come to it through Mary, in Mary, with Mary and from Mary." (7) And have we not heard St. Irenaeus explain that God accomplished the mystery of the Incarnation only with the consent of the glorious Virgin because He willed that she should be the principle of every good for mankind? (8)

O Jesus Christ, God of love, may all the hearts and tongues of angels and of men love and glorify thee infinitely and eternally for having established such a furnace of love in thy peerless Mother's divine Heart. O God of my heart, I offer thee all her love to atone for the icy coldness of my miserable heart. O Mother of love, send into our hearts wine living sparks from the divine fire that burns in thy virginal Heart, and be pleased to associate thy unworthy children with thee in all the love and glory thou dost forever render to the most adorable and amiable Trinity.

(5). Totum nos Deus habere voluit per Mariam. Serm. de Nativ. B. Virg.

(6). Sine negotiatione et sine petitione Mariae nihil descendit de caelo. The reference for the text is not given in the original work of St. John Eudes.

(7). In Prol. Contempl. B. Virg.

(8). Quod vult illam Deus omnium bonorum esse principium. Quoted by Salazar in Cap. 31 Prov. Versus 29, num. 179.

## CHAPTER IV

### HEART OF MARY, MIRROR OF CHARITY

AMONG the innumerable blessings we have received from the liberal hand of our Heavenly Father, there are three very important favors which seem to pass unnoticed by the majority of men. They are three special graces wherewith His immense goodness honored us when we were given the first two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ... and thy neighbor as thyself." (1)

The first of these favors consists in the fact that it pleased God to command us to love Him. What goodness! How great a favor! To understand this commandment accurately we would have to measure the infinite distance that separates God from man, the Creator from the creature, the All from the nothingness, the Saint of saints from the most miserable sinner, God Who is the Sovereign good and the source of all good from man who is a dark pit of evil and miseries. If we but knew who God is and what we are, we would certainly be amazed by His divine Majesty's command to love Him, for we should clearly see that God confers tremendous privileges by merely allowing us to think of Him, and that it would be a signal honor if He simply permitted us to adore Him as our Creator and Sovereign Lord. But this does not satisfy His infinite goodness towards us; He therefore commands us to love Him as our Father.

The second favor manifested is that God is not content with loving us as His children, but publishes an explicit commandment to all men on earth, whatever their condition, enjoining them to love each other as they love themselves, under penalty of incurring His eternal wrath and indignation. He forbids them, with the threat of hell fire, to harm their brethren in any way, whether by deed, word, intention or even thought, in their bodies, their Souls, their reputation or anything that belongs to them. O ineffable goodness! O admirable love!

The third favor, even greater than the others, is that God commands  
(1). Luke 10, 27.

### SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY

227 -

all men to love each other not only as they love themselves, but as they love Him. St. Augustine, St. Thomas and all theologians teach us that the love or charity with which we must love God and our neighbor is but one and the same virtue, namely, the third theological virtue. Hence our Saviour declares in the holy Gospel that the second commandment, obliging us to love our neighbor, is like unto the first, which enjoins us to love God. The reason is that, in order to love our neighbor as God wills, we must love him in God and for God. This means that we must love our fellow man with the love wherewith God loves him, not for our own interest and satisfaction, but for the love of God, and because God wants us to love him. Now to love God in this way is to love Him in our neighbor, and to love our neighbor with love similar to our love for God. Hence the second commandment is like unto the first.

Thus does the Blessed Virgin love us with a most great and ardent love. In the first place, she loves us with the same love she has for God, seeing and loving God in us. The third theological virtue in Mary's Heart is not of another nature than the one in the hearts of the rest of the faithful, which has as its sole object God and neighbor. It is true that this divine virtue is, in a sense, indescribably more ardent in the Blessed Virgin's Heart where its object is God instead of ourselves; nevertheless it is substantially the same charity (though different in degree), and the Mother of Fair Love truly

loves us with the same love wherewith she loves God Himself.

I maintain, in the second place, that the most glorious Virgin loves us with a supremely ardent love, because she loves us with the very same love with which she loves the God-Man, her Divine Son Jesus Christ, for she knows that He is our Head and we are His members, that we are therefore one with Him, as members are one with their head. She thus considers us her children and loves us, in a way, even as her own Son. We are her children for two reasons: first, because as Mother of our Head, she is mother of His members as well, and Second because our merciful Saviour, when He was suspended on the Cross, out of an excess of inconceivable goodness gave us to His Blessed Mother to be her children. We had nailed Him to the Cross by our sins, we had made Him suffer the most ignominious and cruel death; yet at the very hour when we were thus unworthily and cruelly treating Him, He conferred upon us the most signal favor, the gift of His most admirable Mother. Christ gave her to us to be not only our Queen and our Lady, but Our Mother as well, saying to each of us in the person of the beloved Disciple: "Behold thy Mother." (2) He gave us to her, not as Servants and (2). John 19, 27.

228 -

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

slaves (which in itself would be a great honor for us), but as her children: "Behold thy Son." Thus did Christ speak of each one of us, as though He were saying: "Mother, behold all my members: I give them to thee to be thy children. I put them in my place, that thou mayest consider them as being myself, and may love them with the same love as thou lovest me. Thou dost see, by my horrible torments and cruel death, how much I love them; do thou likewise love them as I do."

Mary's Heart is a burning furnace whose flames reach everywhere, generating more fire and warmth of love for us, than ever existed in the hearts of all fathers and mothers towards their children, of brothers for brothers, of friends for their friends, in one word, more ardour than ever burned in all the hearts of Heaven and of earth.

This love is like a dazzling Sun illuminating all things. It lightens the darkness of those who approach its glow; it reveals our faults and weaknesses, that we may detest them; it shows us our nothingness and our misery so that we may become humiliated in our own eyes. The glow of Mary's love reveals to us the many millice and snares of the enemies of our salvation, in order to save us from them; it shows us the illusion and deceit of the folly and conceits of the world, teaching us to despise them; and it manifests to us the marvels of the greatness and goodness of God, that we may Serve Him with fear and with love.

The charity of Mary is a most vigilant love, ever watching over us and our actions, in order to protect, assist and guide us in all things.

This most holy love, or rather this most holy Heart of the Mother of Uncreated Love, is Heaven's oracle for all who have recourse to it in their doubts and anxieties. It is an oracle full of incredible goodness, which resolves our difficulties, enlightens our doubts, and always imparts salutary and helpful answers, if we have recourse to it with humility and confidence.

Of this love one can truly say that it is a mighty tower and an impregnable bulwark for all the friends of God, who would choose to die rather than deliberately offend Him, especially for humble souls, for pure persons (as everyone loves most those who resemble him), and for those who have vowed in a particular manner to Serve and honor the beloved of God, namely, Mary most amiable, the Mother of Jesus; for she also loves most dearly those who love and imitate her.



Mary's love is swift to help them that invoke her. "Remember, O most pious Virgin," Says St. Bernard, "that never was it known from the beginning of the world that any of those who fled to thy protection and sought the help of thy prayers, was left unaided." "O most amiable

## **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY**

229 -

Mary," adds the same saint, "we cannot pronounce thy name without being comforted; no one can invoke thee without being heard or without feeling the effects of thy assistance." (3)

Mary's is a love that is mild and meek, and knows not how to be severe or terrifying. "She is full of sweetness," says St. Bernard, "her Heart and mouth are filled with milk and honey." (4) "Milk and honey are under thy tongue." (5) "Her heart is manna," writes St. Ambrose, "containing all the delights of Paradise." (6) "It is a promised land;" observes St. Augustine, "flowing with milk and honey." (7)

The love of the admirable Heart of the Mother of God is a paradise of delights for all hearts who, being truly detached from all earthly things, strive to serve, honor and love only Jesus and Mary, the King and Queen of Heaven.

Mary's is a most liberal love, which has given us an immense and infinite treasure encompassing all the riches of Divinity and whatever is rare, precious, desirable and lovable in Heaven and on earth, in time and eternity. Indeed Mary has given us the treasure of all treasures, because the love of her virginal Heart gave the Son of God, drawn from the adorable Bosom of His Heavenly Father, a resting place on earth; and through her love He entered the hallowed womb of Mary for our sake.

Mary's charity is a love most zealous for the salvation of souls. This zeal gave the Blessed Virgin, from the beginning of her life, a most ardent desire to see the Son of God come into the world to save mankind from universal perdition of sin. This zeal made her offer so many prayers, practice such mortifications and shed so many bitter tears to obtain the grace that the Eternal Father might send His Son into the world to deliver us from the bondage of hell. This zeal induced Mary to give her most willing consent to the mystery of the Incarnation. It caused her to give us the Saviour, and to preserve, nourish and educate Him for us with the greatest imaginable care and affection. It obliged her to offer Him on Calvary at the cost of the greatest suffering and anguish ever experienced.

The love of Mary is a most perfect love, than which none is more perfect or more excellent.

(3). In Deprecat. ad V. Mariam.

(4). Serm. 4 de Assumpt.

(5). Cant. 4, 11.

(6). Psal. 35.

(7). Serm. 100 de Temp.

230-

## **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

It is most constant and firm, for the Mother of all charity loves us with an invincible love: Amore invincibili, says St. Peter Damian. All the torrent of our ingratitude, infidelities, negligences and cowardice in her service, all our imperfections and innumerable offenses are not able to extinguish Mary's love, for it is stronger than death and hell. This love perseveres in its goodness and care until our last breath, and exerts all its power, wisdom and mercy to protect us from the malice and snares of the enemies of our salvation.

O Mother of Love, make us sharers in thy boundless charity. Obtain for us the grace of doing all things for the pure love and glory of God.

(8). Serm. 1 de Nativ. Virg.

## CHAPTER V

### HEART OF MARY, ABYSS OF HUMILITY

CONSIDER the words of the Holy Ghost: "Deep calleth on deep." (1) What do they mean? They mean that the Holy Ghost sets before us the image of a twofold or dual abyss.

The first is the humble heart immersed by profound humility in the realization of its own nothingness, an abyss that engulfs the humble man, preventing him from seeing in himself anything but nothingness and making him love the lowliness and abjection of such nothingness.

The second is the abyss of graces and celestial blessings that every, where surround and accompany the truly humble heart.

The first depth calls for the second: "Deep called on deep," because the prayer of the humble heart has such power with God, that it is always heard. Divine Goodness can refuse it nothing. It is the profundity that summons and attracts all the graces of Heaven; God showers them into the lowly soul with open hand and without reserve. Humility is the guardian of all other graces and virtues, and they are safe where it abides, according to the words of St. Basil: «Humility is the safe treasury of all virtues.» (2)

All the greatness of the Blessed Virgin was accomplished by the humility of her most holy Heart. From the first to the last moment of her life, her humility never ceased to invoke and draw upon her grace after grace, perfection after perfection, holiness upon holiness, until it brought her to the summit of the grace and holiness that next to that of Christ ever was or shall be greatest among men. As St. Bernard puts it: "It was just that she who considered herself the least of creatures, even though she was above all others, should have been honored as the worthiest and holiest of all." (3)

Would you observe the admirable effects of such prodigious humility in the Heart of the Queen of the humble? Consider Mary throughout

- (1). Ps. 41, 8
- (2). In Constitut. cap. 17.
- (3). In Serm. Super signum Magnum

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

the course of her life, and you will see that, just as the life of Jesus was a constant exercise of humility, so the life of His Blessed Mother constituted a perpetual practice of the same virtue. As humility is our Saviour's own spiritual virtue, which He constantly preached by His example and *earnestly recommended* with the words: "Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart"; (4) so can we say that humility is also the most beloved virtue of His dearest Mother. She urges us to practice it by her example, and does not cease to tell us with her Divine Son: "Learn of me, my dearest children, for I am meek and humble of heart." This is the constant message of her marvellous humility, which I shall now describe in its twelve principal manifestations.

The first manifestation was the complete self-annihilation with which she adored God, from the very beginning of her life, as her Creator and Sovereign Lord.

The second manifestation of the humility of the glorious Virgin's most holy Heart was the uneasiness she felt on hearing the salutation of the Angel Gabriel. Whence this perturbation? Was it

from beholding the Archangel? "No," says the Angelic Doctor, "for Our Lady was accustomed to visits from angels." (5) And the holy Gospel says that she was troubled not by the presence of the Angel, but by his words: "She was troubled at his saying" (6) because he greeted her as full of grace, as one having the Lord with her in a special manner, and as being blessed among all women. That salutation is what troubles her most humble Heart, which cannot listen to such exalted praises without trembling.

The third effect produced by the humility of Mary's admirable Heart was that, after hearing St. Gabriel proclaim that God had chosen her to be the Mother of His Divine Son, and consequently the sovereign Lady of the universe, she answered the Angel with the words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." St. Bonaventure exclaims: "How wonderfully deep is Mary's humility! An archangel salutes her; she is called full of grace; she is told the Holy Ghost will overshadow her; she becomes the Mother of God Himself; she is raised above all creatures; she is appointed sovereign Lady of Heaven and earth; and yet instead of becoming filled with pride, she humbles herself most deeply, saying, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord.'" (7)

- The fourth effect of the humility of the Blessed Virgin's most holy
- (4). Man. 11, 29.
  - (5). Summa theol. 111, Q. 3., a. 3, ad 3.
  - (6). Luke 1, 29.
  - (7). In Speculo B.V. Cap. 4.

## **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY**

233-

Heart was that, after she had conceived the Only-begotten Son of God in her blessed womb, she revealed to no one, not even to her spouse St. Joseph, the tremendous mystery which exalted her to the highest pinnacle. She would not have mentioned the sublime dignity, that raised her above the Seraphim and put the entire world under her feet, if the Holy Spirit had not revealed it to her cousin, St. Elizabeth. This stupendous silence, caused by the marvellous humility of our Saviour's Mother, excites the admiration of St. Thomas of Villanova and makes him exclaim: "O marvellous modesty, peerless humility! O admirable severity, prudence and constancy! What shall I say to thee, most sacred Virgin? Here thou art Mother of God, Lady of the universe, Queen of Heaven and earth. The greatest mystery, the most incomparable marvel, has been wrought in thee by the divine power, and thou dost tell no one. No human being knows the vital miracle, so jealously dost thou guard thy secret! Thou dost remain in profound silence, until, in the house of thy cousin Elizabeth, beholding that God Himself has revealed this miracle of miracles, then only dost thou breathe thy blessed silence, and raise to Heaven the sublime canticle of praise and adoration for the author of all these marvels: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.'" (8)

The fifth effect of Mary's humility was accomplished during her visit to her cousin St. Elizabeth, concerning St. John the Baptist.

Its sixth effect was manifested in her relationship with St. Joseph, whom she regarded and honored as her husband. "Behold a marvellous thing!" says St. Thomas of Villanova. "See the Queen of Virgins, the Mistress of the World, the very Mother of God, not disdaining to serve a poor carpenter, to prepare his meals and to obey him like a dutiful wife! But what exalts her humility above all admiration is that she prefers to endure an unspeakable humiliation rather than reveal to Joseph the admirable mystery wrought in her by God, and her newly received rank of Mother of the promised Messiah. O prodigy of humility! Never has its like been seen before and never shall it be seen again."

The seventh effect of the humility of the royal Heart of Mary was revealed at the birth of Her

Divine Son in a stable at Bethlehem. The sovereign Empress of the universe went to lowly Bethlehem to give birth to the King of men and angels, the Redeemer of all mankind. Yet she found no lodging there and being turned away from every house, was obliged to seek the lowly abode of animals. There she brought forth the only Son of God the Father, the King of Glory, the sovereign Lord of all (8). Luke 1, 46-St John Eudes does not give the reference for this quotation from the works of St. Thomas of Villanova.

234 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

things. And she sustained these humiliations without a complaint and with most perfect humility.

The eighth effect of the admirable humility of the Mother of God became apparent when she subjected herself to the Hebrew law of Purification.

The ninth effect of the humility of the blessed Heart of Our Saviour's Mother was the virtue she practiced during the forty days' penance of her Divine Son in the desert. Remember what we have said above; namely, that our Saviour's incomparable love for His Blessed Mother made Him desire her to resemble Him as closely as possible, and caused Him to engrave in her Heart a perfect image of all the states and mysteries of His most holy life.

The tenth effect of the humility of Mary's all-pure Heart became manifest at the wedding of Cana in Galilee, where she obtained from her beloved Son the miracle whereby He changed water into wine. But how did she induce Him to perform that miracle? Was it by exerting her authority as His Mother? By no means. Was it by pressing Him with repeated entreaties, to show her power over Him and the reality that she was indeed His Mother? No, for she did not even presume to entreat Him, but merely made plain to Him, with the greatest modesty and humility, the need for additional wine. Mary left it entirely to His divine will to act as He thought best.

The eleventh effect of the humility of the admirable Heart of the Mother of Jesus was that she suffered with her beloved Son all the contempt and insults He endured during His public ministry from His enemies, who offended and affronted Him in a thousand ways, seeking to bind Him as a madman, to stone Him like a blasphemer, and even to hurl Him from the top of a mountain. She likewise endured with her Son all the humiliations and ignominies of His Passion, when He was treated as a criminal, bound and throttled like a thief, torn with whips, crowned with thorns, reviled by the shocking preference of the mob for Barabbas, and nailed to a cross between two bandits. Yes, my Jesus, Thy most worthy Mother bore with Thee all this shame and humiliation! As Thy glory is now her glory, so were Thy ignominies her very own, which she bore with such humility that she never uttered a complaint to God or man. O prodigious humility! Most humble Mary, pray to thy dear Son that He may grant us the grace to learn from Himself and from thee how to suffer insults and humiliations patiently and with humility, and never to complain.

The twelfth effect of the humility of the Admirable Heart of Mary is recorded in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles where it is written

#### **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY**

235 -

that, after the Ascension of Christ into Heaven, St. Peter, St. John and the other disciples withdrew to the Cenacle of Jerusalem. There they remained until the coming of the Holy Ghost, united in prayer with the holy women and Mary, Mother of Jesus, whom St. Luke the Evangelist mentions last, not only after the holy Apostles, but even after the sinner from whom our Saviour had driven seven devils. How can it be that she who is the first in dignity; in merit and in sanctity should be put in the

last place? It is that her most profound humility compelled her scribe, St. Luke, to name her thus in the last place, according to the lowliness of her self-estimation, considering and treating herself as the least and most unworthy of creatures. What peerless humility! The Queen of Heaven and earth, the Mother of the King of kings, among whose ancestors fourteen kings are numbered, treats herself and wishes to be treated by others as though she were nothing at all.

Such, then, are twelve effects or manifestations of the humility of the incomparable Heart of Mary, Mother of God. But that is not all, for we must count, if we can, all the moments of her life, and we shall be counting as many acts and effects of her humility, for her entire life constituted, in fact, a constant exercise of that holy virtue.

O Queen of the humble, thou seest how remote we are from the practice of true and perfect humility. Obtain from thy beloved Son the pardon of all the sins we have committed against this great virtue; offer to Him thy very humble Heart in reparation and satisfaction for our misdeeds; and entreat Our Lord to grant us the graces we need to enable us to imitate carefully and faithfully the most holy humility of the amiable Heart of Jesus and Mary.

## CHAPTER VI

### HEART OF MARY, EMPIRE OF THE DIVINE WILL

AFTER the most amiable Heart of Jesus there never was nor will be, in Heaven or on earth, any heart where the adorable will of God reigns so perfectly and gloriously as in the admirable Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the first place, the glorious Virgin always esteemed and revered the Divine Will as her origin and principle, the source of her being and her life, to which she constantly referred her use of the gifts as to their first cause.

Secondly, she considered and honored the Divine Will as her last end and as the center of her existence, knowing full well that she existed in the world only to accomplish and do the Creator's Will in all things. To this end all her thoughts, words and actions were directed, and in this amiable center her pure Heart exclusively sought and found its sovereign contentment and complete rest.

Thirdly, Mary considered and respected the Divine Will as ruler and sovereign, whose every order was so dear and precious, that she would have preferred a thousand deaths to the slightest disobedience.

Fourthly, Our Lady considered and loved God's holy Will as her true Paradise, where she found sublime delights, because not only did she desire everything that God ordained, but she willed her acceptance in the manner most pleasing to Him. Hence, as God Himself derives infinite pleasure from the operation of His decrees, so did our heavenly Virgin receive the greatest joy and happiness from her faithful fulfilment of the Divine Will.

Fifthly, Mary considered God's holy Will not only in itself, but also manifested in the will of St. Joseph, her most worthy Spouse, in the edicts of the pagan emperor Augustus, in the whole Mosaic law, and in every disposition of divine Providence towards her Divine Son, herself and all other creatures. She loved the most holy Will of God in all these aspects, and subjected herself as lovingly as when she considered it directly in its essence.

The sixth illustration of the perfect reign of the Divine Will in Mary's

### SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY

237 -

Heart is shown by the fact that, although this incomparable Virgin owed obedience to none save God Himself, and while as Mother of God and Queen of Heaven and earth she held sovereign sway over all creatures, she nevertheless practiced very faithfully what the Holy Ghost was to teach later on through St. Peter: "Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake," (1) Mary was, in fact, always ready to yield not only to her superiors, but to her equals and even her inferiors, preferring the will of others to her own, whenever it was not contrary to the good pleasure of Almighty God.

What else shall I say? I may add that the most pure Virgin's love for the sweet Will of God was so intense, that it truly constituted the soul of her soul, the spirit of her spirit and the heart of her heart. This spirit and heart caused her to live a heavenly life, animated every power of her soul and all her interior and exterior senses, was the principle of all her actions, and inspired her to loving acceptance of all her afflictions.

I hear my Saviour tell us: "I came down from Heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." and "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me that I may perfect His work." (2) The Blessed Mother can indeed truly repeat after Him: "I am in the world only to do the will of my Creator and I find my supreme pleasure in its constant fulfilment."

We read in the works of St. Gertrude that one day she made the following request of her divine Spouse: "I ask, dear Lord, and I desire with all my heart that thy most praiseworthy Will be accomplished in me and in all thy creatures, in the manner most pleasing to thee." (3) If Saint Gertrude possessed such great love for the Will of her divine Spouse, what shall we say, what can we think of the Queen of all saints, whose love for the Will of Him who is her God, her Creator, her Saviour, her Brother, her Son, her Father and her Spouse, was greater than the love of all angels and men together?

We can certainly say that Mary's incomparable love of the Divine Will formed her and identified her with it. Hence God could well say to her first of all what He says of His Church through the Prophet Isaias: "Thou shalt be called my pleasure" (4) which is equivalent to saying: Thou art my Heart, my love, my Bride, my beloved in whom I am delighted and well pleased; because thy love for my Divine Will is so great that thou art identified with it.

(1). 1 Peter, 2, 13.

(2). John 6, 38; 4, 34

(3). Legat. div. piet. lib. 3, cap. 11.

(4). Isa. 62, 4.

238 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Finally, the adorable Will dwelt in the Blessed Virgin's holy Heart as in its own home, holding its keys as uncontested Master. God's Holy Will dwelt there as in its kingdom, enjoying complete and sovereign sway. Mary's blessed Heart was the triumphal car of the Divine Will bearing a triumph over all its enemies. It was the Heaven of the glory of God's Eternal Will, a paradise where everything was subject to its orders, nothing contrary to it, and all things were consecrated to its praise and worship.

Mary's obedience to God's adorable Will caused Mary to utter the divine *Fiat*, more admirable, in a way, than the *Fiat* whereby God created the universe. God's *Fiat* created the world, but Mary's *Fiat* was the occasion by which God became man and man, God. St Bernard says: "We were all created by God's eternal word, and behold we die; in thy brief answer, namely, *Fiat*, we find a new being and are called back to life." (5) "I dare affirm of the Blessed Virgin," writes St. Anselm, "what St. John has said of the eternal Word; namely, that as nothing was made without Him, so also nothing was made without her. The great God accomplishes more through the Blessed Virgin's *Fiat* than through His own. Why? Because God's *Fiat* was a *Fiat* of command, whereas the Blessed Virgin's *Fiat* was a *Fiat* of obedience." (6)

What greater praise could be pronounced concerning the obedience to be glorious Mother of our Saviour? How admirable! "Nothing is made save through Mary's hands," says St. Bernard, "and God Himself became man only after that admirable Virgin had said *Fiat*."

Let us harken also to St. Andrew of Jerusalem, who says: "God ordered light to be, and all things are made. The Blessed Virgin says: Be it done unto me according to Thy word, and the greatest of all things was accomplished. God's *Fiat* is a *Fiat* of command; the *Fiat* of the Mother of God is a *Fiat* of obedience. By God's command heaven and earth were made: by the Blessed Virgin's obedience, the admirable incarnation of the eternal Word followed." (7)

The final act of submission and obedience to the Divine Will that sprang from holy Mary's maternal Heart was her consent to that adorable Will concerning the Passion and death of her beloved Son. This consent she gave with such wonderful obedience, that if such had been

(5). Homil. 4 sup. Miss. est

(6). De Excel. Virg. cap. 11.

(7). Dixit Deus: Fiat lax et facta est lax, fiat firmamentum, ceteraque et facta sunt. Dixit Virgo: Fia mihi secundum verbum tuum, et factum est opus omnium maximum. Dei fiat secutum est caelum operaque reliqua, quae caeli ambitus complectitur. Obedientis Virginis fiat secuta est admiranda divini Verbi incarnatio. Serm. de Assumpt. B. V.

## **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY**

239 -

the Eternal Father's Will, she would have been as ready to crucify and sacrifice Christ with her own hands, even as Abraham prepared to sacrifice his only son Isaac, yet with incomparably greater love and obedience.

Thus the Divine Will ever reigned in the most Holy Heart of the Queen of Heaven, and thus will it ever be. May we not truly say, therefore, that adorable Will of the Almighty possesses her admirable Heart more mightily, more magnificently and more gloriously by far than all other hearts that ever were or shall be in Heaven and on earth? It possesses the authority and power over Mary's Heart, where it will reign forever, where it will eternally receive the veneration, homage and adoration of all the angels and saints.

Infinite and eternal glory, then, to that adorable Will for all the marvels it has ever wrought in the pure Heart of the Mother of God! Unending praise and thanksgiving be to her most admirable Heart for all the love and honor that its most perfect submission and obedience have ever tendered and shall forever render to the adorable Will of the Heavenly Father!



**CHAPTER V11****HEART OF MARY, TREASURE-HOUSE OF  
GRATUITOUS GRACES**

THE Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin is the sanctuary of gratuitous graces, by which are meant graces imparted by the Holy Ghost not so much for the sanctification of the recipient as for the instruction, comfort and benefit of other souls.

St. Paul enumerates nine such graces: the gift of speaking wisely; the gift of speaking with knowledge; the gift of faith; the power of healing the sick; the gift of miracles; the gift of prophecy; the gift of speaking in diverse tongues; the discernment of spirits; the gift of interpreting Scripture.(1)

What is the gift of wise speech, or the word of wisdom? The gift of wise speech is a grace of the Holy Ghost that enables us to expound with clarity the truths of faith, while the word of knowledge is a gift of the Holy Spirit which imparts facility in explaining truths that concern morals.

What is the gift of faith? It is, according to St. Chrysostom, the special confidence necessary to perform miracles, or, according to St. Ambrose, a grace of the Holy Ghost which provides strength to preach the Gospel boldly and fearlessly. Other theologians define it as the heavenly light which must enlighten in a special manner the minds of those who preach the Gospel.

What are the graces of healing and the gift of working miracles? These two graces can really be combined because the grace of healing the sick has the effect of restoring bodily health through miracles, while the gift of working miracles manifests the power of God through miraculous works.

What is the gift of prophecy? It is a grace of the Holy Ghost by which  
(1). Cor. 12, 8-10.

**SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY**

241 -

we know future events and secret things that cannot be known in a natural way. This gift likewise includes the grace of revelations.

What is the discerning of spirits? It is a light of the Holy Ghost, whereby are known the thoughts, desires, movements and interior affections proceeding from a good or evil principle.

What is the gift of speaking diverse tongues? It is the gift bestowed by the Holy Ghost on the Apostles at Pentecost, and includes the special facility in making heavenly truths understood by those to whom they are taught.

What is the gift of interpretation of Scripture? It is a grace of the Holy Spirit enlightening the intellect to understand the sense of Holy Writ, and animating the will to extend this understanding to others.

Did the Blessed Virgin possess all these graces? Yes, without doubt. Such is the opinion of St. Albert the Great, (2) Suarez, and many other great theologians who offer several substantiating proofs. First of all, since Our Lady was full of grace, according to the declaration of St. Gabriel, she must therefore have possessed all graces. Secondly, her incomprehensible dignity as Mother of God

must necessarily have been adorned with the highest and most perfect gifts of the Holy Ghost. Thirdly, being after her Divine Son, the universal dispenser of all graces in the Church, Mary must necessarily have possessed the totality of the graces that she was to obtain for human kind.

We may therefore say, first, that the Holy Ghost gave the Blessed Virgin a most penetrating and clear understanding of Sacred Scripture, together with a great facility in explaining its truths concerning faith and morals.

Secondly, Mary possessed in the highest *degree* the special confidence necessary to work miracles.

In the third place, Our lady possessed more perfectly than any Saint the gift of actually working miracles, because apart from the miracle of miracles wrought by her cooperation with the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost in the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation, we have every reason to believe that she worked many other wonders, though they have not been recorded.

In the fourth place, many proofs could be adduced to reveal that Our Lady enjoyed the gift of prophecy. Be it enough to mention the prophecy expressed in the Magnificat: "Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed," (3) for it includes all the honor and homage that

(2). Apud Vega. Theol. Mar. n. 1342.

(3). Luke, 1, 48

242 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

will ever be paid to Mary in Heaven and on earth, while endless ages run, and throughout eternity.

In the fifth instance, having received the gift of prophecy, the most Blessed Virgin likewise possessed the grace of revelations in a much more excellent degree than all the other Saints.(4) Throughout her life, says St. Andrew of Crete,(5) she was enlightened by countless divine revelations. How many mysteries did not the Holy Ghost reveal to her, even from the moment of her Immaculate Conception? How many wondrous secrets did she not hear from the adorable lips of her Beloved Son during the rich hidden years He spent at her side? How many lights did she not receive from her familiar conversations with the Angels? Finally, St. Ambrose (6) and many other holy Doctors have testified that St. John the Evangelist owed his intimate knowledge of the divinity of Christ and the revelations contained in the Apocalypse to his special relationship to Mary and his filial services to her.

In the sixth place, the holy Virgin possessed the gift of discerning spirits more perfectly than the greatest Saints, as this gift is contained in that of prophecy.

In the seventh place, she received on Pentecost with the Apostles, the gift of speaking in diverse tongues. St. Albert the Great, St. Antoninus and St. Athanasius assert that Mary received it with greater plenitude than the Apostles themselves, for the instruction and consolation of many of the faithful, who came from every part of the world to seek and to consult her as an oracle of the Holy Spirit.

In the eighth place, being endowed with the gift of wisdom and of faith, and the spirit of prophecy, Mary likewise possessed the grace of interpreting Scripture with much more perfect clarity than was ever granted to anyone else.

But what relation do all these graces bear to the most holy Heart of our heavenly Mother?

They are related to it as effects are to their cause, as streams to their source, as lines to their center, as the solar rays to the sun. For is it not true that the love and humility of the amiable Heart of Mary having drawn the Holy Ghost to take up His abode, likewise attracted the complete plenitude of all His gifts and graces? Hence do we justly term her virginal Heart the sanctuary of the graces of the divine Spirit. This being so, it is only fitting that Heaven and earth, men and angels, and every creature be employed in blessing, praising and glorifying the thrice Holy One, who has enriched the incomparable

(4). Cf. Suarez, In 3 part. disp. 19, Sect. 4.

(5). Serm. de Assumpt

(6). De Instit. Virginis, cap. 7.

## **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY**

243 -

Heart of Mary with so much grace, so much Sanctity and so many marvels.

I do not exhort you, dear reader, to imitate the graces just described, for these sublimities are admirable rather than imitable, but I adjure you to take cue not to fall into the sentiments of Luther, Calvin and other sectarians, who seek to snatch from the Church some of its greatest and most signal jewels, by attempting to deprive it of the grace of revelations (7) and the gift of miracles.

Throughout the history of the Church there have been such manifestations of the power of God. The Spirit of Light operated marvellously and powerfully in certain chosen and faithful Souls. The spirit of darkness, who is the ape of God, tries to counterfeit these works, in order to discount their value, making them seem to be like his own, full of falsehood and deceit. The world brings forth many more thorns than roses; fool's gold is far more abundant than true ore. In the time of Achab, King of Israel, the deceitful spirit spoke through more than four hundred. false prophets, while the Spirit of Truth spoke only through the prophet Micheas. It is indeed with strong reason that St. John the beloved disciple cries out to us: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, if they be of God." (80

There are in this confused world persons too credulous, believing too easily, and there are others to whom belief is too hard. These two extremities are dangerous, and the wise will avoid both of them. To accept every revelation or supposed miracle is the mark of a weak, imprudent spirit; to reject every revelation is the mark of a rash, unreasoning spirit. Tell me, do Sensible men destroy all currency because much of it is counterfeit? Satan had always had diviners and false prophets, from the earliest days, but God has also had His chosen mouthpieces, and He always will have them, in fulfillment of His Divine promise: "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." (9)

God has many ways to lead souls to Heaven, and as Master of Life, He leads as He wills, some souls by ordinary paths, others by extraordinary paths. The way of faith is the great highway built to guide men to eternal life; yet is not faith founded upon revelation? And is it not by revelation that we hold the mystery of our creation?

(7). St. John Eudes probably added these concluding paragraphs to justify his belief in the visions and revelations of Mary Des Vallées, a saintly woman of Coutances.

(8). 1 John 4, 1.

(9). Joel 2, 28.

it is true that the fundamental revelations of our faith are authorized and ratified by Holy Church; yet it is a mark of faith to treat with respect anything which suggests the shadow of Almighty God, so long as no error appear, and with prudence to refrain from attributing to the devil what may perchance come from God. That is why it is wise to withhold judgment in such matters. Those, who by reason of their office or by order of their superiors must investigate these manifestations, should never rely on their own knowledge or experience, but, seeking counsel and careful theological study, they should humbly seek the aid of the Holy Ghost and invoke the Mother of Truth and of the Eternal Light, so that thus they may fulfil the words of St. Paul: "Extinguish not the spirit. Despise not prophecies. But prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (10)

(10). 1 Thess. 5, 19-21.

**CHAPTER VIII****HEART OF MARY, INESTIMABLE TREASURY  
OF RICHES**

THE immense liberality of divine goodness has granted us possession of four great treasures here on earth.

The first is the most Holy Eucharist, containing all that is richest, most precious and most admirable in time and in eternity, in all the angels and all the Saints, in the Queen of saints and angels, in the sacred humanity of the Son of God and His divinity, in the divine Essence and in the three eternal Persons.

The second treasure is Sacred Scripture, which epitomizes all the truths, all the revelations, all the mysteries and every revealed secret of the Godhead, for which reason St. Augustine (1) and St. Gregory (2) call Sacred Scripture the Heart of God.

The third treasure is the relics of the saints, which the Church possesses, cherishes and honors as the dowry of her divine Spouse.

The fourth treasure is the admirable Heart of the glorious Virgin, whose riches are unfathomable.

In the first place, the Holy Heart of Mary is "the treasure of the love of the Eternal Father," says St. Methodius, (3) Bishop and Martyr, "because in her immaculate Heart the adorable Father placed His love," that is, His only and well-beloved Son, when He sent Him for the world's salvation into the virginal womb and maternal Heart of holy Mary. This beloved Son, the Heart and treasure of His most loving Father, was enclosed for nine months in the sacred bosom of the most pure Virgin, and He shall forever dwell in her maternal Heart; hence her virginal Heart must be honored as the precious treasure of the love of the Father of all goodness.

Secondly, the Queen of Heaven's most august Heart is the treasure of

- (1). In Ps. 21.
- (2). In 1 Reg. UP. 1.
- (3). In Orat. de Hypapante.

**THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

the only Son of God. In her marvellous Heart He hid and preserved all the mysteries and all the wondrous manifestations that took place in Him while He dwelt on earth, according to the divine text: "and his mother kept all these words in her heart." (4)

Jesus poured into the Heart of His Mother the plenitude of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in His own Heart. Beyond that He has enriched it with all the treasures of grace and mercy acquired for us by His Precious Blood and His saving death. Christ imparted to Mary the power of distributing these treasures "to whom she pleases, when she pleases and as she pleases," says St. Bernard. "In thy hands, O Mary," says the pious and learned Dionysius the Carthusian, "are all the treasures of the multitudinous mercies of God." (5)

The most august Heart of the Queen of Angels is not only the treasure of the Father's love, and

of the Son's goodness; it is also the treasure of the charity of the Holy Ghost. Into this treasure-chest the Holy Spirit poured immeasurable wealth of graces: all the graces of the holy patriarchs and prophets, of the holy apostles and martyrs, of the holy priests and Levites, of the holy confessors and virgins, all the graces granted to every saint, and all gratuitous graces. In the treasury of her heart the divine Spirit has enthroned all the theological, cardinal and moral virtues to an incomparably higher degree than they are to be found in the hearts of all the angels and saints. In Mary's Heart the adorable Spirit has concentrated the plenitude of His sevenfold gifts, His twelve fruits, and the eight evangelical beatitudes. We may therefore say with St. Andrew of Crete that her most admirable Heart is itself "the most holy treasury of all sanctity." (6)

Let us add with St. Epiphanius that her most holy Heart is "the admirable treasure of the Church." (7) It is the store-house of glory, felicity and jubilation for the Church Triumphant. St. Bernard exclaims: "By thee! O holy Virgin, Heaven was peopled, hell emptied, and the ruins of the heavenly Jerusalem were rebuilt."

Our Lady's Heart is likewise a treasury of graces and mercies for the Church Militant, for St. Germanus of Constantinople pronounced that 'no man is delivered or preserved from the world-wide snares of Satan save through Mary; and God grants His graces to no one except through her alone.'

(8)

(4). Luke, 2, 5 1.

(5). Opuscul. de Laud. vitae solitariae.

(6). Orat de Assumpt.

(7). Orat de Laud Deip. Serm. 94.

(8). 'Nemo liberatur a malis, nisi per te, O Sanctissima! Nemo est, cui donum concedatur, nisi per Te, O Purissima. De Zona B. Virg.

## **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY**

247 -

Our loving Mother's heart is a treasury of solace and comfort for the Church Suffering because, as has been shown, the pangs of Purgatory are constantly diminished, hour by hour, thanks to the marvellous charity of Mary's Heart.

Finally, no grace or favor ever comes to us from the lofty throne of Almighty God without passing through the merciful hands of Mary, Mother of Charity.

Let us join with St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, to salute our most lovable Mary with our whole heart, saying to her: "Hail, O holy Mother of God, thou art the most precious treasure of the entire universe."

O incomparable treasure! O admirable Heart! O ineffable goodness of the most adorable Trinity, to give us this marvellous maternal Heart and inestimable treasure, or rather, these most holy Hearts and very rich treasured. Actually we possess four Hearts and four treasures: the adorable Heart of the Eternal Father, which is His Son Jesus Christ, whom we possess in the Holy Eucharist; the loving Heart of Jesus Christ Himself in the Relics of the Passion; the Divine Heart of the Holy Ghost, in Sacred Scripture; and the most tender Heart of Mary, Mother of God. What respect for the Sacred Relics! What veneration for Holy Writ! What devotion and tender affection for our dearest Mother's most excellent Heart!

How rich are we not rendered by the possession of these four great treasures, especially the first and the last, which are the divine Heart of Jesus and the most holy Heart of Mary! We surely thus possess the means to pay off all our debts and satisfy all our obligations. And indeed we are

encumbered with three great debts, as well as three great obligations.

First of all, we are obliged to adore and glorify the Most Holy Trinity in all Its grandeurs and in all that It is, in Itself and in Its creatures. To meet this obligation, we shall offer to the three Divine Persons all the adoration, honor and glory that have been and ever shall be rendered to the Blessed Trinity by the most worthy Heart of Jesus and Mary.

Secondly, we are bound to love God with our whole heart, our whole soul, and with all our strength, as much for His own sake as because of His great love for us. Yet we have not even begun to love Him as we should. To pay this debt and to make up for our deficiency, let us offer to the Eternal Father the Divine Heart of His Only-Begotten Son, whose burning love for the Almighty Father is truly worthy of Him; and let us offer to Jesus the most holy Heart of His Blessed Mother, whose love immeasurably surpasses that of all the angels and saints together.

Thirdly, we are obliged to Satisfy Divine justice for our innumerable

248-

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

offenses, negligences and sins. To discharge this obligation, let us offer all the sorrow, anguish and sufferings endured by the all-perfect Heart of Jesus and Mary out of love for us, and let us offer ourselves to them that we also may endure, for their sake, whatever sufferings it may please them to make us bear.

Whenever we experience any spiritual or temporal necessity, let us beg the Eternal Father, with deep humility and greatest confidence, to grant our requests through the most loving Heart of His Divine Son. And let us implore the Son, through His Mother's tender Heart, to grant us the assistance we need in the manner most pleasing to Mother and Son; thus we shall certainly obtain our desire.

When we are sad and desolate, let us remember that we possess a treasury containing inestimable riches, the Blessed Virgin's most holy Heart, a Heart that holds more love and affection for us than the hearts of all the devoted fathers and mothers that ever were, are, or shall be, nay, than the united hearts of all the angels and saints. What a subject of joy and comfort this should be for us! If we but raised the wealth of love and tenderness stored for us in the admirable Heart of our good Mother, we would surely die of joy.

## CHAPTER IX

### HEART OF MARY, SANCTUARY, CENSER AND ALTAR OF DIVINE LOVE

THE hearts of all the angels and saints of Heaven constitute, according to the different degrees of love possessed by those same hearts, as many diverse sanctuaries of divine Love, where Almighty God is adored, glorified and loved forever. The divine Heart of our most amiable Saviour, however, is the Sanctuary of sanctuaries and the Love of loves. As from all eternity, ever shall it adore, glorify and love God in a manner infinitely worthy of divine grandeur and sublime goodness.

The most holy Heart of the peerless Mother of our Saviour is the second sanctuary of divine love, a sanctuary fashioned by the Holy Ghost Himself, Who is love essential and uncreated, a sanctuary never defiled by sin, but always adorned with the highest degree of every virtue. Mary's Heart always was, and shall forever remain, the glorious abode of the Saint of saints. In it there always existed and ever shall exist greater honor, glory and love for the Most Holy Trinity than in all material and spiritual sanctuaries that ever were, are or shall be in Heaven and on earth.

This adorable sanctuary comprises several features that we shall now have to consider.

The first is its perpetual sacrifice ceaselessly offered to God, a sacrifice of love and praise. Mary offered the sacrifice of love, for during her pilgrimage on earth, and still much more since her Assumption into Heaven, her virginal Heart constantly made a perpetual exercise and sacrifice of love towards God, a love never surpassed, except by the love of the deified Heart of Jesus.

She also offered the sacrifice of praise, for her Heart is a perpetual host of praise and adoration, of glorification, of thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity, which is more worthily praised, more perfectly adored and more highly glorified by Our Lady than by all human and angelic minds and hearts in heaven and on earth.

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Mary's is the Heart represented by the golden censer held in the hand of the Angel mentioned at the beginning of the eighth Chapter of the Apocalypse.<sup>(1)</sup> It is a golden censer, to show that Mary's immaculate Heart is unmixed love as typified by pure gold. The Angel in whose hand it is held is the Angel of the great counsel, namely, our Blessed Saviour Himself, to show that the holy Heart of Mary always belonged to God alone, and that it was ever possessed and guided by the Angel of the great counsel. If the heart of an earthly Sovereign is in the Lord's hand, to be ruled as He wills, how much more truly the Heart of the Queen of Heaven? The Angel of the great counsel fills the censer with fire from the altar, adding great quantities of incense, which are the prayers of the saints, to signify that the Son of God filled His holy Mother's Heart with the sacred fire He had come to bring upon earth, and that all the adoration, praise and prayers of her virginal Heart proceed from the adorable Heart of Jesus.

The prayers of the Saints are placed in Mary's Heart, represented by the golden censer, to make us understand that the Saints place their prayers, and all their praise and adoration rendered to God, in the admirable Heart of the incomparable Mother of their Saviour, that being united to her prayers, their own may become more acceptable and efficacious in the sight of the Divine Majesty.

So much concerning the nature of the sacrifice of love offered in the august sanctuary of



Mary's most pure Heart. The victims of love there offered are threefold:

First is her Divine Son, the adorable victim offered by the Blessed Virgin with all her heart and love unspeakable in the Temple of Jerusalem. and on Calvary. She still continually offers Him to God in Heaven, and in each of the Sacrifices being daily celebrated throughout the world. If all Christians possess the right to offer to the divine Majesty the same sacrifice that is offered by those who are honored with the sacerdotal character, how much more truly must not the Mother of the sovereign Priest enjoy that right and power? I do not claim that Mary is corporeally present at the sacrifices offered on earth, but she does assist at each Holy Mass in spirit, heart and affection.

John Gerson, the pious Chancellor of the Paris University, says: "If Mary did not receive the character of the sacerdotal office on the night of the Lord's Supper, nevertheless, both then as well as before and after, she was anointed with the interior grace of the faithful. She was not to (1). Apoc. 8, 3

### **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY      251 -**

consecrate, but to offer a pure, holy and spotless Host on the altar of her Heart." (2)

The second sacrificial victim is the Saviour's Mother herself. As our adorable Redeemer immolated Himself for the glory of His eternal Father and for the salvation of mankind, so too His most holy Mother, wishing to imitate Her Son as far as possible, likewise sacrificed herself for God's greater glory with a Heart burning with love for His divine Majesty. Thus Mary lived on earth in a state of perpetual sacrifice of her whole being.

The third victim comprises countless souls that have been sacrificed to God in the marvellous sanctuary of Mary's virginal Heart. To understand this, we should remember that if the Eternal Father gave us all things when He gave us His Beloved Son, (3) this gift applies still more truly to her to whom He gave the Divine Word to be her own Son. Hence the Queen of Heaven and Earth, knowing full well that all things in the universe belonged to her, and wishing to employ all of them for the greater glory of Him from whom she received them, offered and sacrificed as victims of His divine Majesty every creature in the world. She knew that sacrifice is the greatest honor that can be rendered to God, and that we therefore cannot make a holier use of anything that belongs to us than to offer, give and sacrifice it to the sovereign Lord of all things, provided it be done in accordance with His holy will.

These, then, are the three types of victims that were offered to God in the sanctuary of the immaculate Heart of the Mother of our Sovereign Priest. Mary will forever continue to offer these victims in Heaven, just as her Son Jesus Christ continues the perpetual offering of Himself and His possessions to the Almighty Father.

Let us, in turn, give ourselves unreservedly to the Son of God and His Blessed Mother, that we, and all that we have, may be joined in their sacrifices, and united to them in the ardent love of their offering.

The true identity of the High Priest who offers all these sacrifices in the sanctuary of Mary's virginal Heart is none other than her Heart itself, which is therefore the sanctuary of divine love and, in part, the victim of love offered therein, as well as the officiant who offers it with peerless love.

Another adornment of our admirable sanctuary is the altar of divine love, on which all the

foregoing sacrifices have been and will forever be  
(2). Tract. 9 super Magnif. alphab. 49; lit. B.  
(3). Rom. 8, 32.

252 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

offered. It is again the most loving Heart of the Mother of Fair love. Let us listen again to the saintly and illustrious doctor John Gerson, who wrote: "After the divine sacrifice offered by Our Lord Himself on the altar of the Cross, the one most pleasing to God and most useful to mankind, is the sacrifice offered to the divine Majesty by the most holy Virgin on the altar of her Heart, when she so often and with so great a love offered her beloved Son as a living Host. Here is the true altar of holocausts whereon the sacred fire of divine love was continually burning without interruption day or night. It is the golden altar seen by St. John before the throne of God in Heaven." (4)

Of this altar of the glorious Virgin's ardent Heart, united as it is with the divine Heart of her Son Jesus, do we meet at the beginning of Holy Mass, *Introibo ad altare Dei*. "I shall go up to the altar of God." These two Hearts being only one Heart, as we have often said, they are likewise but a single altar. On this altar the sacrifice we are about to offer has been offered time and again by both Mother and Son. Therefore does Holy Church put those words three times on the lips of the priest at the beginning of Mass, to admonish us that we should offer our sacrifice on that divine altar, and not merely on the material and visible altar, which is only a shadow of the former. Having therefore to offer our sacrifice on so holy and divine an altar, we must offer it in union with the love, charity, humility and holiness of the admirable Hearts of Jesus and Mary who are in a sense but one Heart and one altar. We also designate it as the Holy of Holies when, on ascending to the altar, we pray God to deliver us from our iniquities "*ut ad Sancta sanctorum puris mereamur mentibus introire*," that we may be worthy to enter with pure minds into the Holy of Holies."

Holy Church refers again to the Heart of Mary when we are made to say during the wonderful sacrifice: "We humbly beseech thee, Almighty God, command these to be carried by the hands of thy holy angel (the Angel of the great counsel) to thine altar on high, in the presence of thy divine majesty, that as many of us as shall, by partaking at this altar, receive the most sacred Body and Blood of thy Son, may be filled with all heavenly blessing and grace."

Notice that when the priest says: *Ex hac altaris participatione*, he kisses the material altar as being the figure of the true mystical and spiritual altar; namely, the Heart of Jesus and Mary. This reveals the intimate union our own heart should have with that most amiable Heart at all times and in all places, but more especially during the oblation of the divine Sacrifice.  
(4). Tract. 9 super Magnif. Partit. i.

## SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY

253 -

O admirable heart, O heart most loving, thou art the foremost sanctuary of Divine Love, the holiest earthly victim, the golden throne offering perpetual incense of prayer and sacrifice, the altar of sacrifice. Thou art the saint of saints and the queen of all those privileged to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

O reader, priest of God, think of the august sanctuary of Mary's Heart, and the holy love, purity and fervor with which you must offer the same sacrifice every day. In the name of God I counsel you to realize the words: *Introibo ad altare Dei*, remembering that you go in to the altar of God, which is the heart of Jesus and Mary. And when you mount the altar steps, give yourself yet again to Jesus and Mary, that you may be united to their immaculate purity and to a holiness higher

than that of the Seraphim.

Those of you, O readers, who are not priests, when you enter a church to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, or to say your prayers, hearken to the heavenly voice that strikes your ears: *Pavete ad sanctuarium meum.*" (5) Reverence my sanctuary." Tremble because you are sinners coming before your judge, and having humbled your heart, beg pardon and implore of Him the grace of perfect repentance.

O Mary, mother of Mercy, O mother of loving grace, hide us in thy blessed Heart, draw us to share in thy constant sacrifice, and immolate our hearts forever in thy sanctuary and in thy altar, to the eternal glory of Thy Beloved Son.

(5). Lev, 26, 12,

## CHAPTER X

### HEART OF MARY, CENTER OF THE CROSS AND CROWN OF MARTYRS, DOCTORS AND VIRGINS

WITH much reason we may call Mary's most Holy Heart the Center of the Cross through which Salvation came to us. 'The profundity of Mary's love did not prevent her from experiencing most poignant Sorrows. Albert the Great, (1) St. Bernardin, (2) and many other Saints affirm that Our Lady would have died of sorrow at the foot of the Cross, had not divine power imparted to her extraordinary strength as she shared the Passion of Her Beloved Son. Hence the Fathers of the Church consider her to have been in truth a martyr and more. Many doctors boldly proclaim that Mary suffered more than the combined sufferings of all martyrs. No one ever could or ever can understand the depths of the sorrow of her most loving heart.

O Mother of my Saviour, thy well-beloved Son has exalted thee with a crown more glorious and shining than the crowns of all the martyrs. Not only hast thou suffered more than they, therefore making thy sorrow more glorious, but also the holy Martyrs have revered and honored thee as their queen and their mother, through whose intercession they have obtained the grace to merit the palm and eternal crown of martyrdom. They lay their glorious crowns at thy feet, O Mary, for to thee, after God and thy Divine Son, they owe their triumph and everlasting bliss.

Among the countless martyrs, I shall cite three who hold special obligations to the heart of the Blessed Virgin. First is John Travers, an Irish theologian, imprisoned and burned at the stake by King Henry VIII of England. It is recorded that he prayed particularly to Our Lady for the grace of martyrdom, which she promised to him. When the tribunal of judges asked if he had written a book in defense of the Primacy of the Pope, he cried out, showing his hand: "Here are the three fingers with which I wrote the book, and I shall never retract." Although his

(1). Sup. missus est.

(2). Serm. 2 de No. Mariae, Art 2, Cap. 4.

### SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY 255 -

body was burned, those three fingers remained intact, nor was it possible to burn them.

Secondly I cite St. Andrew of Sio in Greece, sustained by Our Lady through most terrible and prolonged martyrdom at the hands of the Mohammedans in 1463. His mangled remains were found to have been miraculously restored in the grave, so that his body, when disinterred by the faithful, appeared whole and incorrupt, because of his constant invocation of Our Lady.

The third martyr, chosen because of the extent of his sufferings and his prayers while being dismembered, is St. James Intercis, a Persian who obtained his crown under the Emperor, Theodosius the Younger.

Now if you would derive benefit from these thoughts of Our Lady's heart considered as the Center of the Cross of Christ and as Queen of Martyrs, you must not doubt the great love of her heart for the countless souls who are crucified in this life. It will be most pleasing to her if you will commend to her special protection all afflicted persons everywhere, but particularly those held captive by the Mohammedans, and likewise those Christians who are destined to suffer the greatest of human tribulations, the persecution of Antichrist at the end of the world. Implore the Mother of Mercies that she may be the Comforter of the Afflicted and obtain from her Divine Son the grace that

all their sufferings may be turned to eternal and holy profit.

Offer to Mary all your own pains of mind and body, begging her to offer them to her Crucified Son, uniting your tiny crosses to the tremendous crosses, for the Glory of God.

In addition to the crown of martyrdom, the Blessed Virgin also is called by many theologians the teacher of the Apostles and Doctors, and is crowned with a diadem of learning and virtue beyond that of saintly doctors and confessors. Therefore you must invoke her specially on behalf of those souls suffering in the darkness of paganism, heresy and sin. Have recourse to the heart of Mary in all your doubts and worries, begging her to grant you the light to avoid the snares of error in this world.

Her third crown is that of Queen of Virgins, which she possesses far more excellently than any saintly exponent of the virtue of purity, far beyond any perfection that can be written or described. Beg Mary to imprint in your soul a great love for chastity and an inconceivable hatred for impurity.

## CHAPTER XI (I)

## HEART OF MARY, WORLD OF WONDERS

FROM the beginning of time the Three Divine Persons have cherished a most ardent love for the glorious Virgin, upon whom They have showered such inestimable favors, even to the communication of Their adorable perfections. (2)

In addition, think of the numberless churches which, in every century since the time of the Apostles, God has caused to be built all over the world in honor of the incomparable Mary, where her praises are chanted night and day. Among these churches there are more than sixty in Rome alone, sixty-six in the city of Naples, eighty thousand in Spain, and an uncountable number in France. At Avignon not only is the main altar of the Cathedral dedicated to the Mother of God, but every one of the many other altars in the edifice are likewise dedicated.

Consider the feasts of the universal Church, which include seven principal feasts of Our Lady, not to mention fifteen others celebrated in special localities or churches. Also, every Saturday of the year is dedicated by Holy Church to Our Lady.

Add to the great number of Orders, Congregations and Sodalities the processions and pilgrimages made wherever Christianity prevails in honor of the Blessed Virgin with the approving sanction of Holy Church. Together with these are the miracles *performed by God* through veneration of the Mother of God, and the blessings poured by Our Saviour upon those who honor and cherish pictures and images of His Beloved Mother.

Then consider the number of books that have been penned in praise of the Queen of Angels, in such quantities that one noted bibliographer counts more than five thousand, composed by persons of importance, Popes, cardinals, bishops, theologians, emperors, rulers, princes, lords, canons and religious. There is scarcely a nation which has not produced literature in praise of Mary, for among these writers are men of Ethiopia,

(1). This chapter is an abridgment of chapters 13 and 14 in the original work.

(2). St. Chrysostom calls Mary abyssus immensarum Dei perfectionum. In Hor.ani.

## SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY

257 -

Africa, Arabia, Dalmatia, Sardinia, Syria, Hungary, Scythia, and of the West and East Indies. Others are Irish, Scottish, Polish, Portuguese, Sicilians, English, Flemish, French, German, Greek, Spanish, Italian.

No less than forty-six Popes have written treatises concerning the Mother of God; fifty-seven Cardinals; thirty-four Patriarchs; two hundred and fifty-nine Bishops; twelve Emperors, six Kings and Queens, princes and lords, eighteen, not to count the many works of members of religious orders.

Imagine for yourselves the innumerable panegyrics and sermons which have been pronounced in every part of the world at all times by successive mighty Fathers in praise of the Mother of Our Saviour, together with the praises chanted forever by the blessed in Paradise.

Even thus has the majesty of God proclaimed His love for Mary. *Omnis gloria Filiae Regis ab intus*. All the glory and all the splendours of the peerless daughter of the Most-High spring from within, from her admirable Heart.

Mary's Heart is truly a world of wonders because it is the principle and source of everything great and admirable in the peerless Virgin. We have already listened to the Holy Ghost preaching the grandeur and marvels of His most worthy spouse, but let us open our ears of our heart to hear again the words of tradition throughout the centuries of history, inciting our zeal for devotion to the admirable Virgin Mary.(3)

In the First Century, there stand out the Twelve Apostles, and in the second, St. Irenaeus, St. Ignatius and St. Justin Martyr. From the Fathers of the Third Century I chose, writing in praise of Mary, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Bishop of Neocaesarea, and of the fourth, St. Athanasius, renowned Patriarch of Alexandria, together with St. Ephrem, Father of the Eastern Church, whose invocations to Mary constitute a most beautiful litany.

In the Fifth Century there is the great St. Augustine, and St. Eucher, Archbishop of Lyons. From the sixth I cite St. Fulgentius, who, while defending the Divinity of Christ so ardently against the Arians, had signal devotion to proclaiming the praises of the Mother of our Saviour.

In the Seventh Century, Pope St. Gregory extolled Our Lady as "the mountain towering above all creation in dignity," (4) while St. Ildefonsus, Archbishop of Toledo, vehemently cursed the Helvidians and other heretics who clued to deny the perpetual virginity of Mary.

(3). In this concluding chapter St. John Eudes summarizes the history of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholic Tradition. Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes*, V. 7. PP. 607 ff.

(4). *Expor.* in 1 Reg. lib. x, cap. 1, n.45.

258-

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

In the Eighth Century, St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople stands out particularly for his writings and sermons in praise of Our Lady, having special recourse to her most merciful heart.

From the writers of the Ninth Century I have most frequently quoted a religious of the Augustine Order who sought to conceal his name by calling himself by the extraordinarily humble title, "The Idiot." (5) Nevertheless God Who exalts the lowly saw that he became known by his true name, Raymund Jourdain. His writings reveal exceptionally profound devotion to the Mother of God.

I wish to mention a few other writers of subsequent centuries, particularly St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, whose love for the Glorious Virgin Mary, his Princess, shines particularly in his treatise on her excellence. (6) I quote from his panegyric, which should suffice to warm even the coldest hearts, the following words: "O woman admirably unique, and uniquely admirable~, grant me the grace that thy love may be constantly in my heart, and that thou wilt bear me forever within Thy Heart."

In the Twelfth Century the great St. Bernard, expounding the symbolism of the twelve stars in the crown of the woman envisioned in the Apocalypse, says that they represent the mysteries and virtues of her life, while the twelfth star signifies the "martyrdom of her Heart." (70

St. Bonaventure, Albert the Great, Thomas a Kempis, St. Thomas of Villanova, Arnould of Bonneval, all have written eloquently on the prerogatives and privileges of the incomparable Mary. The revelations and writings of St. Brigid, including the vision of the Admirable Mother of Our Saviour,(8) have been approved by Holy Church.

In conclusion, if we were to recount everything written by the Doctors of the Church, and all that God has caused to become known through His s:saints, concerning the privileges, excellence and

perfection of Our Lady, it would fill an almost countless number of large volumes.

Mother Most Admirable, what great and glorious things have been said, thought and written in praise of thee and of thy loving heart To me it seems incontestable that thy heart is the centre of all these wonders, having drawn down the munificence of the Most High by its humility, purity and love. That is why I regard, hail and honor the Virginal

(5). St. John Eudes follows the opinion of Salazar and other writers who assigned the works of "The Idiot" to the Ninth Century. But Theophilus Raymund, the editor of Jourdain's works, discovered that this learned writer was Abbot of Celles and lived about 1381.

(6). *Alloquia Caelestia*.

(7). *Serm. in Signum Magnum*.

(8). *Revel. lib. 1, Cap. 31*

## **SANCTITY OF THE HEART OF MARY      259 -**

Heart under so many titles and symbols. Infinite and everlasting praise be to God, the Sovereign of all hearts, for having filled thy admirable Heart with such miracles of wonder and grace!

O Queen of my heart, I have testified many times already, but I shall repeat thousands of times again, imploring all the inhabitants of heaven to repeat with me and on my behalf, that all sublime prerogatives are thine, and that if the least Of thy perfections were wanting, and it could be given thee by the complete destruction of myself, I should consent to it with all my heart.



261 -

## **PART NINE**

### **Practice of the Devotion to the Admirable Heart of Mary**

263 -

#### *Part Nine*

#### *PRACTICE OF THE DEVOTION TO THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY*

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **TWELVE REASONS FOR HONORING THE HEART OF MARY**

THE truths contained in the eight preceding parts oblige us to honor the Admirable Heart of the Mother of God, but there are additional reasons compelling us to do so, among which the twelve principal motives are these:

1. We ought to honor and love the things that God loves and honors, and through which He is loved and glorified. Now, after the most adorable Heart of Jesus, there is no heart in heaven or on earth which has so loved and honored God, or has rendered Him so much glory and love, as the most worthy Heart of Mary, the Mother of the Saviour.

2. Who could possibly describe the ardent flames of love in the incomparable Heart of the Mother of God toward her Beloved Son Jesus? Count, if you can, all her thoughts, all her words, all her actions, labors, anxieties and vigilance in feeding, clothing, protecting and rearing our divine Saviour, and you will count so many reasons obliging us to love and praise her most amiable Heart.

3. Count also all the thoughts, feelings and affections which filled her motherly Heart with regard to our salvation, and you will count so many obligations on our part to love and honor Mary.

4. Picture yourself the means employed by the Mother of mercy to cooperate with her Beloved Son our Saviour in the great work of the Redemption of the world, that is, her prayers, fasts, mortifications, tears, sufferings, and her most poignant sacrifice of her dear Son at the foot

264 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

of the cross, her Heart utterly consumed with love and charity, and you must realize that all these facts are just so many additional obligations on our part to revere and love her most worthy Heart.

5. The holy name of Mary has always been so highly honored in the Church, that, according to Surius, St. Gerard, Bishop of Pannonia, ordered the people of his diocese to prostrate themselves on the ground at the mention of her holy name. Blossius (1) reports that in his time it was the universal custom in the Church that, whenever the holy name of Mary was pronounced, everyone knelt, and all the faithful prayed, sighed and wept with most extraordinary devotion and fervor. This devotion is not dead, because the feast of the Holy Name of Mary is celebrated in a number of churches, especially in the Order of the Redemption of Captives, where the office of her holy name is recited on all Saturdays not assigned to an office of nine lessons. If the venerable name of Mary be worthy of such great veneration, what honor should we not render to her Admirable Heart?

6. Holy Church never ceases to sing daily, in addressing the only Son of Mary, "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck," (2) because we can never sufficiently praise and revere the consecrated womb in which she bore the Son of the eternal Father, nor the blessed breasts at which she nursed Him. What honor and praises should be given to her most worthy Heart?

7. According to the aspirations of St. Paul the hearts of the faithful become the abodes and dwellings of Jesus Christ, (3) and Christ Himself assures us that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit reside in the hearts of all who love God, (4) so who can doubt that the Most Blessed Trinity dwells perpetually in a most admirable and ineffable manner in the virginal Heart of her who is the Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son and the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Mary who alone loves God more than all other creatures combined? This being the case, with what devotion should we not honor her immaculate Heart?

8. If we are indebted to the holy Evangelists for having left us the written records of the life of our Redeemer and the mysteries of our Redemption, how much more do we owe to our most holy Mother for having preserved for us this precious treasure in her maternal Heart?

9. Is it not we miserable sinners who pierced this most innocent Heart of Mary, at the time of the Passion of the Saviour, with countless thou

(1). Sermon de Assumpt.

(2). Luke 11, 27.

(3). Ephes. 3, 17.

(4). John 14, 23.

#### **PRACTICE OF THE DEVOTION     265 -**

sands of shafts of sorrow by our innumerable sins? How greatly are we obliged, then, to render all the honor within our power in order to make some reparation for the most bitter anguish that we caused her loving Heart to suffer.

10. The Admirable Heart of Mary is the perfect image of the most divine Heart of Jesus. It is the pattern and model for our own hearts; and all our happiness, perfection and glory consists in striving to transform them into so many living images of the sacred Heart of Mary, just as her holy Heart is a consummate likeness of the adorable Heart of Jesus. Therefore it is most useful, good and beneficial to exhort Christians to practise devotion to the most august Heart of the Queen of Heaven. The sovereign devotion is to imitate what we honor, says St. Augustine; (5) so who can fail to perceive that, in encouraging the faithful in devotion to the most amiable Heart of the Mother of God, we are also exhorting them to imitate the most eminent virtues that adorn it, to engrave its likeness on their own hearts and to render themselves worthy children of such a Mother?

11. Not only is the Heart of the Mother of Our Saviour the prototype and model of our own hearts, but her Heart, after the adorable Heart of Jesus, is also Sovereign Ruler of all the hearts that have been created to love God, since she is Queen of the universe. For that reason all hearts should look upon and imitate the Heart of Mary as their model, but in addition they are obliged to render it all the homage that they owe to it as to their Sovereign.

12. Finally consider all the attributes and perfections of the incomparable Heart of the Mother of Fair Love, and you must realize that there are just that number of reasons compelling us to praise, honor and love this most praiseworthy and lovable Heart.

(5). De Civit. lib. 8, Cap. 17.

## CHAPTER 11

## TWELVE METHODS OF PRACTISING THIS DEVOTION

ALL that has been said in the foregoing pages demonstrates that the devotion to the most holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin is most firm and well-established, and that we are obliged by a countless number of reasons to render special honor and veneration to this Heart. Therefore we must now seek proper and suitable methods of doing so. Here are twelve principal recommendations:

1. If you wish to afford extreme happiness to the virginal Heart of Our Lady, so zealous for the salvation of your soul, bear and do what our Lord tells you in these words: "My son, give me thy heart;" (1) and "Be converted to me with all your heart (2) To that end make a firm and, true resolution to fulfil your solemn promise to God in baptism; to make a complete renunciation of Satan, of the works of Satan which are synonymous with sin, and of the pomps of Satan which are synonymous with the world; and to follow our Lord in His teaching, example and virtues. And in order to be converted to God not only in heart but with all your heart, cultivate an ardent desire (and ask Him for the grace to fulfil it), to transform all the passions of your heart and turn them toward His Divine Majesty, placing them at the service of His glory. For example, the passion of love should be directed towards loving only God and one's neighbor in God and for God; the passion of hate, towards hating only sin and all that leads to sin; the passion of fear, towards fearing nothing in the world except offending God; the passion of sadness, to the end of letting nothing sadden us except the sins we have committed against God; the passion of joy, towards seeking all our joy in the love and service of God, and in doing His most holy will everywhere and in all things; and so on with the other passions.

2. In order that our Saviour may perfectly possess each heart, listen to these holy words and practise them: *Hoc sentite in corde vestro, quod et*

(1). Prov. 23, 26.

(2). Joel 2, 12.

## PRACTICE OF THE DEVOTION

267 -

*in Corde Mariae*, "Keep in thy heart the feelings which are in the Heart of Mary, the Mother of Jesus." These principal feelings are:

- i. Horror and abomination for every kind of sin.
- ii. Hatred and scorn for this corrupt world and everything pertaining to it.
- iii. The lowest possible esteem, and even of scorn and hatred, toward self.
- iv. Profound esteem, respect and love for all the things of God and His Church.

v. Veneration and love for the Cross, that is, for privations, humiliations, mortifications and sufferings, which are one of the richest treasures that a Christian soul can possess in this world, according to the oracle from Heaven: "My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations," (3) so that you may say with St. Paul: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (4)

3. One of the most useful and important ways of honoring the most worthy Heart of the *Queen* of virtues is to strive to imitate and to implant in your heart a lively image of her holiness,

meekness and forbearance, humility, purity, devotion, wisdom and prudence, patience, obedience vigilance, faithfulness, love and all its other virtues.

4. Offer your heart frequently to the Queen of all hearts consecrated to Jesus, and implore her to take full and complete possession of your heart so that Mary May give it entirely to her Son, fill it with supernatural sentiments to adorn it with virtues, and mould it according to the Heart of the Divine Son and His Blessed Mother.

5. Assist the poor, widows, orphans and strangers, protect the helpless, console the afflicted, visit the sick and imprisoned, and perform other similar works of mercy. All these acts are most highly pleasing to the most merciful Heart of the Mother of Grace.

6. The greatest joy that we can afford the admirable Heart of Mary, all aflame with love for the souls which cost the Precious Blood of her Son, is to work zealously and devotedly for their salvation. If the hearts of the angels and saints in heaven rejoice for each conversion of a sinner on earth, the Queen of Angels and saints derives infinitely more joy from it than that of all the denizens of heaven combined because her heart possesses more love and charity.

7. Cultivate particular devotion to all the saints who enjoyed some special relationship with the most lovable Heart of the Mother of God, for example, those mentioned in Part Seven, Chapter Three.

(3). James 1, 2..

(4). Gal. 6, 14

268 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

8. Remember what has been said above: that Our Saviour has given us His own divine Heart, along with the most holy Heart of His Blessed Mother, to be the model and rule of our lives. Make a careful study of this divine rule, therefore, in order to follow and keep it faithfully.

9. Our Saviour has given us His divine Heart, together with the holy Heart of His Blessed Mother, not only to be our rule, but also to be our very Heart, so that as members of Jesus and children of Mary we may share but one heart with our adorable Head and our incomparable Mother. This privilege should help us to Perform all our actions with the Heart of Jesus and Mary, that is, in union with the holy intentions and dispositions that motivated Jesus and Mary in all their actions. To this end strive earnestly, at least at the beginning of your principal activities, to renounce yourself entirely and to give yourself to Jesus so that you may become united with His divine Heart, which is one and the same with the Heart of His Holy Mother; thus may you enter into its love, charity, humility and holiness, so that you may do all things in the holy dispositions which have always filled it.

10. Pay some special honor daily to the royal Heart of the sovereign Lady of the universe. This may be done through an act of devotion or a prayer offered for that intention, in imitation of Blessed Herman of the Order of St. Dominic, who each day used to recite an *Ave Maria* in greeting to the most amiable Heart of Mary.

Even though, following the example of this holy religious, you were to say only one *Ave Maria* each day in honour of the admirable Heart of the Mother of God, you would be doing something highly pleasing to her and most advantageous to your own soul, since the great Suarez, that wonder of learning and piety, said that he would rather lose all his knowledge than lose the merits of a single *Ave Maria*.

11. In all your affairs, necessities, perplexities and afflictions, have recourse to the most

benign Heart of Mary, regarding it as your refuge in every need, and as a refuge, fortress and safeguard which God has given you as a shelter in the midst of all the miseries engulfing man in this valley of tears, this place of exile and banishment. Yes, the most bountiful and gentle Heart of Mary is truly *solarium exilii nostri*, "The solace and comfort of our exile." Whoever has recourse to it with respect and confidence will feel the marvellous effects of its incomparable goodness. There glows in the maternal Heart of our most charitable Mother more love than in all the hearts of the fathers and mothers of all time past, present and yet to come.

Mary's Heart is constantly mindful of us and the little things that concern us. Her Heart is so filled with kindness, meekness, mercy and generosity

## **PRACTICE OF THE DEVOTION**

269 -

that never has anyone been known to invoke this Mother of Goodness in humility and confidence without receiving comfort in her presence.

It is a Heart full of wisdom and enlightenment which possesses a perfect understanding of all our needs and of all that is most fitting for us to have. It is a most generous Heart, strong and mighty to fight our enemies, to repulse and crush whatever oppresses us, to obtain from God whatever it asks of Him, and to shower us with all kinds of blessings.

Finally, it is the Heart of our great Queen, our most bountiful Sister and our most amiable Mother, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth and who holds in her hands for distribution to men all the treasures of her beloved Son, *cui vult, quando, vult et quomodo vult*, says St. Bernard; "to whomever she wills, whenever she wills and however she wills."

12. The twelfth means of honoring the admirable Heart of the Mother of Our Saviour is to celebrate its feast, or rather its feasts, with particularly marked devotion. I say "feasts" for there are several feasts of the most august Heart of our Heavenly Queen.

The first is celebrated in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and in several other places on February 8th, and in a number of other communities and churches on the first day of June. (5)

The second is the feast of the most ardent longing of the virginal Heart for the birth of our Saviour, which is called the feast of the Expectation, and is observed on December 18th.

The third is the feast of the Sorrows of the Pure Heart of the Mother of Jesus, which is celebrated on the Friday following Passion Sunday.

The fourth is the feast of the Resurrection of the Heart of Mary which was restored to life by the Resurrection of her Divine Son: "(Her) spirit (was) revived," (6) and overwhelmed with the greatest joy imaginable when this beloved Son visited her after His Resurrection. For that reason this feast is observed under the name of the Apparition of the Risen Jesus to His Most Holy Mother, on the first free day after the octave of Easter.

The fifth is the feast of the Joys of the Heart of Mary on July 8th.

There are in addition many others, for all feasts of the Blessed Virgin are really feasts of her Admirable Heart.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception, celebrated on December 8th,

(5). The Congregation of Jesus and Mary and the Order of Our Lady of Charity, founded by St. John Eudes, still solemnize the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary on February 8th. In the Universal Church the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is now celebrated on August 22nd.

(6). Gen. 45, 27.

270 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

is the feast of the Creation or formation of her most holy Heart, which was fashioned by the almighty hand of God and filled with grace and love from the very first of its creation.

The feast of the Nativity of Mary is the feast of the birth of her Heart, which on that day began to live a life more holy than any other life.

The feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple commemorates the solemn and public dedication of her Heart to eternal Love, which is God Himself.

The feast of her angelic Marriage (7) with St. Joseph is the feast of the divine betrothal of the two purest of Hearts, two virgin Hearts so closely united that they form but a single heart which loves God more than do all the hearts of the Seraphim.

The feast of the Annunciation commemorates the greatest miracle of the marvellous Heart of this admirable Mother, which on that day becomes an unfathomable depth of wonders, where greater and more prodigious things take place than have ever happened or ever will happen, no matter how great or worthy of admiration, in all centuries past, present and yet to come.

The feast of the Visitation is the feast of the *Magnificat* and of the inspired words that came forth on that day from her blessed Heart so filled with the Holy Spirit.

Christmas is the feast of her Divine and Virginal Childbirth, the feast of the delights of her Heart, which is utterly suffused and exalted with joy and love for her lovable Infant upon beholding Him born before her eyes.

The feast of the Purification is the feast of the first public and solemn sacrifice which her Heart made to Almighty God of His Son, her dearest Child. It is also the feast of the humility of her Heart, when she took her place in the temple among the ordinary mothers, and joined the ranks of the poor in offering what the poor were accustomed to offer.

The feast of the Assumption commemorates the triumphs of her Heart, the feast of its most perfect and intimate union with the Heart of the Most Blessed Trinity; the feast of the glorification and crowning of her Heart as Sovereign ruler of all hearts.

Finally, all these solemnities are the feasts of the most holy Heart of the Queen of every heart, because, as we said before, her Heart is the source and origin of whatever is great, holy and admirable in each of these feasts. And thus, the feast of the Holy Heart of the Mother of God, which is celebrated on February 8th, encompasses all the other feasts of

(7). This feast is celebrated in some religious orders; on January 23rd.

our holy Mother, for it is the feast of her Heart strictly speaking-the feast of this Heart which is the principle of all her holiness, all her holy virtues, all her holy mysteries, and all the glories and grandeurs that she will possess everlastingly in heaven: "All the glory of the King's daughter is within." (8)

After that, judge for yourself how many great and marvellous things are honored by this holy solemnity of the Admirable Heart of the Queen of the Angels, and with what devotion it ought to be celebrated.

To all the above recommendations add meditation on the virtues, excellences and wonders contained in the admirable Heart of the Mother of the Saviour, which is an excellent way to motivate yourself to love and honor it

(8). Ps. 44, 14

(9). Two series of meditations on the Holy Heart of Mary will be found in another volume of The Selected Writings of Saint John Eudes entitled, Meditations on Various Subjects, New York, 1947. P. 231

273 -

## **PART TEN**

### **The Cantic of the Admirable Heart of Mary**

#### **Exposition of the Magnificat, Treating Its Significance Verse by Verse**

275 -

#### *Part Ten*

#### *THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART*

#### *OF MARY*

#### **Exposition of the Magnificat, Treating Its Significance Verse by Verse**

#### **CHAPTER I**

#### **EXCELLENCE OF THIS SUBLIME CANTICLE**

SACRED Scripture includes a number of inspired canticles that were composed by saintly women, for example, the canticles of Mary, sister of Moses and Aaron, of Deborah, of Judith, of Anna, mother of the prophet Samuel, all of which give thanks to God for outstanding favors received from His divine bounty. But the holiest and worthiest of all canticles is the *Magnificat* of the Mother of God, which stands unsurpassed because of the dignity and holiness of its author, as well as because of the great and admirable mysteries it contains. This is to say nothing of the miracles that God has performed by means of this canticle. While there is no record of any miracles having been performed through other canticles, St. Thomas of Villanova, (1) the Archbishop of Valencia, points out that upon the recitation of this canticle the Holy Spirit wrought a number of wonders on behalf of St. John the Baptist, the holy precursor of the Son of God, as well as in the person of his parents. Experience also has shown on more than one occasion that the *Magnificat* is an excellent means of expelling evil spirits from the bodies of those who are possessed by the devil. Several other esteemed writers

(1). Concio. de Visit. B. Virg.

276 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

report various miracles which have taken place through the recitation of this canticle. (2)

There is no evidence that the Blessed Virgin Mary ever sang or spoke it publicly more than once during her lifetime, but we cannot doubt that she recited it numberless times in private. Some writers report that Our Lady has often appeared in churches, during Vespers, surrounded by throngs of angels, and that she has been heard to sing her marvellous canticle with the angels and the priests so melodiously and enchantingly that no words can express the perfection of her participation.

Remember, too, whenever you sing or recite this virginal canticle, to surrender yourself to the Holy Spirit so that you become united to the devotion and all the holy dispositions with which it was sung or spoken by the Blessed Virgin Mary and by countless numbers of zealous saints.

(2). Cf. St. Anselm, in lib. Miracul.



## CHAPTER 11

## THE TRUE CANTICLE OF MARY'S HEART

I CALL the *Magnificat* the true Canticle of the most holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary for several reasons.

First of all, it originated in her immaculate Heart and its melody vibrated her heart-strings before it found voice on her lips.

Secondly, the words were sung only through the impetus and inspiration flowing from her Heart-from her corporeal, spiritual and divine Heart. 'The corporeal Heart of Mary, being filled with acute and extraordinary joy, impelled her most holy mouth to sing this *Magnificat* with extraordinary fervor and jubilation; her spiritual Heart, being wholly delighted and enraptured in God, brought forth from her hallowed lips them ecstatic words: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." (1) But Her divine Heart, that is to say, the divine Child who was hidden in her blessed womb and dwelling in her Heart, the soul of her soul, the spirit of her spirit and the Heart of her Heart, is the primary author of this canticle. It is this divine Heart which inspired the mind of the holy Mother with the thoughts and truths contained in the canticle. It is the Heart of Jesus who pronounces through her, its prophetic utterance of praise.

Thirdly, the *Magnificat* is the canticle of the Heart of the Mother of uncreated love, that is, the canticle of the Holy Spirit, Who is the spirit and the Heart of the Eternal Father and the Divine Son. The Holy Ghost is also the Heart and the Spirit of the Virgin Mother, pervading and possessing her so completely that her very presence and voice filled with the same spirit St. Zachary, St. Elizabeth and her unborn child, St. John the Baptist.

Finally, it is the canticle of the Heart and the love of Our Lady, because it is the divine love inflaming her utterly that inspired her to pronounce the words of this marvellous canticle-words which, according to St. Bernardine, are like so many flames of love darting from the ardent

(1). Luke 1, 47.

278-

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

furnace of divine love burning in the immaculate Heart of this incomparable Virgin.

O canticle of love, O virginal canticle of the Heart of the Mother of love, having thine origin in the Heart itself of the God of love, Who is Jesus, and in the Heart of the personal and incarnate love which is the Holy Spirit, it is fitting only for the most blessed lips of the Mother of love to sing and pronounce thy message! The very Seraphim deem themselves unworthy to do so. How is it, then, that miserable sinners like us dare to repeat thy divine words and to pronounce with our worldly mouths the ineffable mysteries thou dost contain? Oh, with what respect and veneration should this most holy canticle be recited and sung! Oh, what should be the purity of the tongue and the holiness of the lips that intone it! Oh, what fire and flames of love should it kindle in the hearts of the ecclesiastics and religious who repeat and sing it so often! One should indeed be all heart and love in order to sing and recite this canticle of love.

O Mother of pure and tender love, deign to make us partakers of the holiness, fervor and love with which thou didst sing this admirable canticle here on earth, and as thou wilt sing it everlastingly in heaven with all the angels and the saints. Obtain for us from thy Divine Son the grace to be numbered among those who will sing the *Magnificat* eternally with thee, that we may give immortal thanks to the most adorable Trinity for all the wonders wrought in thee and through thee, and for the countless graces bestowed on all mankind through thy blessed intercession.

### CHAPTER III

#### "MY SOUL DOTH MAGNIFY THE LORD"

THE first verse contains only four latin words, *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*, but they are words imbued with great mysteries. Let us weigh them carefully and devoutly; let us consider them attentively, in a spirit of humility, piety and respect, in order that we may be inspired, like the Blessed Virgin, to magnify God for the great and marvelous things that He wrought in her and through her, on her behalf and for us as well.

Here is the first word: *Magnificat*. What does this word mean? What does it mean to magnify God? Is it possible to magnify one whose grandeur and magnificence are immense, infinite and incomprehensible? Not at all; such a thing is impossible-impossible for God Himself, Who cannot make Himself greater than He already is. We cannot magnify God, that is, make Him greater in Himself, since His divine perfections are infinite and therefore cannot be increased in themselves, but we can magnify Him in ourselves. "Every holy soul," says St. Augustine, "can conceive the eternal Word within himself by means of faith. He can engender God in other souls by preaching the divine Word, but he can magnify His creator by loving Him so truly that he too may say: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.'" (1) "To magnify the Lord," continues St. Augustine, "is to adore, praise and exalt His immense grandeur, His supreme majesty, His infinite excellence and perfections."

We can magnify God in several ways: first of all, by our thoughts, having a most exalted idea of God and the highest esteem for Him as well as for all things of God; secondly, by our devotion, loving God with all our hearts and above all things; thirdly, by our words, always speaking with the most profound respect of God and all things pertaining to Him, and by adoring and praising His infinite power, His incomprehensible wisdom, His immense goodness and His other perfections; fourthly, by our actions, always performing them solely for the glory of God; fifthly, by practising what the Holy Spirit teaches us in these

(1). Sermon de Assumpt.

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

words: "Humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God, for great is the power of God alone, and he is honoured by the humble." (2) In the sixth place, we can magnify God by willingly bearing the crosses that He sends us for love of Him; for there is nothing that honors Him more than suffering, since our Saviour found no means to glorify His Father more excellent than the torments and death of the Cross. Last of all, we can magnify God by preferring and exalting Him above all things through our thoughts, affections, words, actions, humiliations and mortifications.

But alas! How often do we do just the contrary! Instead of exalting God, we lower Him; instead of preferring Him to all things, we prefer the creatures to the Creator; instead of preferring His Holy will, His interests, His glory and His happiness to our own will, interest, honor and satisfaction, we do just the opposite, putting Barabbas before Jesus.

Such is not thy behaviour, O holy Virgin! Thou didst always magnify God most highly and perfectly, from the first moment of thy life until the last. Thou didst always magnify Him most excellently by all thy thoughts, affections, words and actions, by the most profound humility, by the multitude of thy sufferings, by practising all virtue in a sovereign degree and by making saintly use of all the powers of thy soul and of all thine interior and exterior senses. In a word, thou alone hast

glorified God more worthily and magnified Him more highly than have all other creatures combined.

We come now to the second word of our canticle, which is *anima*. "My soul doth magnify the Lord." Notice that the Blessed Virgin Mary does not say "I magnify," but "My soul doth magnify the Lord," in order to show that she magnifies Him from the utmost depths of her Heart and with her whole inner strength. Thus does she magnify Him not only with her lips and tongue, her hands and feet, but she also employs all the faculties of her soul—her understanding, memory, will and all the powers of the superior and inferior part of her soul, exhausting full inward and outward strength in order to praise, glorify and magnify her God. She does not magnify Him exclusively in her own name, nor to discharge her infinite obligations because of the inconceivable favors that she has received from His divine bounty; she magnified God in the name of all creatures and for the graces that He has bestowed upon all men, since He became man in order to render men God-like and save the whole human race, if men will but cooperate with the designs of His inconceivable love for them.  
(2). *Ecclus.* 3, 20-21

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

281 -

Here is the third word: *mea*, "my soul." What is this soul which the Blessed Virgin calls her soul?

My first reply to this question is that I know a great author (3) who maintains that this soul of the Blessed Virgin is her Son Jesus Christ, the soul of her soul.

Secondly, I answer that these words, *anima mea*, refer first to the individual and natural soul which animates the body of the immaculate Virgin, and second, to the soul of the divine Infant Whom she is carrying in her womb, Who is so closely united with her own soul that their two souls, in a certain sense, form but a single soul. In the third place, these words, *anima mea*, "my soul," indicate and include all souls created in the image and likeness of God who have ever been and ever will be in the whole world. St. Paul assures us that the Eternal Father has given us all things in giving us His Divine Son, (4) so there can be no doubt that, in giving Christ to His divine Mother, He thus gave her all things and therefore all souls belong to her. Mary is not unaware of this, and she also knows full well her sacred obligation to make use of everything that God has given her, for His honor and glory. Consequently, when Mary pronounces these words, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," considering all the souls of the past, present and future as souls who belong to her, she includes them all in order to unite them with the soul of her Son and her own soul, and in order to avail herself of every soul for praising, exalting and magnifying Him who descended from heaven and took flesh in her own virginal bosom so that He might accomplish the great work of their redemption.

We come now to the last word of the first verse: *Dominum*, "My soul doth magnify the *Lord*."

Who is this Lord whom the Blessed Virgin magnifies? It is He who is the Lord of lords, the sovereign and universal Lord of heaven and earth. This Lord is the Eternal Father; this Lord is the Son; this Lord is the Holy Spirit—three divine Persons who are but one God and one Lord, having but one single essence, power, wisdom, goodness and majesty. The most pure Virgin praises and magnifies the eternal Father for having associated her with His divine paternity by making her the mother of the very Son whose Father He is. She magnifies the Son of God for having deigned to choose her to be His Mother and Himself to be her true Son. She magnifies the Holy Spirit for having willed to accomplish in her the greatest of His works; that is, the adorable mystery

(3). Vigerius, in *suo Decachordo*, chord. 7.--Cardinal mark Vigerius, a Franciscan, died at Rome in 1516.

(4). *Rom.* 8, 32.

of the Incarnation. She magnifies the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for the infinite graces which They have granted to her and intend to bestow on all mankind.

Let us learn from this canticle that one of the principal duties required by God, and one of our greatest obligations towards His divine Majesty, is gratitude for His blessings, for which we must render thanks to Him with all our hearts and with most special devotion. Let us be eager, therefore, to imitate the glorious Virgin in her sublime thanksgiving, and to say frequently with her: "My Soul doth magnify the Lord," in order to thank the Most Blessed Trinity, not only for all the graces that we have received, but also for all the blessings that Providence has ever bestowed on all creatures. And in saying the words *anima mea*, let us remember that the Eternal Father, in giving us His Only-begotten Son, has given us all things, consequently the holy souls of Jesus and His divine Mother, together with all other souls in general, belong to us. For that reason we can and should profit by these souls for the glory of Him who has given them to us, through an ardent desire to praise and glorify God with our whole heart, our whole soul and all our strength. In these words we should include all the hearts and souls in the world, which are ours and which we wish to unite into one great heart and one single soul, to be employed to praise our Creator and Saviour.

## CHAPTER IV

### -MY SPIRIT HATH REJOICED IN GOD MY SAVIOUR"

THESE divine words, uttered by the inspired lips of the Mother of our Saviour, reveal to us the ineffable and incomprehensible joy that enraptured her heart, her spirit and her soul, together with all its faculties, not only at the moment of the Incarnation of the Son of God within her, but during the time that she bore Him in her blessed womb; indeed, even throughout the remainder of her life, according to Albert the Great and other Doctors. It was such an excessive joy, especially at the moment of the Incarnation, that, just as her holy soul was separated from her body during the last moment of her life by the strength of her love for God and her superabundant joy upon beholding herself preparing to Join her Son in Heaven, so also, if her life had not been miraculously preserved, she would have died of joy upon realizing the inexpressible bounty of God on her behalf and that of all mankind. History recounts numerous instances of persons who, hearing news of even temporal benefit, have died of joy, so it is most credible that the Blessed Virgin Mary would have died of joy if she had not been sustained by virtue of the divine Child in her virgin womb, because hers was the greatest cause for joy that ever existed or ever shall exist.

Mary rejoiced in God, in Deo; that is, because God is infinitely powerful, wise, good, just and merciful; because He so admirably displays His power, goodness and all His other divine attributes in the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption of the world.

Mary rejoiced in God her Saviour, in Salutari, because He had come into the world to Save and redeem her first and foremost, preserving her from original sin and overwhelming her with His graces and favors in such an abundance that He made her His mediatrix and cooperator in the salvation of all mankind.

Her Heart was overcome with joy because God had regarded her favorably, that is, had loved and approved of the humility of His handmaid, in which He found a most singular happiness and pleasure.

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

"Herein," Says St. Augustine, "lies the cause of the joy of Mary—that He beheld the humility of His handmaid. It was as if she were saying, 'I rejoice because of the grace that God has granted to me, for it is from Him that I have received the reason for this joy; and I rejoice in Him because I love His gifts for love of Him.'" (1)

Mary rejoiced for the great things that God's omnipotent goodness had wrought in her, the greatest wonders that had ever come to pass in all the preceding *centuries*, the greatest that will ever take place in all the ages to come, as we shall see further on in the explanation of the fourth verse.

Mary rejoiced not only for the favors that she had received from God, but also for the graces and mercy that He had showered upon all men who were disposed to receive His priceless gifts.

Mary's heart rejoiced not only in the goodness of God toward those who place no obstacle in its way, but also in the manifestations of His justice toward the proud, who scorn His generosity.

In addition, the rejoicing of the Blessed Virgin sprang from another very special cause most worthy of her incomparable bounty. St. Antoninus cites this reason, (2) and I repeat it here so that it

may encourage us to love and serve Mary whose love for us is so very great. Here it is. In explaining the words *Exsultavit spiritus meus*, the Saint says that we must interpret them as we do those spoken by our Saviour on the cross: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit (3)" that is, Father, I commend to Thee all who will be united with my spirit through faith and charity. "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." (4) In like manner, the Mother of the Saviour being wholly delighted and ecstatically enraptured in God when she pronounces these words, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour . . ." sees in spirit the almost countless multitude of those who will have special love and devotion for her, and be numbered among the predestined, from which she derives an inconceivable joy.

That being the case, who is it that will not be inspired to love this allgood and all lovable Mother, who experiences such deep love for those who love her that she regards and loves them as her own spirit, soul and heart? Let us listen to what Lanspergius the Carthusian says to each one of us, that we may be made to realize that truth:

(1).Sup. Magnificat.

(2).Part, 4, tit. 15, cap. 2. § 29.

(3). Luke 25, 46.

(4), 1 Cor. 6, 17

#### **THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART 285 -**

"I exhort you, my dear son, to love our most blessed Lady and divine Mistress. If you wish to safeguard yourself against an infinite number of dangers and temptations, of which there are so many in this life, if you wish to find comfort and never to be overcome by sorrow in your adversities, if, in short, you wish to be inseparably united with our Saviour, then cultivate special veneration and love for His most pure, amiable, meek, faithful, gracious and powerful Mother. If you truly love Mary and try conscientiously to imitate her, you will find that she in turn will be a most sweet and tender Mother to you, and that she is so filled with kindness and mercy that she despises no one and never ignores those who invoke her aid, because her greatest desire is to dispense to all sinners the treasures of the graces which her Divine Son has placed at her disposal. Whoever loves this immaculate Virgin is chaste; whoever honors her is devout; whoever imitates her is holy. No one loves her without feeling the effects Of reciprocal love. Not one of those who love her can perish; not one of those who try to imitate her can fail to attain eternal salvation. How many wretched sinners has she taken to her merciful bosom when they were in despair and abandoned to all sorts of vices, with one foot in hell, if we may use the expression; yet they were not rejected by Mary when they had recourse to her goodness. Rather were they snatched by her from the jaws of the infernal monster, being reconciled with her Divine Son and replaced on the path to paradise by the power of her intercession? It is a grace, a privilege and a power specially conferred upon Mary by her omnipotent Son, that she is able to obtain penance for those who love her, grace for those who are devoted to her, and the glory of heaven for those who strive to imitate her." (5)

Here is another joy of the Queen of Heaven which is indicated in these words: "My soul hath rejoiced . . ." a joy which surpasses all the others. Several holy Fathers and important Doctors write that this Virgin Mother, being ecstatically elevated to God at the moment of the Incarnation of her Son within her, was filled with the same inconceivable joys which are possessed by all the blessed in heaven, and that she was rapt to the third heaven, where she had the happiness of seeing God clearly face to face. In proof of this, these holy writers advance the indisputable maxim that all the privileges with which the Son of God has honored His other saints were also bestowed by Him upon His divine Mother. Now St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Basil, St. Anselm, St. Thomas and a number of others do not hesitate to assert that St. Paul, while he was still on earth, saw the essence of God when

(5). Lanspergius, Epist. 23.

he was transported to the third heaven. Who can doubt, then, that the Mother of Our Saviour, who always lived in the most perfect *innocence* and who alone loved God more than all the other saints combined, enjoyed this same favor, not only on one Occasion but on several, particularly at the happy moment of the conception of her Son? This is the opinion of St. Bernard, Albert the Great, St. Antoninus and many others. "O blessed Mary," exclaims the holy Abbot Rupert, "it was then that a deluge of joy, a furnace of love and a torrent of heavenly delights burst upon thee, wholly absorbed and inebriated thee, and made thee experience what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and no human heart has ever understood." (6)

Let us learn from this that the children of the world are victims of very pernicious error, being gravely mistaken in imagining that there is no joy or happiness on earth, that there is only sadness, bitterness and affliction for those who serve God. O insupportable delusion! O hateful lie which can proceed only from him who is the father of all errors and falsehoods! Do we not hear the voice of Eternal Truth crying out: "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil . . . but glory, and honor, and peace to every one that worketh good," (7) and that the heart of a sinful person is like a sea that is always troubled, agitated and disturbed: "The wicked are like the raging sea"; (8) that the fear of God changes the hearts of those who love Him into a paradise of joy, gladness, peace, happiness and "The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart, and shall give joy, and gladness, and length of days"; (9) and that true servants of God possess a felicity that is greater, more genuine and more steadfast, even in the midst of the most overwhelming tribulations, than all the pleasures of those who espouse the cause of Satan? Do you not hear St. Paul assuring us that he is filled with consolation and imbued with joy in the midst of all his tribulations? (10)

Do you desire to learn these truths from experience? "O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet." (11) But if you wish to acquire this experience, you will have to renounce the false pleasures and misleading delights of the world.

O holy Virgin, implant in our hearts a share in the scorn, aversion and

(6). In Cant. 1.

(7). Rom. 2, 9-10.

(8). Isa. 57, 20.

(9). Ecclus. 1, 12.

(10). 2 Cor. 7, 4

(11). Ps. 33, 9

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART 287 -

detachment which thy virginal Heart always felt toward the false pleasures of earth. Obtain for us from thy divine Son the grace to seek all our happiness, joy and delight in loving and glorifying Him; in serving and honoring thee with our whole heart and soul and with all our strength.

## CHAPTER V

### "HE HATH REGARDED THE HUMILITY OF HIS HANDMAID"

IN ORDER to understand this verse appropriately, we must consider it in relation to the preceding verse from which it springs: "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

This verse contains two principal truths, the first of which is expressed in these words: "He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid." What is this humility of which the Blessed Virgin speaks here? The holy Doctors are divided in their opinions about it. Some of them say that among all the virtues, humility is the only one which never perceives or becomes aware of itself, for he who believes himself to be humble is really proud. Therefore, when the Blessed Virgin says that God has regarded her humility, she is speaking not of the virtue of humility but of her lowliness and abjection.

Other authorities maintain that humility in a soul consists, not in being ignorant of the graces that God has bestowed upon it and the virtues that He has granted, but in returning His gifts and keeping for oneself only nothingness and sin; and that the Holy Spirit, speaking through the mouth of the Blessed Virgin, wishes to teach us that among all the virtues He beheld in her, He loved her humility and approved of it most of all, because the Blessed Virgin had humbled herself beneath all things, and this humility persuaded His divine Majesty to elevate her above all creatures by making her the Mother of the Creator. "O true humility," exclaims St. Augustine, "which gave birth to God for the sake of men, and granted life to mortals! The humility of Mary is the heavenly ladder on which God descended to earth. For what is the meaning of respexit, if not approbavit, 'He hath approved?' There are many who appear humble in the eyes of men, but their humility is not beheld by God. For if they were truly humble, they would not find pleasure in the praises

### THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

289 -

of men, and their spirits would not rejoice in the eulogies of this world, but in God." (1)

"There are two kinds of humility," says St. Bernard. "The first is the daughter of truth; it is cold and without warmth. The second is the daughter of charity, and it inflames us. The first consists of knowledge and the second of love. Through the first we realize that we are nothing, and we learn this humility from ourselves and from our own wretchedness and weakness. Through the second we trample underfoot the glory of the world; and this humility we learn from Him Who annihilated Himself and fled when they sought Him out to offer Him the glory of royalty; but when they hunted Him down to crucify and plunge Him into the depths of opprobrium and ignominy instead of fleeing He voluntarily offered Himself." (2)

The Blessed Virgin possessed in a sovereign degree these two kinds of humility, especially the second; and St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Albert the Great, (3) St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas and several other writers all maintain that the words which the Holy Spirit uttered through the mouth of the most humble Virgin, *Respexit humilitatem*, mean true humility.

If you ask why God regarded the humility of the most glorious Virgin rather than her shining purity or other virtues, seeing that she possessed them all in the highest degree, Albert the Great will reply, together with St. Augustine, that God preferred to look down upon her humility because it was more pleasing to Him than her purity. "Virginity is highly praiseworthy," says St. Bernard,



"but humility is necessary. The former is counselled; the latter is commanded. You can be saved without virginity, but there is not salvation without humility. Without humility, I dare say that the virginity of Mary would not have been at all pleasing to God. If Mary had not been humble, the Holy Spirit would not have descended upon her; and if He had not descended upon her, she would not have become the Mother of God. She pleased God with her virginity but she conceived the Son of God through her humility. Hence it must be inferred that it was her humility which rendered her virginity pleasing to His divine Majesty." (4)

O holy humility, thou hast given us a God-Man and a Mother of God, and consequently thou art the source of all the graces, favors, blessings, privileges and treasures that we possess on earth and hope to possess one

(1). Serm. 2 de Assumpt.

(2). Serm. 42 Super Cant.

(3). Serm. 2 de Nat. Dom.

(4). Homil. I super missus est.

290 -

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

day in heaven. Thou art the destroyer of all evil and the source of all good. Oh, how we should esteem, love and desire this holy virtue! With what fervor we ought to implore it of God! Oh, with what ardor should we seek and embrace all the means necessary to acquire it! Whoever has no humility has nothing; and whoever does possess it has all the other virtues. Hence it seems, to quote the Holy Spirit speaking through the mouth of Holy Church, that the Eternal Father sent His Only-begotten Son into the world to become incarnate and to be crucified only that He might teach us humility through His example. It is what Holy Mother Church proclaims in this prayer on Palm Sunday: "Almighty and eternal God, who didst cause our Saviour to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross that all mankind may imitate the example of his humility, mercifully grant that treasuring the lessons of his patience we may deserve to have fellowship in his resurrection." "What the devil has destroyed through pride," says one of the holy Fathers, "the Saviour has reestablished through humility." (5)

O Jesus, King of the humble, grant us the grace, we beseech Thee, to learn well the divine Lesson which Thou hast taught by these holy words: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (6)

O Mary, Queen of the humble, it is thy privilege to crush the head of the serpent, which is pride and arrogance. Crush it completely, then, in our hearts, and make us partakers of thy holy humility, that we may sing with thee for all eternity, *Respect humilitatem ancillae suae*, rendering thanks to the Most Blessed Trinity for having been so well pleased with thy humility that It deemed thee worthy, because of it, to become the Mother of the Saviour of the world, and to cooperate with Him in the salvation of all mankind.

(5). Caesarius Arelat. Homil. 18.

(6). Matt. 11, 29.

## CHAPTER VI

### **"HENCEFORTH ALL GENERATIONS SHALL CALL ME BLESSED"**

This brings us to the second part of this verse, namely: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." We need not be astonished if the most holy Virgin says something here about herself which is highly favorable, and refers to her own glory and praise, for it is the Holy Spirit Who speaks through her lips. Here is one of the greatest, most celebrated and most important prophecies that was ever made or ever will be made, announcing to mankind the infinity of admirable things that God will accomplish everywhere on earth in every age and everlastingly in heaven on behalf of the Mother of the Redeemer, in order to make her known, loved, served and honored throughout the world.

This great prophecy, informing us that all generations are to acknowledge and acclaim the Mother of the Blessed Saviour, applies to the whole universe, from the highest heaven to the lowest depths of hell. For not only has the Most Blessed Trinity sent the Archangel Gabriel, one of the first princes of Its empire, as ambassador, to announce to Mary that she was full of grace, and that the Lord was with her in order to accomplish in her the greatest wonder of all time, and that she is blessed forever among all women; this same Trinity also exalts Mary above all the angels on the highest throne of glory.

The eternal Father honors her as the most blessed of all women, making her eternally the Mother of the Only-begotten Son Whose Father He is, and granting her a power which supersedes all the powers of heaven and earth.

The Son of God proclaims her blessed among all the nations who hear His holy Gospel, which teaches the fulness of the grandeurs that He has bestowed upon Mary in choosing her to be His Mother.

The Holy Spirit renders her supremely blessed and glorious in choosing her as His most worthy Spouse and endowing her with His holiness in such a high degree that she is Queen of all the saints.

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

At the hierarchies of angels acknowledge Mary to be blessed, because in contemplating her on the day of her triumph and glorious Assumption, they find the glorious Virgin so filled with wonders that they can speak of them only with admiration and transports of delight. *Quæ est ista?* they ask, *Quæ est ista?* Who is she? Who is she? And after the adoration that they continually tender to God in heaven, their foremost activity is to proclaim incessant praises of their Sovereign Empress.

Do we not hear the voice of holy Church Militant which perpetually sings all over the earth: "Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary which bore the Son of the eternal Father, and blessed are the breasts which nourished Him?"

Have we not already heard of the merciful Virgin once declaring to St. Brigid that there is no pain in purgatory which is not eased through her mediation? And do we not hear the voice of Holy Mother Church asking God to deliver the poor souls from that prison of divine justice through the intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin: *Beata Maria semper Virgine intercedente*? It must convince us that the souls of the Church Suffering are not only relieved in their agony but also

delivered from it through her mediation.

Is it not also true that the souls who were in Limbo from the beginning of the world until the death of the Son of God profited by the intercession of this incomparable Virgin, since it was she who gave them the Redeemer to free them from captivity?

Let us descend still lower to the utmost depths of hell. If it is true, as St. Thomas, the Angelic Doctor, says, that the miserable damned are punished *citra condignum*—that is to say, they do not suffer the full torments merited by their sins—it is certain that this is a concession of divine Mercy. Now it is also true that for every effect of grace or mercy that proceeds from the adorable bosom of Divine Bounty our Mother of Mercy prays, and her prayers are effective. Therefore all the souls in hell ought to recognize and revere her as the most benign and sweet Mother of mercy. But because they do not do so, let us compensate for their neglect, praying all the inhabitants of heaven to do likewise.

What shall we say of the wretched demons? Is it not true that, in spite of the rage they directed against this most bountiful Virgin because of the souls that she frequently snatches from their claws, they are nevertheless constrained to acknowledge her inconceivable charity whenever they are forced to abandon their prey by virtue of her intercession? And that upon the pronouncement of the holy name of Mary, they are compelled to leave the bodies in their possession and flee to their infernal dungeon?

#### **THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART 293 -**

Thus it is that all the generations of heaven, of angels, of saints, of the Church Triumphant, Militant and Suffering, and even of hell itself, fulfil this prophecy of the glorious Virgin: "All generations shall call me blessed."

Finally, there is no country in the world, no nation under the sun, either great or small, rich or poor, no religious or priest, no man or woman, not under the obligation to confess and proclaim that the Mother of the Saviour is the most blessed, powerful, generous, compliant, admirable and amiable of all creatures; for she seems to belong to the world and to think only about doing good to all who love and invoke her, and to make them partakers of her own happiness and felicity.

"O many times blessed!" exclaims the holy Doctor John Gerson. "Blessed first of all because thou hast believed. Blessed, secondly, because thou art full of grace. Blessed thirdly because thou art blessed. Blessed fourthly because the Almighty hath wrought great things in thee. Blessed in the fifth place because thou dost possess the joys of motherhood together with the glory of virginity. Blessed, last of all, because thou art incomparable, having been and always to be without equal." (1)

Let us listen now to St. Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople, addressing Mary most admirable. "Who does not admire thee, who does not love thee, O most bountiful Virgin? Thou art our firm hope, our sure protection, our unshakable refuge, our most vigilant guardian, our perpetual safeguard, our most powerful help, our strongest defense, our unconquerable tower, the treasure of our joy, the garden of our delight, our impregnable fortress, our inaccessible bulwark, the port of those who are in danger of shipwreck, the security of sinners, the asylum of the abandoned, the reconciliation of criminals, the salvation of the lost, the blessing of the accursed, the general and public purveyor of every kind of blessing. In short, who could ever comprehend the effects of thy mercy? O heaven! O Queen of heaven! Blessed be thou amongst all generations! There is no place in the world where thy praises are not sung; and there is no race or tribe from which God does not receive some tribute and service through thy mediation." (2)

O holy Virgin, my heart is overcome with joy to see thee proclaimed blessed by all generations, past, present and yet to come, and I implore the Most Blessed Trinity with all my heart to allow this divine prophecy to be fulfilled even more and more throughout the universe. Oh, would that every breath of mine, every pulsation of my heart and veins, every use of the faculties of my soul, and all my interior and exterior senses,

(1). Super Magnificat, Tract. 4, notula 1.

(2). Sermon. 2 de Dormit. B.V.

294 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

were as so many voices continually singing, in company with all the angels and saints, with the whole Church and all creatures: "Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary which bore the Son of the eternal Father, and blessed are the breasts which nourished Him." O blessed Mary, Mother of God, ever Virgin, temple of the Lord, repository of the Holy Spirit, who alone without rival hast been found most pleasing to Our Lord Jesus Christ, pray for thy people, intervene for the clergy, intercede especially for all devout women, and grant the help of thine incomparable goodness to all who honor thee.

**CHAPTER V11****"HE THAT IS MIGHTY HATH DONE GREAT THINGS  
UNTO ME: AND HOLY IS HIS NAME"**

IN THE preceding verse the Blessed Virgin prophesied that all generations shall call her blessed; in this verse she reveals the reasons for this honor, ~namely the great things that God has done to her.

What are these great things? Let us listen to St. Augustine. "It is a great thing," he says, "for a virgin to be a mother without the cooperation of man. It is a great thing for her to have borne in her womb the Word of God the Father, to have clothed Him with her own flesh. It is a great thing for her who characterizes herself as a handmaid to become the Mother of her Creator." (1)

"It is a great thing," says St. Antoninus,(2) "to have created heaven and earth out of nothing. It is a great thing to have brought manna down from heaven in order to nourish the Chosen People in the desert for forty years. It is a great thing to have given the Israelites possession of the promised land after having exterminated all the kings and people who inhabited it. All the miracles that our Saviour performed in Judea, giving sight to the blind, driving out devils from the bodies of those who were possessed, curing the sick, restoring the dead to life, are great and marvelous things. But the mystery of the Incarnation, which the infinite power of God wrought in the Blessed Virgin, incomparably surpasses all these other things. It is what prompts her to say, 'He that is mighty hath done great things!'"

"Here are the great things," says St. Thomas of Villanova,(3) "that God wrought in the most holy Virgin. He elevated her to such a high degree of grandeur that all the eyes of men and angels cannot scan that eminence. He transformed this granddaughter of Adam into the Mother of her own Creator, the Lady of the world, the Queen of heaven and the Empress of all creatures. A new prodigy appeared in the world, to the

(1). In Magnif.

(2). Summa theol. Part. 4, titul. 15, Cap. 22.

(3). Concio 2 in Annunt. B.Y.

**THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

great wonderment of heaven and earth: a God-Man, a Man-God; God become man, and man united with God. Prodigy of prodigies, miracle of miracles, after which there remains nothing on earth worthy to be admired!"

"It is quite true that all the wonders witnessed on earth are as nothing compared with this incomprehensible event. We admire the miracle that God performed when He allowed His people to pass dry-shod across the Red Sea. That is a trifle. Here is something far greater: it is the immense ocean of the Divinity confined within the body of a young and mortal virgin. We admire the bush that burned without being consumed. That is a little thing; here is a virgin who brings forth a Child while preserved, serving her virginity intact. We admire the prophet Moses lying in a tiny cradle of rushes. That is insignificant; let us rather admire the King of Heaven lying in a manger. We admire a column of fire and a pillar of cloud which guided the people of God in the desert. That is nothing; instead let us admire the essential fire of Divinity enclosed in a tiny cloud in order to guide and govern the whole world. We admire the manna sent from heaven. That is a mere nothing; let us admire the Word of the Almighty Father Who descends from heaven into the bosom of the Virgin Mother. We admire the sun halted in its course by the command of Josue, or retreating at the prayer

of Ezechias. That is unimportant; let us admire the God who voluntarily annihilates Himself. We admire the prophet Elias restoring a dead child to life. That is a small thing; let us admire the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with His Father, restoring Himself to life after having died on the Cross. We admire the same prophet Elias ascending into heaven. That is nothing wonderful; let us admire the Man who ascends to the throne of the Divinity and becomes God."

It is what St. Cyprian (4) extols when he exclaims, "O Lord, how admirable is Thy name! Truly Thou art a God Who dost perform wonders. I no longer admire the marvelous construction of the world, nor the stability of the earth, nor the order and arrangement of the days, nor the course and brilliance of the sun; but I admire a God made man in the womb of a virgin; I admire the Almighty brought down into a cradle; I admire the Word of God united personally with the mortal and perishable body of a man." (5)

Finally, God wrought such great things to this chosen virgin that He could not have accomplished greater marvels. He could easily make a

(4). Sermon de Nativitate Christi.

(5). Sermon de Nativitate Christi.

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART 297-

world larger than the one He did make, a sky more vast, a sun more brilliant; but He cannot make, says St. Bonaventure, a mother greater and nobler than the Mother of God. For if He could make a greater mother, He would have to give her a more excellent son. Now is it possible to find a son more worthy than the Son of God, whose Mother is the Blessed Virgin?

What more shall I say? I quote a great prelate distinguished for learning and piety, Rutilius Benzonius, Bishop of Loretto, who is not afraid to assert that God elevated this incomparable Virgin to such heights and granted her such extraordinary privileges that it may be said that she gave, so to speak, greater things to His Divine Majesty, in a certain sense, than the gifts granted to her. Everything that Mary received is finite and limited, confined within the bounds of created things, but the Queen of Heaven, gave birth to the Son of God, the Creator and Sovereign Lord, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. From God she received the privilege of being His creature, of being pleasing to Him, of being full of grace, of being blessed among all women. But she made it possible for God to be our Emmanuel, that is to say, God with us; to be the Redeemer of men through the precious blood that He received from her; to possess all power in heaven and on earth as a man; to be the universal Judge of the whole world as a man; to be seated at the right hand of the Father as a man; to be the head of the whole Church as a man; to be the leader of the angels as a man; to forgive sins as a man.

If our Saviour gave His Apostles the power to perform miracles greater than those that He Himself performed, according to the testimony of the Gospel, (6) we need not be astonished that He granted to His most holy Mother the power to give Him gifts even greater than those she received from Him and this power is one of the marvels to which Mary refers when declaring that the Almighty "hath done great things to her."

After that, who will not admire the great and wonderful accomplishments of Almighty God with regard to the glorious Virgin? And who will not *acknowledge that* it is the Holy Spirit Who was speaking through her: *Fecit mihi magna qui potens est?* Oh, what a wealth of prodigies and miracles is bound up in these words! Oh, what a great thing it is to be both virgin and mother, and to be a virgin and the Mother of God! Oh, what a great privilege it is to be associated with the Eternal Father in His divine fatherhood, to be the Virgin Mother, in the fulness of time, of the very Son generated from all eternity

(6). John 14, 12.

298 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

without a mother! Oh, what a great thing it is to be clothed with the virtue of the Most High, to be a partaker of His adorable fecundity in order to be the Mother of the Son, who is consubstantial, co-equal and co-eternal with God His Eternal Father! Oh, what a great thing it is to give temporal birth from a virginal bosom to Him who was born before the beginning of time in the bosom of the Father of mercy! Oh, what a great thing it is for a mortal creature to give life to Him from whom she received her own life! Oh, what a great thing it is to be the worthy Spouse of the Holy Spirit, associated with Him in the production of His adorable masterpiece, the God-Man.

Such indeed are the great and marvellous things that God wrought upon the Queen of heaven, but lo! here follows the miracle of miracles. Great, holy and admirable as thou wert, O Virgin Mother, thou didst always look upon, demean and humble thyself as if thou wert the least and most insignificant of all creatures. "It is a great thing for the Queen of Angels to be a virgin," says a Holy Father of the Church, (7) "it is a great thing for her to be a mother, it is a greater thing for her to be a mother and virgin at the same time, and it is a very great thing for her to be a virgin and the Mother of God; but what surpasses all else is that, great as she is, Mary considers herself as if she were nothing."

Furthermore, Mary uses all these tremendous powers, her immense privileges, her sublime mercies, to help the humble, the wretched and even the most hopeless, if they will simply have recourse to her with humility and confidence. "All power," says the holy cardinal, Peter Damian, "is given to Mary in heaven and on earth, and nothing is impossible to her who holds the power to restore and hope of salvation in the most despairing individuals." (8) "Yes," exclaims St. Bonaventure, "because the Almighty Lord is most powerfully with thee, O Mary, thou art therefore most powerful with God, most powerful through Him, most powerful in Him." (9)

O most powerful and benign Virgin, with all my heart do I give infinite thanks to the Almighty for having made thee so great, so powerful and so admirable. With all my heart do I also offer, *deliver and* abandon myself entirely and irrevocably to the great power that God has granted thee, imploring thee most humbly to exercise it on my behalf for the total destruction of *whatever in* me is displeasing to Him and

(7). Venerable Bede-Magnum, quia Virgo; magnum quia Mater; majus, quia utrumque; maximum, quia Deiparens; sed majus, quia, cum tanta sit, putat se nihil esse.

(8). Sermon 1 de Nativ. B. Virg.

(9). In Spec. Virg. Cap. 8.

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART 299 -

to thee, and to establish in its stead the perfect reign of His glory and love.

The Blessed Virgin, having affirmed that the Almighty has wrought great things in her, then adds these words: "And holy is His name," words which contain six great mysteries.

The first is that the mystery of the Incarnation, being a mystery of love, is attributed to the Holy Spirit, who is personal love, as the masterpiece of His love and bounty, in fulfilment of the words of the angel: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." (10)

The second mystery indicated in the words, "and holy is his name," is that the holy humanity

of the divine Infant whom the Blessed Virgin conceived in her womb is sanctified by His most intimate union with essential Holiness, the Divinity. This is further designated by *these words* of St. Gabriel: "The Holy which shall be born of *thee shall* be called the Son of God."(11)

The third mystery is that the Infant God is thus sanctified and made the Saint of saints in order to sanctify and glorify the name of the Thrice Holy One as much as it deserves, as well as to make it sanctified and glorified on earth, in heaven and throughout the universe, thus fulfilling the proclamation: «Hallowed be thy name.» (12)

The fourth mystery included in the words, "And holy is His name," is that the Saviour of the world, whom the holy Virgin bears in her most sacred womb, is divinely anointed with the unction of divinity, that is, He is sanctified and consecrated as a Saviour so that He may exercise the functions of Saviour, and of the Sanctifier of all men, a mission He commences at once with regard to His precursor, the Baptist, and His relatives, St. Zachary and St. Elizabeth.

The fifth mystery is that the Holy Spirit, by overshadowing Mary in order to accomplish in her the most holy work that ever was or will be done, and the Saint of saints, holiness itself and the source of all holiness, by being conceived by her, filled and overwhelmed her with an ocean of grace and inconceivable holiness.

The sixth mystery indicated in these words, "And holy is his name," is that the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation is an inexhaustible source of all the grace and holiness that has ever been, is now and ever will exist in heaven and upon earth.

Behold and admire how many wonders are contained in these few

(10). Luke 1, 35

(11). Luke 1, 35.

(12). Matt. 6, 9.

300 -

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

words pronounced by the hallowed lips of the Mother of the Saint of saints, Whose holy name be praised, sanctified and glorified for all eternity.

For this intention let us repeat together with the seraphim, with all paradise and with holy Church: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory."



## CHAPTER VIII

### **"HIS MERCY IS FROM GENERATION UNTO GENERATION, TO THEM THAT FEAR HIM"**

WE COME now to the second part of our divine canticle, the true canticle of the most holy Heart of the Mother of tender love, and a very precious relic of her immaculate Heart.

Having magnified God for the infinite favors bestowed upon her and having made this admirable prophecy, "All generations shall call me blessed," which includes a world of wonders which the Almighty has wrought and will continue to accomplish for all time and eternity to render this Virgin Mother glorious and venerable throughout the universe, she makes yet another prophecy that vibrates with rich comfort for all mankind, particularly for those who fear God. In it our peerless Mary affirms to us that the mercy of God extends from generation to generation to all those who fear Him: "And his mercy is from generation unto generation, to them that fear him."

What is this mercy? "It is our most bountiful Saviour," explains St. Augustine.(1) The eternal Father is called the Father of Mercy, because He is the Father of the Word Incarnate who is uncreated mercy itself. It is this mercy which the royal prophet David begged God, in the name of the whole human race, to send into the world through the mystery of the Incarnation, when he prayed: Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy, and grant us Thy salvation. (2) The Word Incarnate is all love and charity; therefore He must be all mercy. God is naturally and essentially allmerciful, says St. Jerome, and always ready to save by His clemency those whom He cannot save according to His justice. But we are so wretched and so inimical to ourselves that when mercy is offered to us for our salvation, we turn our backs on it in scorn.

It is through the Incarnation that the Son of God exercised His mercy on our behalf, and His great mercy, according to these words of the

(1). Exposit. Sup. Magnif.

(2). Ps. 84. 8.

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Prince of the Apostles: "According to his great mercy (He) hath regenerated us."(3) All the effects of the mercy which our Saviour has wrought in men from the beginning of the world up to this moment, and will continue to produce for all eternity, have proceeded and will proceed from the adorable mystery of His Incarnation, as from their source and primary origin. That is why David, in asking pardon for his sins, prays in this fashion: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy."  
(4)

Three elements are necessary for mercy: the first is that it takes pity on the miseries of others, for he is merciful who bears in his heart, through compassion, the miseries of the wretched; the second, that it possess the greatest will to help the outcast in their miseries; the third, that it pass from thought and will into effect. Now our most benign Redeemer became man that He might manifest His great mercy. First of all, having become man and assumed a body and a heart capable of suffering and sorrow, like ours, Our Lord was so filled with pity at the sight of our troubles and rendered so sad by carrying them in His Heart that no words can express his suffering because on one hand, He bore an infinite love for us, like the very best father for his children, and on the other hand He kept constantly before His eyes all the misfortunes of body and spirit, all the anguish, tribulations, martyrdoms and torments which all His children would have to endure until the end of

the world. His most tender and loving Heart would have caused Him countless deaths had not His love, stronger than death itself, preserved His human life so that He might sacrifice it on the cross for our sake.

Secondly, all our tribulations were present to our most merciful Saviour at the very first moment of His life, and He resolved so firmly, ardently and steadfastly at that time to help us free ourselves from them and He so faithfully preserved this intention in His heart from the first to the last instant of His life, that all the most atrocious cruelties and tortures that wretched men, to whom Christ was so wonderfully good, caused Him to suffer while He was on earth, as well as all His prescience of the ingratitude, outrages and crimes with which we would repay His adorable mercy, were not capable of cooling even slightly the ardor and strength of His will to show mercy to mankind.

Thirdly, what did He not do and suffer in order to deliver us effectively from all the temporal and eternal miseries into which our sins had plunged us? All the actions of His life-of a life of thirty-four years, of

(3). I Pet. 1, 3.

(4). Ps. 50, 3

#### THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART 303

a life divinely human and humanly divine-all the virtues that He practised, all His steps and travels here on earth, all the labors that He endured, all the humiliations, privations and mortifications that He underwent, all His fasts, vigils, prayers and sermons, all His sufferings, wounds and sorrows, His most cruel and shameful death, His precious blood shed to the last drop-were not all these things, I repeat, employed not only to rid us of every kind of evil, but also to grant us possession Of an eternal empire, filled with an immensity of glory, grandeur, joy, felicity, and inconceivable and inexpressible blessings? O bounty! O love! O superabundance! O incomprehensible and inexplicable mercy to my Saviour, how well indeed art Thou called the God of Mercy! O human heart, how frightful is thy hardness and stupidity if thou dost not love this God of love! Oh, what shalt thou love if thou dost not love Him Who has so much love and kindness for thee?

But what is the meaning of the following phrase: "From generation unto generations, to them that fear Him?" According to the explanation of holy Doctors, these words mean that, since our Saviour was made flesh and died for all men, He also pours the treasures of His mercy upon all those who do not oppose but rather fear Him. Being the inexhaustible fountain of grace and mercies, God also derives a sovereign pleasure from bestowing them continually upon His children, everywhere and at all times. Although, according to St. Bernard, divine Mercy is equally shared by the Three Divine Persons, together with all the other divine attributes, it is nevertheless attributed particularly to the person of the Son, as power is to the Father and bounty to the Holy Spirit. It is particularly the Incarnate Word who, through His great mercy, delivered us from the tyranny of sin, from the power of the devil, from eternal death, from the torments of hell and infinity of evils and miseries, God acquired for us, at the cost of His Precious blood and His Divine life, the same eternal empire which His Eternal Father had given to Him.

But Our Lord did not will to accomplish this great work by Himself. In addition to doing all things in union with the Heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost, Christ also willed to associate His most holy Mother with Him in the great work of His mercy. "It is not good for man to be alone,"(5) said God when He willed to give the first woman to the first man; "let us make him a helpmate like unto himself." So also does the new Man, who is Jesus Christ, choose to have a helpmate in Mary, and the eternal Father gives the Blessed Mother to the Beloved Son to assist Him and cooperate with Him in the great work of the salvation of the world, which is the work of His great mercy.

(5). Gen. 2, 18.

When St. Catherine of Siena was in Rome, she pronounced several magnificent eulogies in honor of the Mother of God on the feast of the Annunciation in 1379-eulogies motivated and inspired by the Holy Spirit-of which these four invocations are most worthy: "O Mary, Bearer of Fire! O Mary, Peaceful Ocean! O Mary, Fiery Chariot! O Mary, Administrator of Mercy!"

Mary is called "Bearer of Fire" because she carried in her virginal body Him who is all-enkindled with love and charity toward mankind, who said that He came to bring fire to the earth, and proclaimed that His greatest desire was to inflame all hearts with love. (6)

Mary is called a "Peaceful Ocean" because she is an immense sea of grace, virtue and perfection, an ocean that is always calm and peaceful, that sustains and transports everyone to the port of eternal salvation without trouble or difficulty.

Mary is a "Fiery Chariot" completely inflamed with love, charity, goodness and meekness on behalf of true Israelites . . . "the Chariot of Israel," (7) that is, of the true children (of God); but she is equally as terrifying to all the demons as she is meek and kind to men. Whoever honors, loves, serves and invokes Mary with humility and confidence will ascend to paradise in a fiery chariot.

She is the "Administrator of Mercy" because God has endowed her with extraordinary goodness, meekness, generosity and kindness, with unparalleled power, that she may desire and be capable of helping, protesting, sustaining and comforting all the afflicted, the miserable, and those who have recourse to her in their needs and necessities.

Mary does this continually with regard to individuals, kingdoms, provinces, cities, houses and even the whole world, according to these words of one of the holiest and most learned Fathers of the Church, St. Fulgentius, who lived almost twelve centuries ago. "Heaven and earth," he says, "would long since have been reduced to the nothingness out of which they were created, had not the prayers of Mary sustained them." These words must be understood to include not only the firmament but also the other skies which contain the sun, the stars and the moon." (8)

Let us, then, acknowledge and honor the Mother of the Saviour as the Mother of Mercy, with whom her beloved Son willed to share His great mercy to associate her in the works of His clemency and benignity. Infinite and eternal thanks be rendered to Thee for this partnership! O my

(6). Luke 12, 49.

(7). 4 Kings 2, 12.

(8). Caelum et terra jam dudum ruissent, si Maria precibus non sustentasset. Mythologia, lib. 4.

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

Saviour! O Mother of Mercy, may all the angels, saints and creatures for ever sing the mercy of Thy Son Jesus and His Divine Mother! "The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever." (9) "let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him: and his wonderful works to the children of men." (10)

(9). Ps. 88, 2.

(10). Ps. 106, 8.

## CHAPTER IX

### "HE HATH SHOWED MIGHT IN HIS ARM"

IN THE preceding verse the Blessed Virgin Mary praised and glorified the effects of divine Mercy originating in the Incarnation of the Saviour and extending from one generation to another to all who fear God. In this verse she magnifies and exalts the prodigies of Divine Might which shine forth so admirably in this same mystery.

The great God, she says, hath put down the mighty with His arm. What arm is this? St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius and St. Bonaventure all maintain that it is the Word Incarnate, according to the prophet Isaias; "And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (1) which text St. John applies to the Son of God. (2) Since it is with his arms that man performs his actions, it is similarly through His Divine Son that God accomplishes all things. "Just as man's arms," says Albert the Great, "extend from his body, and his hands from both the arms and body, so also does the Son of God extend from the Almighty Father, while the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son."

But what is the meaning of the words "He hath showed might?" They mean that God has acted powerfully, and that His power has produced admirable effects in his arm, through His Only-begotten Son and Incarnate Word, who is His arm. It is through Christ that the Eternal Father created all things; it is through Christ that He redeemed the world; through Christ He vanquished the devil and triumphed over hell; it is through Christ that God opened heaven to us; it is through Him that He performed an infinite number of other miracles. "The words that I speak to you," says the Son of God, "I speak not of myself. But the Father who abideth in me, he doeth the works." (3) Oh, what wonders are wrought by Divine Might in this ineffable mystery of the Incarnation! What a miracle to behold two natures, infinitely removed from each other, so closely united that they form but a single person! What a

- (1). Isa. 53, 1
- (2). John 12,38.
- (3). John 14, 10.

### THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART 307 -

Miracle to behold the Word Incarnate come forth from the consecrated womb of a virgin without destroying that virginity! What a wealth of miracles in the institution of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar! What a miracle, last of all, for Divine Might to have elevated a daughter of Adam to the dignity of Mother of God, and to have enthroned her as Queen of the angels and of the whole universe!

Among the works of God, some are attributed to His hands and fingers, like the heavens: "The heavens are the works of thy hands" (4) of will behold the heavens, the works of thy fingers." (5) Others are attributed to one of His fingers, "This is the finger of God," (6) like the wonders that He performed through Moses in Egypt. But the incomparable work of the Incarnation is attributed neither to the hands or fingers of God; it belongs to the arm of His divine Might because it incomparably surpasses all the other works of His adorable Majesty.

"It is an admirable thing," says St. John Damascene, "that He who is perfect God becomes perfect man. This God-Man is the newest of all things; indeed, He is the only new being that has ever appeared or ever can appear under the sun, in whom the infinite power of God is made manifest far more than in all that the universe encompasses. For what is there greater and more admirable than to behold God made man?" (7)

Let us listen now to Richard of Saint Victor who, in explaining these words of the royal prophet, *Descendet sicut pluvia in vellus*, (8) exclaims: "O the glory of the Blessed Virgin! O marvellous grace! Admirable dignity of the Mother of this divine Child! Oh, what goodness on the part of this adorable Child who, being the Son of God, wills to become the Son of Mary! Oh, what dignity of the Mother of Jesus to possess the fruit of fertility together with the flower of virginity! What a marvel to behold a virgin who bears a son, not just an ordinary son but a son who is God! Truly the glory of Mary is a glory altogether unique. *Descendet sicut pluvia in vellus*, 'He will descend like rain upon fleece.' Who will descend? The Only-begotten Son of God. Whence and to what place will He descend? From the adorable bosom of the divine Father into the virginal bosom of His Mother." (9) So speaks Richard of Saint Victor.

Will you listen, after that, to the holy Cardinal Hugues as he explains these words of the Psalmist: "Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle:

(4). Ps. 101, 26.

(5). Ps. 8, 4.

(6). Exod. 8. 19.

(7). St. John Eudes does not give the reference for this quotation.

(8). Ps. 71, 6.

(9). Adnot. in Psal. 71.

308 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

because he hath done wonderful things." (10) What are these marvellous things? "They are," says this saintly cardinal, "that He has caused God to be made man, a virgin to become a Mother, and the hearts of the faithful to believe these two mysteries. It is a wonderful thing that God delivered up His own Son to the spite of slaves, His beloved Son to the hatred of His enemies, the sovereign Judge to the ignominy of criminals and condemned creatures, the First to the last (for a man is the least of all creatures), and the Innocent to the impious. (11)

Here are two additional factors of the highest importance. The first is that nowhere is divine Might more apparent than in the remission and destruction of sin, according to these words of holy Church: "O God, Who dost manifest Thine omnipotence more in forgiving us our sins and showing us mercy than in anything else." The wrong done to God through sin is so great, that only the infinite might of an immense bounty can pardon it, and sin is such a frightful monster that only the arm of the Almighty can crush it.

The second wonderful manifestation of this adorable Might is the virtue and strength that it imparts to holy martyrs and to all persons who suffer extraordinary afflictions, that they may bear them generously and in a true Christian manner for the love of Him Who suffered the torments and death of the Cross for their sake.

This is a brief summary of the countless miracles performed by the all-powerful arm of the Word Incarnate, miracles which He continues to perform daily for the glory of His divine Father, the honor of His most admirable Mother and the salvation and sanctification of mankind, to incite men to love and serve Him with all their hearts, as He loves them with all His Heart.

10). Ps. 97, 1

(11). In Ps. 97.

## CHAPTER X

### "HE HATH SCATTERED THE PROUD IN THE CONCEIT OF THEIR HEART"

Aside from the effects of divine Might as indicated in the preceding pages, here is yet another of the greatest importance, proclaimed in the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary: "He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their hearts." What does that mean, and who are the proud? The holy Fathers explain this text in various ways. Some of them say that they are the rebellious angels whom God drove out of heaven and cast into hell for their pride. Others understand them to mean Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nabuchodonosor, Antiochus and other enemies of the people of Israel. St. Cyril and St. Augustine explain them with reference to the demons that our Lord drove out of the bodies and souls of men when he came into the world. St. Augustine writes further that we may also infer these proud to mean the Jews who scorned the humble coming of our Saviour, for which they were rebuked.

Hugh of Saint Victor and Dionysius the Carthusian say that these words designate all men dominated by pride, while Cardinal Hugues declared that these proud are the heretics whose minds are divided and at variance because of the diversity of their thoughts and errors. There are still others who assure us that these prouds are sinners in general who rebel against the divine will.

Finally, certain holy Doctors write that we must apply these words to the emperors, kings, princes, philosophers and all the tyrants who have opposed the proclamation of the holy Gospel, personages whom God has exterminated and cast into hell fire. These also include all men, who will persecute the Church until the coming of the antichrist, for the majority of the words of the *Magnificat* are prophecies expressed in the past tense, *dispersit superbos*, as if those things were already fulfilled, in order to show that they will just as certainly take place as if they had already happened.

Let us now examine the meaning of the words: "In the conceit of his heart." St. Augustine explains them in this way: "He hath destroyed

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

the proud by a secret and profound resolution of His divine will. For it was by a profound determination that God was made man, and the innocent suffered in order to redeem the guilty; a most secret resolution of which the devil could not have had knowledge." (1)

But because the Greek reads thus: "In conceit of their heart," other Doctors are led to offer this explanation: "He has destroyed and exterminated those whose hearts were filled with high esteem for themselves;" or else: "He has scattered the thoughts and resolutions that the proud were meditating in their hearts," in conformity with these words of the prophet Isaiah: "Take counsel together, and it shall be defeated." (2)

Here is another most important secret which the Blessed Virgin reveals to us in the words "He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart." They mean, according to the opinion of prominent writers, that not only does God disperse and annihilate the evil thoughts and pernicious designs contrived against Him and His friends by the wicked, but also that He converts all their pretensions into their own confusion, the glory of His divine Majesty and the increased holiness and eternal happiness of those who serve Him. Furthermore, He opposes them with their own weapons, *Mente cordis sui*, striking back at them with the very same arrows launched by their malice against

Him and His children: "The arrows of children are their wounds." (3) He makes use of their designs to fulfil His own. He causes the evil intentions of their impious minds to be turned to their own perdition and the advantage of His servants. God converts the obstacles which the wicked place in the path of the works of His glory into very powerful means employed to give them more firmness, perfection and brilliance.

Did not Satan's malice toward the first man lead to his own confusion while proving advantageous not only to man but to all posterity? God brought forth such immense good from the evil into which the temptation of the devil caused Adam to fall that Holy Mother Church sings: "O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer."

Did not the accursed envy and bad will of the brothers of Joseph serve divine Providence as a means of exalting him even to the extent of sharing the royal throne of Egypt, and of earning for him the extraordinary title of the God of Pharaoh? Of what advantage to Pharaoh's successor was his hardness and cruelty against the chosen people except to drown him with his whole army in the depths of the Red Sea, and to manifest still more strikingly God's protection of His own children?

(1). In Magnif.

(2). Isa. 8, 10.

(3). Ps. 63, 8.

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

311 -

What was the intention of the perfidious enemies of Christ and the evil spirits in treating the Son of God so ignominiously and cruelly as they did, if not to make His name infamous and hateful throughout the world? As we read: "Let his name be remembered no more." (4) Thus they strove to thwart all His designs and nullify the great work that He had undertaken for the redemption of the world. Yet God employed their abominable hatred to fulfil the determination of His infinite bounty with regard to the human race.

What was the intention of the tyrants in slaughtering so many thousands of holy martyrs, if not to ruin and completely exterminate the Christian religion? And yet, did not Divine Might use this means to render its establishment more solid, holy, extensive and glorious?

Finally, we may truthfully apply to all who persecute and oppose the servants of God what St. Augustine said of the godless Herod who slaughtered so many innocents in the attempt to destroy Him Who came to save the world: "Behold a wonderful thing, that the hatred and cruelty of this impious enemy of God and men was much more profitable to these blessed infants than all the friendship that he could ever have shown them and all the favors he could ever have bestowed on them." (5)

Thus does the all-powerful arm of the Incarnate Word overthrow the undertakings of the proud in the devising of their hearts: "He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart."

It is through the humility of thy virginal Heart, O Queen of Heaven, that all these great things are accomplished, since thy marvellous humility drew the divine Word from the bosom of His Father and clothed Him with flesh in thine own virginal bosom. We also look to thee to crush the head of the serpent, that is, to stamp out pride and arrogance. We may indeed say to thee, therefore: "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people, for thou hast done manfully." (6)

This first phrase, "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem," is the voice of the angels, whose downfall has been atoned through thy intercession. The second, "Thou art the joy of Israel," is the

voice of men, whose sadness has been changed into joy through thy mediation. The third, "Thou art the honor of our people," is the voice of women whose shame has been blotted out by the blessed Fruit of thy womb. The fourth, "Thou hast done manfully," is the voice of the holy souls who

(4). Jer. 11, 19.

(5). Serm. 10. de Sanctis.

(6). Judith 15, 10-11.

312-

#### **THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

were imprisoned in Limbo and set free from captivity by thy beloved Son, the Redeemer of the world.

O most holy and desirable humility of Mary, thou art the source of all blessings. O hateful pride, thou art the cause of all the evils of earth and hell. "Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord," (7) says the Holy Spirit; not only is the proud and arrogant man abominable in the sight of God, but "he is abomination itself."

O Queen of the humble, efface from our hearts whatever is contrary to humility, and make this holy virtue reign within us for the glory of thy Beloved Son.

(7). Prov. 16, 5



## CHAPTER X1

**"HE HATH PUT DOWN THE MIGHTY FROM THEIR SEAT, AND HATH EXALTED THE HUMBLE"**

THE time being ripe when the Father of Mercy was pleased to fulfill His intention from all eternity to save mankind, His divine wisdom, whose resolutions are impenetrable, willed to employ means to that end which apparently had no capacity for or conformity with the greatness of this mighty work. What are these means? Here they are. God sent His Only-begotten Son into the world in a perishable and mortal state, in such abjection and lowliness that He Himself says, "I am a worm and no man" (1): bearing as a tide of honor in Scripture, Novissimas Virorum, (2) "the most abject of men."

This adorable Father wills His Only-Begotten Son, generated in His bosom from all eternity, and equal to Him in all things, to be born of a Mother who is in truth most holy, but so lowly and humble in her own eyes and in the eyes of the world that she esteems herself the least of all creatures.

Furthermore, this divine Father, wishing to provide helpers and coworkers to work with His Divine Son in this supreme work of redemption of the world, chose twelve poor fishermen without learning, eloquence or any other qualities that might have distinguished them among men. He sent these twelve fishermen throughout the land to destroy a religion based on conformity with human inclinations, a religion rooted for several thousand years in the hearts of men, and to establish instead a completely new religion which is opposed to the first and contrary to all the inclinations of human nature.

These twelve poor fishermen went everywhere to preach and establish this new faith while destroying the first religion. But how were they received? Everyone row up against them-the great and the lowly, the rich and the poor, men and women, the learned and the ignorant,

(1). PS. 21, 7.

(2). Isa. 53, 3.

**314 - THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

losophers and priests of false gods, kings and princes; all men in general expended every effort to oppose the preaching of the Gospel which twelve fishermen strove to proclaim. They were seized and cast into prison with chains on their hands and feet, they were treated like rogues and magicians, they were beaten, burned, stoned, crucified; in short, they were made to suffer all the most atrocious torments.

But what happened? They emerged victorious, they triumphed gloriously over the great, the powerful, the wise and all the monarchs of the world. They annihilated the religion, or rather the irreligion and abominable idolatry which hell had established throughout the world, and they established the Christian faith and religion in its stead. Finally, they became the masters of the world, and God bestowed on them the principality of the earth: "Thou shalt make them princes over all the earth." (3)

God upset the thrones of kings and the pulpits of philosophers; He conferred the first empire of the world to a poor fisherman, whom He elevated to such eminent power and glory that rulers and magnates considered it a great honor to kiss the dust of his sepulchre and the feet of his successors. What is all that, if not the fulfilment of this prophecy of the Blessed Virgin, *Deposuit potentes de*

*sede, et exaltavit humiles.* "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the lowly and humble?"

Notice that these words, as well as the other phrase of this inspired canticle, although expressed in the past tense, *deposuit*, nevertheless implies the past, present and future because they are uttered in a prophetic spirit. Indeed, the fulfillment of this prophecy has appeared manifestly in past centuries, and will continue to appear more and more in the ages to come, until the end of the world.

In past centuries, did not divine Might put down the proud Saul and replace him with the humble David? Did God not confound and destroy the arrogant Aman and the proud Vasthi to replace them by the humble Mardochai and the pious Esther? Did not Josue destroy more than thirty Chanaanite kings, turning their kingdoms over to the people of Israel?

Did not our divine Saviour deliver mankind from the bondage of the demons who before His Incarnation had subjected the world to their cruel tyranny? Did he not banish the rebellious angels from heaven and the fallen man from paradise? And did He not restore mankind, after he had humbled himself through penance to the grace of His Creator? Did He not banish the godless Diocletian from his imperial throne to replace him with the pious Constantine? Did He not drive out the arrogant Eugene and give the throne of his empire to the humble Theodosius?

(3). Ps. 44,17.

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

315 -

dosius? Did He not exterminate the high priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees, to transfer their authority to poor fishermen chosen to share with Him the throne of His divine Justice, and the power which His Father had given Him to judge men and angels?

Thus it is that Christ humbles and destroys the great and powerful of this earth who misuse their power, and exalts the lowly and humble who practice the words of the Apostle: "Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation." (4) This Christ has always done from the beginning of the world; and He will continue until the end of time, even to the coming of the antichrist, who through his abominable pride will attempt to exalt himself even above God Himself: "Who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God." (5) But He who annihilated Himself in order to confound the arrogant and exalt the humble will kill him with a single breath: "The Lord Jesus shall kill with the spirit of his mouth," (6) casting him into the lower depths of hell; and having resuscitated His two prophets Elias and Enoch, He will bring them publicly and gloriously into heaven to shame their enemies who behold them.

O Queen of humble hearts, extinguish the accursed arrogance which reigns within us and replace it in our hearts with the humility of thy Son and thyself, so that we thy children may resemble our most adorable Father and most amiable Mother.

(4). 1 Pet. 5, 6.

(5). 2 Thess. 2, 4.

(6). *ibid.* 8.

**"HE HATH FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD  
THINGS: AND THE RICH HE HATH SENT  
EMPTY AWAY"**

SOME Doctors of the Church explain these prophetic words with reference to the good and the bad angels, the humble and the proud angels, the angels obedient to God and the angels in revolt against God. The good angels, acknowledging that God brought them out of nothingness and drew all their perfections from His divine Bounty, return all things to God and use their angelic qualities to pay Him homage, keeping-for themselves only their nothingness. For that reason God allows them to pass from the state of grace in which they are into the state of glory, showering upon them the inestimable blessings that constitute the blessed eternity.

The bad angels, on the contrary, contemplating the excellence with which God has endowed their creation, find self-satisfaction in them, appropriating their perfections and glorifying themselves as if they possessed these excellences in themselves. By insupportable pride and arrogance they oblige Divine justice to strip away their brilliance and perfections, to reduce them to an extreme wretchedness and barrenness, and to cast them into the depths of hell.

Other Doctors explain these words with reference to the Gentiles converted to God by the Christian faith, and to the Jews remaining in their blindness. The Gentiles before the coming of the Son of God on earth existed in extreme poverty (which is indicated by the word *esurientes*), because they had no knowledge of their Creator and adored no other god but the devil. And when they embraced the Christian religion, God enriched them with its inconceivable treasures. The Chosen People, on the contrary, having uncompromisingly rejected the Saviour of the world and remaining obdurate, were stripped of all the gifts, graces and favors with which God had honored them: "The rich he hath sent empty away."

Still other Fathers of the Church understand them words to mean the

**THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART**

317 -

holy patriarchs, prophets and all the just of Old Law who felt an insatiable hunger, a burning thirst and a most vehement desire for the coming of the Redeemer, and were thereby filled with grace and holiness: "He hath filled the hungry with good things." On the other hand, the arrogant priests of the Jews and the proud Pharisees, convinced as they were of their own wealth of virtue and holiness, and scorning the graces that the Son of God offered them, miserably lost the Law, the faith and the eternal salvation which God had placed in their hands.

The Blessed Virgin possessed such perfect faith and such an ardent love for the Saviour Who was to come on earth, that her hunger, her thirst and her desires were much greater and livelier than the desires of all the patriarchs, prophets and saints who had preceded her or who were living in her time. Thus is it true that our adorable Saviour, so long anticipated, so fervently desired, so ardently begged of God, the Only-begotten and beloved Son of her virgin womb, overwhelmed Mary with an infinity of inconceivable and inexplicable blessings during the nine months that she carried Him within her in the world, when, later, she received him so many times into her immaculate breast and motherly Heart in the Blessed Eucharist after his Ascension, and above all since she possesses Him perfectly in Heaven.

St. Augustine applies the word *esurientes* to the humble, and *divites* to the proud. "The humble," he says, "realize that of themselves they are nothing, and that they stand in extreme need of the help and grace of heaven; but the proud are convinced that they are full of grace and virtue. That is why God takes pleasure in showering His gifts on the former and in depriving the latter of His bounty." (1)

These same words are also understood to mean all the poor whose hearts are detached from the things of earth, who love and embrace poverty for the love of Him who, possessing all the treasure of divinity, willed to become poor for love of us so that we might possess eternal riches. But we must understand the text to refer particularly to those who have voluntarily stripped themselves of all things through the holy vow of poverty, in order to imitate our divine Saviour and His most holy Mother more perfectly in their state of poverty, which was so extreme that the Son of God uttered these words: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." (2) Oh, what great treasures are encompassed by this voluntary poverty, since our Lord Himself said: "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the

(1). In Magnif.

(2). Matt. 8, 20.

318 -

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Kingdom of God." (3) Oh, how dangerous is the possession of worldly wealth, since He Who is eternal truth also said: "Woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation!" (4) And speaking through St. Paul, He utters these terrible words: "They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition." (5) That is why, if you love riches, do not love the false riches of this world but the true wealth of heaven, which is the fear and love of God, charity toward your neighbor, humility, obedience, patience, purity, and the other Christian virtues which will lead you to the possession of an eternal empire.

This explanation of the aforementioned word, *esurientes*, is highly comforting. It is also a prophecy of the most holy Mother of God, referring to the enormous task yet to be accomplished of converting infidels, Jews, heretics and false Christians throughout the world. It was foretold and proclaimed long ago by the oracle of holy Scripture, by the mouth of the Church, and by the voices of the Fathers, Doctors and saints through whom the Spirit of God has spoken.

Open the sacred books and there you will hear the divine Spirit speaking of our Lord through the mouth of the royal prophet, assuring us that Christ will rule and reign throughout the world, (6) that all the kings of the earth will adore Him and all peoples will serve Him; (7) that all tribes will be blessed in Him and all nations will magnify Him; (8) that the whole universe will be filled with His glory; (9) that all generations without exception will adore Him and glorify His holy name; (10) that the whole world will be converted to Him; and that all the tribes of the world will fall prostrate before His face to adore Him. (11)

Do you not hear the eternal Father, speaking to His Divine Son in the second Psalm, promise Him, as His inheritance, all the nations of the world and possession of the entire earth? (12)

Do you not hear the Church so often praying thus to God: "Let all

(3). Luke 6, 20.

(4). Luke 6, 24.

(5). Tim. 6, 9.

(6). Ps. 71, 8.

(7). Ibid.

- (8). Ibid.
- (9). Ibid. 19.
- (10). Ps. 85, 9.
- (11). Ps. 21, 29.
- (12). Ps. 2, 8.

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART 319-

the earth adore thee and sing to thee: let it sing a psalm to thy name?" (13) Are you not familiar with the solemn prayers offered by Holy Church each year on Good Friday for the sanctification of all her children and the conversion of all heretics, Jews and pagans? Do you not know that every day she obliges her priests to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to God for all men and to implore the salvation of the world in these words: "We offer unto thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching thy clemency, that it may rise up in the sight of thy divine majesty, as a savour of sweetness, for our salvation, and for that of the whole world?" Tell me then, I beg of you, would the Holy Spirit Who animates and guides the Church in all things permit her to offer prayers that were futile and unheard?

This great general conversion has been revealed by the Spirit of God not only to the prophets of the Old Law but also to the holiest men and women of the New Law. Does not the great Apostle St. Paul assure us that all the Jews will be converted, and that their conversion will be followed by that of the whole world? There is every reason to believe that God will not refuse His Grace to all other men.

Our Lord said one day to St. Brigid, whose revelations have been approved by three Popes and two General Councils: "The time will come when there will be but one fold, one shepherd and one faith, and when God will be known to all." (14)

"You must realize," Christ revealed to her on another occasion, "that pagans will have such great devotion that Christians will be only their servants in spiritual life, and then shall we see the fulfillment of the Scriptures, which say that the people who know Me not will glorify Me, and that the deserts will be edified. At that time all will sing: Glory be to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, and honor to all the saints!" (15)

All the holy Fathers (16) agree that after the death of antichrist the whole world will be converted, and although some of them assert that the world will last but a few days after his death, while others say a few months, some authorities insist that it will continue to exist many years after. St. Catherine of Siena, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Francis of Paula and a number of other saints have predicted this ultimate universal conversion.

(13). Ps. 65, 4

(14). Revel. lib. 6 Cap. 77.

(15). Revel. lib. 6, cap. 83.

(16). Dionysius the Carthusian in cap. 3, Epist. 1 ad Ther.; Cornelius a Lapide in cap. 2, Epist. ad Rom. vers. 15.

320-

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Then shall we witness the fulfillment of this great prophecy of the Queen of prophets, *Esurientes implevit bonis*, although not perhaps so perfectly as we might wish; that is, with no one left on earth who did not know and love God. But if this conversion is not completely general, it will prove, nonetheless, a delicious and magnificent feast for all those who possess a great hunger and burning thirst for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. They will be overwhelmed with inconceivable happiness and joy upon seeing their Creator and Saviour known, served and honored

throughout the world, together with His most worthy Mother, and beholding the demons who now possess so many rich treasures on earth-that is, so many souls of infidels, heretics and bad Catholics-dispossessed of all, according to these divine words: "And the rich he hath sent away empty.'

Even if this prophecy is not completely fulfilled on earth, it will find its entire and perfect fulfilment in heaven, where the insatiable hunger and burning thirst possessed by all the saints during their earthly lives for the glory of God and the salvation of souls will be perfectly satiated and slaked, and these words will be fulfilled in each one of them: "I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear." (17) There is no mind capable of understanding, nor tongue of expressing, the least particle of the inestimable and inexpressible blessing which God will shower upon them for their great zeal in promoting His honor on earth, and for the salvation of the souls whom they have delivered from the possession of the devil.

O Mother of Mercy, who by thy prayers and merits didst hasten the time of the Incarnation of the Saviour of the world, hasten too, we pray thee, the desirable time of this great conversion which is so necessary for the salvation of so many souls who perish daily. Alas, take pity on them, O Mother of grace, and pray to thy Son to have pity on all the works of His hands, to have compassion on them because of the many sufferings which His holy humanity endured and the Precious Blood that He shed in order to save these souls from falling into hell.

(17). Ps. 16, 15.

## CHAPTER XIII

**"HE HATH RECEIVED ISRAEL HIS SERVANT"**

Almighty God fashioned two orders of creatures at the beginning of the world, angels and men; the angels in heaven, men on earth. Both of them were so ungrateful that they revolted against their Creator, the angel through pride and man through disobedience to the commandment of God. The sin of the angel, being a sin of pride, was found to be so enormous in the eyes of God that divine Justice obliged Him to drive the angelic sinner out of paradise and cast him into hell. But His Mercy, seeing that man had fallen into sin through the temptation and seduction of Satan, took pity on him and resolved to withdraw him from the miserable state to which he had been reduced, even making a pledge to that effect. And even the countless and enormous sins committed by the Jews, the Gentiles and all men since that promise were not capable of preventing its fulfilment, but they did delay it for many centuries, during which time the whole race of Adam, condemned and cast out by God, was plunged into an abyss of darkness and a whirlpool of inexplicable evils from which it was impossible for it to emerge unaided. The more humanity went forward, the more deeply mired it became in this gulf, the more it wallowed in the mud and filth for its sins. (1)

God was known only in Judea, (2) and even there He was known very imperfectly and by very few persons. All the others were enshrouded in the darkness of hell, the whole earth was covered with idols and idolators, and the tyranny of Satan oppressed the whole world. The law of Moses revealed sin but it did not cure it. Thus it seemed that God, by an eminently just judgement, had entirely forgotten mankind abandoned in this deplorable state as a punishment for its crimes. His mercy did not manifest itself; there was evidence only of the terrible signs of His wrath which had cast one third of the angels into hell, had engulfed the whole

(1). *Jacebat in malis, vel etiam volutabatur, et de malis in mala precipitabatur totius humani generis massa damnata.* St. Augustine, Lib. *Enchiridii*, cap. 26 et 27.

(2). Ps. 75, 2 "In Judaea God is known."

**THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY**

army to be swallowed up in the waters of the Red Sea, had rained torrents of fire and flames from heaven to reduce great cities to ashes, had delivered His people on several occasions to the fury of their enemies, and had allowed men to suffer many other fearful punishments.

But finally the Son of God, mindful of His mercy which He seemed to have forgotten for more than four thousand years, *Recordatus misericordiae suae* and of the promise He had made to Adam, Abraham, David and a number of other prophets, to draw the human race from the pit of evils, Himself descended from heaven into the virgin bosom of the handmaid, Mary, where to His divine person He united the wretched human nature which He had abandoned, becoming man in order to save all men who long to be numbered among the true Israelites; that is, who seek to believe in Him and love Him.

That is what the Blessed Virgin announces to us through these words: "He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy," for several holy Doctors explain them as the mystery of the Incarnation. This verse forms the conclusion of her inspired canticle; it is a recapitulation of its ineffable mysteries; it is the end of the Law and the prophets, the dispersal of the shadows, the consummation of the symbols. It is as if Our Lady were saying, "Here is the fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets; this is the fruition of the truth of the promises of God; this is what impels me to sing from the depths of my heart, "My soul cloth magnify the Lord." This is the great

cause of my joy and delight, "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." This is what will Make me proclaimed blessed by all nations. These are the great things that the Almighty has done to me. This is the origin and inexhaustible source of the unfathomable graces and mercies that God will shed on generation after generation of all who fear Him. 'nine are the greatest miracles of His infinite might and immense bounty. This is what will exalt the humble and bring ruin to the proud: "He hath received Israel his servant."

But what is this Israel? Several saints affirm that these words must be applied first of all to the people of Israel, the Son of God having willed to be made man and take birth from the Israelites notwithstanding their past ingratitude and the outrages that He was to receive at their hands. I say "first of all," for the divine Word also united Himself with all human nature and not only with the people of Israel.

But why does the Blessed Virgin say, "He hath received Israel his servant?" It is the Holy Spirit speaking through her and imparting two meanings by the word *puerum*. In the first place, He gives us to understand that the Son of God *became not* only man in order to make us

### **THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART 323 -**

God-like, but He also became an infant to make us children of God: i.

Secondly, the Incarnate Word is placed before us not only as man and child, but also as servant. It is the same thing that the Holy Spirit declares to us through the mouth of St. Paul in these terms: "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." (3) And do we not hear the voice of Our Saviour telling us Himself that He came not to be served, but to serve? (4) O superabundance Of incomparable love! The sovereign Mon. arch of the universe takes the form of a servant in order to deliver us from the bondage of Satan and make us children of God! O my Saviour, we are unworthy to be Thy slaves; yet Thou, not content to call us friends and brethren, hast made us children of the same adorable Father whose beloved Son Thou art, and consequently His heirs and Thy coheirs.

But Thou dost go even further, for, by another excess of unequalled goodness, Thou dost will to bear the title and to be in reality the Spouse of our souls, our souls to be Thy true spouses as Well, and consequently to be but one with Thee and to share all things with Thee.

That is still not sufficient to satisfy the ardor of Thy love for us. Thou dost will to be our head, and us to be thy members, and therefore to be but one with Thee, as members are but one with their head. Thou dost will us to be animated by the same spirit, to live the same life, to have but one heart and soul, and finally to be consummated in unity with Thee and the Heavenly Father, just as Thou art one with Him. Is not this, my dearest Jesus, what Thou didst ask of Him for us on the eve of Thy death in pronouncing this prayer: "That they all may be one, as thou Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." (5) "I in them and thou in me; that they may be Made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them even as me." (6) O miracle of love! O prodigy of charity! O abyss of goodness!

O my Saviour, I am not amazed by the assurance that Thou wilt grant us possession of the same kingdom that the Almighty Father hast given Thee, that Thou wilt invite us to feast at the same table with Thee, and that Thou wilt seat us on Thy throne, *in throno meo*, even as Thou art seated upon the throne of Thy Royal Father. If we are but one with Thee, we should possess the same kingdom, eat at the same table, share

(3). Phil. 2, 7.

(4). Matt. 6. 20, 28.



(5). John 17, 31.

(6). Ibid. 23.

324 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

the same throne, be animated by the same spirit, live the same life and have but one heart and soul with thee. Can we conceive of more admirable bounty? Has there ever been, and is it possible to imagine comparable magnificence. O human heart, how hard, how unfeeling, how unnatural thou art, if such goodness is incapable of softening thee! O monster of ingratitude, what wilt thou love if not Him who holds such a love for thee; indeed, who is all tenderness and love toward thee!

Such are the wonders contained in these words of the Mother of Jesus: "He hath received Israel his servant," since they teach us the mystery of the Incarnation, the source of all these miracles of charity.

But what is the primary cause of this ineffable mystery? and consequently, of all the infinite blessings which proceed from it? Do you not hear the most pure Virgin affirming in these words, *Recordatus misericordiae suae*? Yes, Mother of grace, it is indeed divine mercy that is the origin of the Incarnation of thy Son, and of all the immense treasures proceeding therefrom; and for all these things, next to the incomparable mercy, we are indebted to thy maternal Heart? For by what other means didst thou bring the eternal Word from the adorable bosom of His Father into thine own virginal bosom and sacred womb? Do we not hear the Holy Spirit who, speaking through thee, declares that while the eternal King was dwelling in the bosom and Heart of His Father, the most profound humility of thy lovable Heart gave forth such a pleasing and powerful odor that, rising up to Him, it pleased God to the extent of attracting Him to descend to thee, where He became incarnate for the redemption of the world? Is it not what is meant by these divine words: "While the king was at his repose, my spikenard sent forth the odor thereof"? (7) It is the explanation offered by the saints, who say that the spikenard is a tiny but extremely fragrant herb which represents thy sweet humility.

But, aside from the merit and strength of this holy virtue, how many ardent sighs didst thou send heavenward! How many tears didst thou shed! How many fasts and mortifications didst thou practise! How many earnest and ardent prayers didst thou offer to obtain from the Father of mercy the fulfillment of His promises regarding the Incarnation of His Son, and to draw the attention to this same Son to the prayers and cries of all the holy patriarchs, prophets and just persons who preceded His coming on earth! *Veni Domine, veni et noli tardare, veni et libera nos*, "O Lord, come without further delay, come to deliver us from all the evils which cover the earth."

After divine mercy, then, O holy Virgin, it is to the humility, love,  
(7). Cant. 1, 11.

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

325 -

charity and zeal of thine admirable Heart that we are indebted for His adorable Incarnation, as indicated in these holy words of thy divine canticle: "He hath received Israel his servant." Oh, may all the angels and saints for ever sing to thee a canticle of gratitude, praise, blessing and immortal thanksgiving, in the name of the whole human race, for the inexpressible debt it owes to thee for all eternity!

**"AS HE SPOKE TO OUR FATHERS, TO ABRAHAM AND  
HIS SEED FOREVER"**

THE final verse of the Magnificat sets before us the truth of the word of God and His fidelity to His promises. In Sacred Scripture He is justly called "faithful and true," (1) being not only true to His words, but very truth itself- essential, eternal and impregnable truth. Not only is God faithful to His promises, but He is fidelity itself, infinitely powerful, wise and good: infinitely powerful in overcoming all obstacles to the fulfilment of His promises; infinitely wise in fulfilling them most appropriately at the most suitable time and place, infinitely good in fulfilling His word in the manner most useful and advantageous to those to whom the promises were made.

Men speak freely and are quick to promise many things, but their words and promises are frequently nothing more than lies and frauds. God speaks little: *Semel locutus est Deus.* (2) He has but one Word in His Mouth: *Verbum erat apud Deum,* (3) but with this single Word He gave being to all things: *Dixit et facta est.* (4) With this single Word He supports and preserves all things: *Portans omnia verbo virtutis suae.* (5) With this single Word he governs all things. With this single Word He makes and fulfills all His promises truthfully and faithfully, and He always accomplishes even more than He promised. He promised Abraham, first of all, to give him a son who would be called Isaac, and He gave him countless sons. He promised to multiply his children to equal the number of the stars in the heavens, and then gave him a Son who is the Creator and sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, man and God at one and the same time. God promised Adam and the other patriarchs and

(1). Apoc. 19, 11.

(2). Ps. 61, 12.

(3). John 1, 1.

(4). Ps. 148, 5.

(5). Heb. 1, 3

**THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART**

327 -

prophets to deliver men from the dark perdition of sin, and then He was not content simply to withdraw them from this wretched state and to free them from the bondage of Satan; He also became man in order to make them like God; He became the Son of man so that men might become Children of God; and He descended from heaven to earth to transport them from earth to heaven.

It is these promises made to Adam, Abraham and the other Fathers and patriarchs which the Blessed Virgin mentions in the final words of her divine canticle, "As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever;" a promise that He fulfilled when He took flesh in her blessed womb. He declared this truth to the Jews when He said to them: "Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day," (6) that is, the day of my Incarnation and birth, of my dwelling on earth, whence he hoped for his salvation and that of the whole world. "He saw it," that is, he knew Christ by faith, or else he knew Him through the revelations that the Heavenly Father made to him, "and was glad."

We see, therefore, how God is true to His words and promises, a fact which should afford us wonderful comfort, because this most faithful fulfilment of the pledges of God provides us with infallible assurance that all His other promises to mankind will likewise be perfectly realized.

What are these promises? There are two kinds: those which belong to this life, and those which concern the life to come.

What does God promise us in this life? He promises that He will preserve us from evil if we live in fear of Him: «No evil shall happen to him that feareth the Lord.» (7) Yes, for all things work together for the good of those who love God: "To them that love God all things work together unto good." (8)

He promises to keep track of every step that we take in His service: "Thou indeed hast numbered my steps;" (9) to feel the wrongs that are done to us as if He Himself were wounded in the pupil of His eye: "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye;" (10) to cherish our good works like the apple of His eye: "The alms of a man is as a signet with him: and shall preserve the grace of a man as the apple of the eye." (11)

These are the promises made to us by our Saviour concerning our present life, but there are many others referring to the life in heaven. Our

(6). John 8, 56.

(7) Ecclus. 33, 1.

(8). Rom. 8 28.

(9). Job 14, 16.

(10). Zach. 2, 8.

(11). Ecclus. 17, 18.

328 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

most benign Saviour promises us that on the day of the general resurrection, not only will He cause our bodies to rise again, but He will also clothe them with the brilliance, incorruptibility, immortality and glory of His own most holy body: "Who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like the body of his glory"; (12) He will have us dwell with Him not only in heaven but also in the bosom and heart of His Father: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me"; (13) He will make us kings of the very kingdom that the Almighty Father conferred upon Him: "And I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom"; (14) He will make us His Father's heirs and His own co-heirs; (15) He will share all His possessions with us; (16) He will give us the same glory that His Father has given to Him; (17) He will associate us with His angels, mat us on their thrones, have us live their lives and enjoy their felicity; (18) He will permit us to dine at His table; (19) He will seat us on His own throne; (20) we shall be through grace and participation what He is by nature and essence; (21) and, finally, we shall be but one with Christ and His Eternal Father who are also but one, as we have already said. (22)

Those are the marvellous promises of our most bountiful Redeemer. But is it possible for such great wonders to be fulfilled? Yes, that is as certain as it is that God is God. It is what the Blessed Virgin tells us: "As he spoke to our fathers: to Abraham and to his seed for ever."

O Christian, how admirable is thy religion! How holy and exalted is thy profession! How blessed and advantageous is thy state! Why dost thou not die of joy at the revelation of these rapturous truths! How is it possible for thy heart to remain cold and icy in the midst of them ardent games of the love of thy God for thee? Oh, how fearful will be the furnaces of hell for thee if, instead of loving the God who so loves thee, thou dost despise Him, outrage Him and trample upon His divine commandments! O my God, with all my heart do I wish to love Thee, not all for fear of meriting hell, but purely for love of Thee. O my Saviour, I implore

(12). Phil. 3, 21.

(13). John 17, 24. (14). Luke 22, 29. (14). Rom. 8, 17. (16). Matt. 24, 47.

(17). John 17, 22.

- (18). Luke 20, 36.
- (19). Luke 22, 30.
- (20). APOC. 3,
- (21). 2 Peter 1, 4.
- (22). John 17, 22.

## THE CANTICLE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

329 -

Thee to take full, complete and eternal Possession of my heart. Our adorable Saviour is not the only Being to be called the Faithful and True, for Holy Mother Church ascribed this same quality to His Beloved Mother Mary: "Virgin most faithful." This Virgin Mother has declared to her devotees, that among all the titles of honor in the litanies sung daily in her praise those most pleasing to her are: "Mother most amiable," "Mother most admirable" and "Virgin most faithful." And indeed with good reason she bears that title, being most admirably faithful to her words and promises.

Let us listen to her speaking: "Come over to me, all ye that desire me." (23) (i.e. the Holy Spirit, who causes her to speak thus.) Omnes. Not only some, but all-men and women, great and lowly, rich and poor, young and old, children and adolescents, the healthy and the sick, just men and sinners, faithful and unfaithful, learned and ignorant; for I desire to help all of you in your necessities and obtain the salvation of each and every one. Come to me, for I am the Mother of your Creator and Redeemer; to me, your Queen and Sovereign; to me, your Mother, your all-loving Mother: "The Mother of Fair Love." (24)

Come to me with great confidence, for God has given me all power in heaven and on earth, and my love and tenderness for you are greater than all mothers have ever had, now have, or ever will have in their hearts. Come to me, for even as I have given life to your adorable head, who is my Son Jesus, I can also give it to His members: "He that shall find me shall find life." (25) Come to me, for I have given you your Saviour, I can cooperate with Him in your eternal salvation, and I long to do so: "He that shall find me . . . shall have salvation from the Lord." (26) Come to me, for I will help you in all your needs. I will remain always with you to guide you everywhere and in all things. I will comfort your heart in afflictions. I will protect you amid the dangers of this life and defend you from the host of your enemies, visible and invisible. I will light your way in the dark and strengthen you in your weakness. I will sustain you in temptations and assist you specially at the hour of death. I will receive your souls when they leave your bodies and present them to my Beloved Son. Finally, I will lodge you in my bosom and my motherly Heart. I will keep you always before my eyes, and prove the fullness of my truly maternal love.

But listen to me, my children: "Now therefore, ye children, hear

- (23). Ecclus. 24, 26.
- (24). Ecclus. 24, 24.
- (25). Prov. 8, 35.
- (26). Ibid. 8, 35

330 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

me." (27) "And blessed is the man that heareth me." (28) What have I to say to you? Cast your eyes upon my life on earth, and consider the virtues that God granted me the graces to practise there. They are as so many voices saying to you: "Blessed are they that keep My Ways" (29) that is, who travel

the road of faith, hope, charity, humility, obedience, purity, patience and the other virtues that I practised on earth. Then embrace all these virtues in your hearts, and above all, cultivate a great love for my Son Jesus Christ. And if you love Him, keep all His commandments faithfully: "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye." (30)

Finally, we must realize that my Divine Son and I love all those who love us. (31) Love us, therefore, as your Father and your Mother, and we will love you tenderly and ardently as our dearest children. And if you truly love us, strive to implant a love for us in the hearts of other men, and these words will be fulfilled in your regard: "They that explain me shall have life everlasting." (32)

These are the words and promises of our most bountiful Mother, and she will infallibly fulfill them on behalf of her true children, for she frequently accomplishes even more than she has promised.

O Jesus, Only-begotten Son of God, who has willed to become the only Son of Mary and to accept us as her children and thy brethren, make us partakers, we humbly beseech Thee, of thy wondrous filial love for her, as well as of her admirable love for Thee, that we may love Jesus with the Heart of Mary, and Mary with the Heart of Jesus, and that we may have but one heart and love with Jesus and Mary.

(27). Ibid. 8, 32.

(28). Ibid. 8, 34

(29). Ibid. 8,32

(30). John 2,5.

(31). Prov. 8, 17.

(32). Ecclus. 24, 31

## APPENDIX I

## Mass and Office

## Of

## The Admirable Heart of Mary

*MASS OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY*

## INTROITUS

Gaudeamus omnes in Domino, diem  
festum, celebrantes sub honore sanctissimi  
Cordis Beatae Mariae Virginis: de cujus  
solemnitate gaudem Angeli, et collaudant  
Filium Dei. Ps. 44. Eructavit cor meum,  
verbum bonum: dico ego opera mea Regi.  
V. Gloria. Gaudeamus.

## ORATIO

Deus, qui Unigenitum tuum, tecum ab  
aeterno viventem, in Corde Virginis Ma-  
tris vivere et regnare voluisti: da nobis,  
quaesumus, hanc sanctissimam Jesu et  
Mariae in corde uno vitam jugiter cele-  
brare, cor unum inter nos et cum ipsis  
habere, tuamque in omnibus voluntatem  
corde magno et animo volenti adimplere;  
ut secundum Cor tuum a te inveniri  
mereamur. Per eundem Dominum.

## LECTIO CANTICI CANTICORUM.

## CANT. 4.

Quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam  
pulchra es! Oculi tui columbarum, absque  
eo quod intrinsecus latet. Tota pulchra  
a, amica mea, et macula non est in te.  
Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Li-  
bano, veni: coronaberis de capite Amana,  
de vertice Sanir et Hermon, de cubilibus  
leonum, de montibus pardorum. Vulne-  
rasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa, vul-  
nerasti cor meum, in uno oculorum  
meorum, et in uno crine colli tui. Ego  
dormio, et cor meum vigilat. Vox dilecti  
mei pulsantis: Aperi mihi, soror mea,  
amica mea, columba mea, immaculata

## INTROIT

Let us all rejoice in the Lord while  
celebrating this festival in honor of the  
Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin  
Mary, a festival which rejoices the Angels  
and suggests to them new canticles of

Praise Of the Son Of God. Ps. 44. My  
heart uttered a good work: I address my  
works to the King. Glory

## COLLECT

O God who didst will that Thine Only  
Begotten Son who dost dwell with Thee  
from all eternity should live and reign  
in the Heart of the Virgin Mary; grant  
us, we beseech thm the grace to celebrate  
continually with one only heart, this  
most holy life of Jesus and Mary, to have  
but one heart with them, and one among  
ourselves, to accomplish Thy will in all  
things with a generous heart and resolute  
will, that So we may merit to become Ue  
to Thy Heart. Through the Same Lord.

LESSON FROM THE CANTICLE OF  
CANTICLES (C. 4)

How beautiful art thou, my love, how  
beautiful art thou! Thy eyes are doves  
eyes, besides what is hid within. Thou  
art all fair, O my love, and there is no  
spot in thee. Come from Libanus, my  
spouse, come from Libanus, come: thou  
shalt be crowned from the top of Amana,  
from the top of Sanir and Hermon, from  
the dens of lions, from the mountains  
of the leopards. Thou hast wounded my  
heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast  
wounded my heart with one of thy eyes,  
and with one hair of thy neck. I sleep,  
and my heart watcheth. Open to me, my

### 334 - THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

mea: quia caput meum plenum est rore,  
et cincinni eci guttis noctium. Pone me  
ut signaculum super cor meum, ut signaculum  
super brachium meum; quia fortis est ut mors dilectio,  
dura sicut infernus aemulatio. Lampades ejus,  
lampades ignis atque flammarum. Aquae multae non  
potuerunt exstinguere caritatem, nec flumina  
obruent illam. Si dederit homo omnem substantiam  
domus suae pro dilectione, quasi nihil despiciet eam.

#### GRADUALE

Estote imitatores Jesu et Mariae, sicut filii  
carissimi: et ambulate in dilectione, sicut et ipsi  
dilexerunt vos. Hoc sentite in cordibus vestris,  
quod et in Corde ipsorum: et omnia vestra in  
humilitate et caritate fiant! V. Convertimini ad Deum  
in toto corde vestro: et sit vobis cor unum et anima una.

ALLELUIA, Alleluia V, (Ps 56:2 *Mach. 1*)  
Paratum cor meum, Deus cordis mei, paratum  
cor meum, ut faciam omnes voluntates tuas  
corde magno et animo volenti. Post Septuagesimam,  
omissis Alleluia, V. et Sequentia, dicitur Tractus.

#### TRACTUS

Vide, Domine, quoniam tribulor, conturbatus  
est venter meus, subversum est Cor meum in  
memetipsa, quoniam amaritudine plena sum. V.  
Factum est Cor Virginis speculum clarissimum  
passionis Christi, et imago perfecta mortis ejus,  
quia stigmata illius in Corde suo portavit. V.  
Mortificationem Jesu semper in Corde et corpore  
suo portavit, ut vita Jesu manifestaretur in illa.

#### SEQUENTIA

Lactabunda canant pie  
Cuncta corda Cor Mariae.  
Cor amandum omni corde,  
Cor laudandum omni mente.

### MASS OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

Cor aeterni Numinis  
En factum est Virginis  
Cor aeternum.  
Haec est Virgo sapiens,

sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled:  
for my hair is full of dew, and my locks  
of the drops of the night. Put me as a  
seal upon thy breast, as a seal upon thy  
arm: for love is strong as death, jealousy  
as hard as hell. The lamps thereof are  
fire and flames. Many waters cannot  
quench charity, neither can the floods  
drown it: if a man should give all the  
substance of his house for love, he shall  
despise it as nothing.

#### GRADUAL

Be ye imitators of Jesus and Mary as  
their cherished children, and walk in  
their love as they have loved you. Conceive  
in your hearts the sentiments of their  
Hearts and may all your actions be  
performed in humility and charity. Turn  
to God with your whole being and have  
but one heart and one soul among you.

ALLELUIA. Alleluia (Ps. 56:2 *Mach. 1*)

My heart is ready, O God of my heart,  
my heart is ready. To do all that Thou  
willest with a generous being and resolute  
will. (After Septuagesima Sunday, the Alleluia and Sequence are omitted.)

#### TRACT

Behold, O Lord, the grief which oppresses  
me; my heart is troubled within me for  
I am filled with bitterness.

V. The Heart of Mary has become a  
faithful mirror of the Passion of Jesus

Christ, for she bore the Stigmata in her  
Heart.

V. She constantly bore the mortification  
of Jesus in her Heart, and in her body,  
that the life of Jesus might be manifested in her.

#### SEQUENCE

Now let all hearts rejoice and sing the  
praises of the Heart of Mary.  
Every heart should love her dearly, and  
every heart give highest praise.

335 -

The Heart of God Most-High hath made  
Himself the Virgin's heart eternal;

She is the Virgin most wise, who has

Haec est Virgo rapiens  
     Cor divinum.  
 Consors patris Dexteræ,  
 Fit Matris Deiparæ  
     Cor et Natus.  
 Flos Cordis Altissimi,  
 Flos Cordis Virginei,  
     Flos et fructus.  
 Cordis nostri gaudium,  
 Exsili solatium,  
     Cor Mariæ.  
 Anoris miraculum,  
 Caritatis speculum,  
     Liber vitæ.  
 Fons vivus charismatum,  
 Thesaurus fidelium,  
     Thronus Christi.  
 Rubus ignem proferens,  
 Incombustus permarens,  
     Fornax Coeli.  
 O Fornax mirifica,  
 In te manent socia,  
     os et flamma!  
 Ros mire vivificans,  
 Flamma beatificans,  
     Corda pura.  
 Infundatur omnibus  
 Ros ille pectoribus:  
 Accendatur cordibus  
     Flamma sacra.  
 O Jesu, Cor Mariæ,  
 Ros, ignis, fons gratiæ,  
 Urce, purga, posside  
     Corda cuncta.

336-

O amor, propera,  
 Ubique impera,  
 In terris, ut super sidera!  
 Nova praeordia,  
 Nova fac omnia,  
 Ut Jesum laudent cum Maria!  
 Amen. Alleluia.  
 SEQUENTIA SANCTI EVANGELII SE-  
 CUNDUM LUCAM. Cap. 2.  
 (c. 2)

In illa tempore: Pastores loquebantur ad  
 invicem: Transeamus usque Bethlehem,  
 et videamus hoc verbum, quod factum  
 est, quod Dominus ostendit nobis. Et  
 venerunt festinantes: et invenerunt Ma-

ravished the Heart Divine;

The Son, right-hand of God the Father,  
 has made Himself the Heart and Son of  
 her, the mother of Incarnate God.  
 The flower of the Heart of the Almighty,  
 the flower of the Virgin's heart, is now  
 become both flower and fruit.  
 O heart of Mary pure, thou joy of all our  
 hearts, thou solace of our xii,

Thou miracle of love, thou mirror of  
 great charity and book of life,

Thou art the living fountain of heavenly  
 gifts, the treasure of the faithful, the lofty  
 throne of Christ,  
 The burning bush, that glows with fire  
 Yet never is consumed, the furnace of  
 celestial love,  
 O admirable fire, in thee there is mingled  
 the miracle of flame and dew.

O wondrous dew, imparting life, O fire  
 giving happiness to those whose hearts  
 are pure,  
 Pour forth into our souls this dew of  
 life, and kindle in our hearts the flames  
 of love.

O Jesus, Heart of Mary, O dew, O fire,  
 O fount of grace, burn, purify, possess  
 the hearts of all mankind[

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

O love make haste to spread thy kingdom  
 every where, upon the earth even as Thou  
 dost reign beyond the starry firmament!  
 Renew our hearts in praise, make all  
 things new on earth, singing forever the  
 glory of Jesus and Mary, Amen.

#### CONTINUATION OF THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

At that time: The shepherds said one to  
 another: Let us go over to Bethelchern  
 and let us see this word that is come to  
 pass, which the Lord hath showed to us.  
 And they came with haste: and they



riam, et Joseph, et Infantem positum in praesepio. Videntes autem cognoverunt de verbo, quod dictu erat illis de puero hoc. Et omnes qui audierunt, mirati sunt: et de his, quae dicta erant a pastoribus ad ipsos. Maria autem conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens, in Corde suo (Credo)

#### OFFERTORIUM OFFERTORY

Gaudete mecum omnes, qui diligitis me, quia Cor meum elegit Altissimus, ut poneret in eo thronum suum, et regnum Filii dilectionis suae. (Alleluia)

#### SECRETA

Tua, Domine, propitiatione, et Cordis sanctissimi beatae Mariae semper Virginis intercessione, auferatur a cordibus nostris concupiscentia carnis et oculorum, atque ambitio saeculi: tibi quoque, cum hac oblatione, in igne tui amoris atque in flamma aeternae caritatis jugiter immolentur. Per Dominum.

found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all that heard wondered: and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart (Creed)

Rejoice with me, all you who love me, for the Most High has chosen my Heart to set up His throne and to establish therein the Kingdom of the Son of His love. (Alleluia)

#### SECRET

O Lord, by Thy mercy and through the intercession of the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, drive out from our hearts the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, and grant that with this oblation, these hearts may be forever immolated in the fire of Thy love, and in the flames of eternal charity. Through the same, etc.

### MASS OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

337 -

#### COMMUNIO

Beatum Cor tuum, O Maria Virgo, thesaurus sanctitatis, fornax divini amoris, thronus omnium virtutum, sanctuarium divinitatis! Dei Genitrix, intercede pro nobis. (Alleluia)

#### POSTCOMMUNIO

Domine Jesu Christe, qui miranda sanctissimae vitae, passionis et resurrectionis tuae mysteria, in sacratissimo Corde Matris tuae admirabilis conservari et glorificari voluisti: praesta, quaesumus; ut meritis et intercessione ejusdem Cordis amantissimi, sicut te panem vivum, ac Regem nostrum, ex altari tuo suscepimus; ita in corde et corpore nostro viventem et regnantem portare et glorificare, nosque in te et propter te solum vivere valeamus. Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre, in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum.

#### COMUNION

Blessed is Thy Heart, O Virgin Mary!

It is the measure of sanctity, the furnace of divine love, the throne of all virtues, sanctuary of the Divinity: Mother of God, intercede for us. (Alleluia)

#### POSTCOMMUNION

Lord Jesus Christ, who hast willed that the marvellous mysteries of Thy Life, Passion and Resurrection, should be preserved and glorified in the Most Holy Heart of Thy admirable Mother, grant us, we beseech Thee, through the merits and intercession of this most loving Heart, that as we have received Thee at Thy altar, who art our living bread and our king, so we may bear Thee and glorify Thee living and reigning in our hearts, and that we may live in Thee and for Thee alone, who, being God, dost live and reign with God the Father, etc.

## OFFICE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

## IN I VESPEPIS

Ant. 1. O admirabile et omni laude dignissimum Cor Mariae Virginis, in quo Deus Pater regnum dilectionis suae constituit! alleluia.

(Psalmi ut in Communi Festorum, B.M.V.)

Ant. 2. Elegit Mariam Unigenitus Patris ab aeterno, et praelegit eam, ut dignum sibi in Corde ejus praepararet habitaculum, alleluia.

Ant. 3. Beatum Cor Dei Genitricis Mariae, sacrarium Spiritus sancti, in quo inhabitat plenitudo charitatis, alleluia.

Ant- 4- Corde magno et animo, volenti Christo canamus gloriam, in hac sacra solemnitate sanctissinni Cordis praecelsae Genitricis ejus Mariae, alleluia.

Ant. 5. Cum jucunditate laudes beatissimi Cordis Virginis Mariae celebremus, ut, ipsa pro nobis intercedente, secundum Cor Filii ejus effici mereamur, alleluia.

Capitulum. Cant. viij

Pone me ut signaculum super Cor tuum; ut signaculum super brachium tuum, quia fortis est or mors dilectio, dura sicut infernus aemulatio: lampades ejus, lampades ignis atque flammaram.

Hymnus

Jesu, Mariae gloria,  
Praeclara Cordis Virginis  
Cor intonat Praeconia:  
Nostris adesto canticis.

## FIRST VESPER

Ant. 1. O admirable Heart of the Virgin Mary, most worthy of all praise, in which God the Father has established the Kingdom of His love, alleluia.

(Psalms as on the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

Ant. 2. The only Son of the Father chose Mary from all eternity and predestined her in order to prepare a fit dwelling for Himself in her Heart, alleluia.

Ant- 3. Blessed Heart of Mary, Mother of God, sanctuary of the Holy Ghost in which dwelleth the fullness of His charity, alleluia.

Ant- 4. Let us sing the glory of Christ with 2 generous heart and ardent soul on this sacred feast of the Most Holy Heart of Mary, His august Mothers alleluia!

Ant. 5. Let us joyfully sing the praises of the Blessed Heart of the Virgin Mary that, by her intercession, we may merit to become pleasing to the Heart of Her Son, alleluia.

Chapter (Cam. 8, 6)

Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm: for love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as bell. The lamps thereof are fire and flames.

Hymn

O Jesus, Glory of Mary, our hearts  
intone majestic praises of her virginal  
heart; hearken in our chant.

## OFFICE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

339 -

Miranda Matris viscera,  
Miranda sunt et ubera,  
Regale sed Cor omnibus  
Miraculis praestantius.  
Quem sacra, paucis mensibus,  
Portavit alvus parvulum,  
Hunc Cor, prius, sacratius,

Admirable is the womb of Thy Mother,  
admirable her breasts; but surpassing  
all wonders is her royal Heart.

Her chaste womb bore the incarnate God  
but for a few months; but long before,  
more perfectly she bore Him in her Heart.

Semperque gestat maximum.  
 Cor, aula regum Principis,  
 Coelumque coeli splendidum,  
 Templum superni Praesulis,  
 Altare pacis aureum.  
 Arca quid ista sanctius?  
 Thesaurus orbis, omnia  
 Collata nobis coelitus  
 Servans Dei Mysteria.  
 Ave Cor admirabile,  
 Amore Jesu flammeum,  
 Te sentiant amabile  
 Qui te colunt, Rex cordium.  
 Pars nostra, spes et gaudium,  
 Coetusque nostri gloria,  
 Amor perennis omnium  
 Jungat tibi praecordia.  
 Amor Deus, Cor Numinis,  
 Cor esto mentis unicum,  
 Amor regens Cor Virginis,  
 Dux solus esto supplicum.  
 O sacrosancta Trinitas,  
 Aeterna vita cordium,  
 Cordis Mariae sanctitas,  
 In corde regres omnium. Amen.  
 V. Paratum Cor meum, Deus, Paratum  
 Cor meum.  
 R. Ut faciam, omnes voluntates tuas  
 Ad Magnit. Ant. O Mater amabilis, bea-  
 cam te dicent omnes generationes: quia  
 respexit Deus humilitatem Cordis tui, et  
 invenit te secundum Cor suum. (Alleluia)

Hail, beauteous Heart! the court of  
 the Most High, the shining  
 heaven of heavens; temple of the Lord  
 of hosts, golden altar of peace.  
 What more holy than this Ark?  
 Treasure of the universe, guarding the  
 innumerable mysteries given to us by God.

Hail, admirable Heart, burning with love  
 for Christ! May all who honour thee  
 most royally experience thy love.

Thou art our portion and our hope,  
 the glory of our company;  
 may perpetual love unite our hearts in  
 praise of thee.  
 O love of God, heart of the Most-High,  
 be thou sole heart of all our souls;  
 O regal love, of Virgin Queen be thou  
 our only guide in prayer.  
 Thrice-hallowed Trinity sublime, eternal  
 life of souls, grant that the holiness of  
 Mary's heart may reign forever in all  
 hearts.

V. My heart is ready, O God, my heart  
 is ready

R. To do all that Thou Willest.

Magnificat Antiphon: O amiable Mother,  
 All nations shall call thee blessed, because  
 God has regarded the humility of thy  
 Heart and found it like unto His own,  
 alleluia.

340 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Oremus.  
 Deus, qui Unigenitum tuum tecum,  
 ab aeterno viventem, in Corde Virginis  
 Matris vivere et regnare voluisti: da nobis,  
 quaesumus, hanc sanctissimam, Jesu et  
 Mariae in Corde uno vitam jugiter cele-  
 brare, cor unum inter nos et cum ipsis  
 habere, tuamque in omnibus voluntatem  
 corde magno et animo volenti adimplere;  
 ut secundum Cor tuum a te inveniri  
 mereamur. Per eundem.

AD MATUTINUM

Let us pray: O God, who didst will that  
 Thine Only-Begotten Son who dost dwell  
 with Thee from all eternity should live  
 and reign in the Heart of the Virgin  
 Mary, grant us, we beseech Thee, the  
 grace to celebrate continually with one  
 only heart, this most holy life of Jesus  
 and Mary, to have but one heart with  
 them, and one among ourselves; to ac-  
 complish Thy will in all things with a  
 generous heart and resolute will, that so  
 we may merit to become like to Thy  
 Heart. Through the same, etc.

MATINS

Invit. Jesum in Corde Mariae regnan-

tem venite adorems,. - Qui est amor et  
vita nostra.

Ps. Venite exultemus.

Hymnus

Quem Cor supremi Numinis  
Effundit orbi Filium,  
Effundit et Cor Virginis,  
Imago regis cordium.

Cor, sanctitatis formula,  
Cordis fidelis regula,  
Dignurn Dei sacrarium,  
Cubile Jesu floridum:

Te candidata lilia,  
Nardus rosaeque fulciunt.  
Te mala coeli dulcia  
Amore languens ambiunt.

Cor Matris Agni melleum,  
Amoris igne torridurn,  
Te corda nostra diligant,  
Tuos amores, exprimant.

Sidus micans amantium,  
Sol esto, duxque mentibus,  
Fornax amoris, omnium

Accende flammas cordibus.

Redempta Christi gratia

Fac corda Christo vivere,  
Calcere mundi somnia,  
Se tota Jesu tradere.

Invit. Come let us adore Jesus, our

love and our life, reigning in the Heart  
of Mary.

Ps. 94

Hym

The heart of God Eternal brought forth  
upon the earth His Son, the Son borne  
also in the Virgin's heart, that perfect  
image of the Sovereign Heart.

O Heart that patterns sanctity, thou  
rule of every faithful heart thou temple  
worthy of thy God, and flower-strewn  
couch of Christi

Thou an all white with lilies, pez~  
fumed with rose and nard, surrounded  
with heavenly apples, languishing with  
love 1

O sweet Heart of the Mother of  
the Lamb, burning with the fire of  
love, may our hearts love and imitate  
thee.

O shining seat of those who love thee,  
be thou our sun, the guidance of our  
minds; furnace of glowing charity, en.

kindle all our hearts with flames.

Grant that the hearts of those whom

Christ redeemed May live for Him alone;  
spurning the follies of the world, yielded  
completely to His love.

OFFICE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

3 4 1 -

Fac nos dolosi frangere  
Fraudes malignas tartari,  
Vita tua convivere,  
Amore Christi commori.

Amor, sacri fons nectaris,  
Mentes replens inebria,  
Cordis sagitta Virginis,  
Transfige cordis intima.

O sacrosancta Trinicas,  
Aeterna vita cordium,  
Cordis Mariae sanctitas,  
In corde regnes omnium.

Amen.

Grant them the grace to pierce the  
wicked frauds of hell, to share thy per  
fect life, and with thee die of love for  
Christ.

O loving fountain of holiest rectar, fill  
and satiate our souls; o sword that  
pierced her Virgin Heart, transfix our  
very inmost hearts.

Thrice-hallowed Trinity sublime, eter-  
nal life of souls, grant that the holiness  
of Mary's heart may reign forever in our  
hearts. Amen.

In Primo Nocturno

Ant. Maria Cor suum tradidit ad vigilandum diluculo ad Dominum qui fecit eam: et in conspectu Altissimi deprecata est, et ipse tribuit ei secundum Cor ejus. Psalmi ut in Communi Festorum BM.V. Ant. Preparavit Cor suum Domino, et dilexit illum solum Corde perfecto, et ipse liberavit eam ab omnibus inimicis ejus. Ant. Omni custodia servavit Cor suum, ideo delectata est in Domino, et dedit illi petitiones Cordis ejus.

V. Paratum Cor meum, Deus, paratum Cor meum. R. Ut faciam omnes voluntates tuas.

Lectio 1: De Catricis Cantico. (C. 4) Quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra es! Oculi tui columbarum, absque eo quod intrinsecus latet. Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te. Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni. Coronaberis de capite Amana, de vertice Sanir et Hermon, de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum. Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa, vulnerasti cor meum, in uno oculorum tuorum, et in uno crine colli tui.

First Noctury,

Ant. Mary offered her Heart to watch early for the Lord who made her; she prayed in the presence of the Most High and He granted the desires of her heart. Psalms as the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ant. She made ready her Heart for the Lord and loved Him with a perfect heart; He delivered her from all her enemies. Ant. She kept strict guard over her Heart; therefore was she loved by God, who granted her her Heart's desires.

V. My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready,

R. To do all that Thou wilt.

Lesson 1: Canticle of Canticles (C. 4)

How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou! Thy eyes are doves eyes, besides what is hid within. Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee. Come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus, come: thou shalt be crowned from the top of Anwa, from the top Of Sannir and Hermon, from the dew of lions, from the mountains of leopards. Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of thy neck.

342 -

THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

R. Beata es, Virgo Maria, et beatissimum Cor meum, thronus ornatum virtutum, templum sanctum, Trinitatis, fornix divini amoris.\* Sola sine exemplo dilexisti Dominum nomina Jesum Christum ex toto Corde meo. V. Ipse Pater annuit te, quia tu amasti Filium unicum.-Sola sine.

Lectio 11 (C. 5)

Veniat Dilectus meus in hortum suum, et comedat fructum pomorum suorum, Veni in domum meam, Soror mea Sponsa, melle myrrham meam cum aceto, melle areas: cameli fenum cum melle, bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo: comedite, amici, et bibite, et inebriamini, charissimi. Ego dormio, et Car meum vigilat: Vox Dilecti mei pulsantis: Aperi

R. Blessed are Thou, O Virgin Mary, and blessed is Thy Heart, the throne of all virtues, temple of the Holy Trinity, furnace of divine Love. Thou alone without equal hast loved our Lord Jesus Christ with thy whole heart. V. The Father Himself loves Thee because Thou didst love His Only-Begotten Son. Thou alone.

Lesson 11. Ibid. (C. 5)

Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat the fruit of his apple trees. I will come into my garden, O my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my myrrh, with my aromatic spices. I have eaten the honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved. I sleep, and my heart watches.

mihi, Sonar mea, amica mea, columba mea, immaculata mea: quia caput meum plenum est rare, et cincinni mei guttis nocturnis.

R. Felix es, sacra Virgo Maria, et omni laude dignissima: quia Christum per fidem et dilectionem in Corde tuo formasti. -Benedicimus tui in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus Cordis tui Jesus. V. Hic est Deus Cordis mei, et pars mea in 2CtCMUM. -Benedicta.

Lectio III (C. 8)

Quia est is qui ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super Dilectum suum. Pone me ut signaculum super Carum, ut signaculum super brachium meum, qui fortis est ut mors dilectio, data sicut infernas acmuli: lampades ejus, lampades ignis tuas flammarum. Aquae multae non poterunt extinguere charitatem, nec flumina obruent illam. Si decent horno Manton substantiam domus tuae pro dilectione, quasi nihil despiciet eam.

R. Vidi speciosam sicut columbam, et circumdabant eam ejus flores rosarum, et lilia convallium: ipsa autem voce Magna clamabat: -Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore languen. V. Flores

The voice of my beloved knocking. Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is full of dew, and my locks of the drops of the rights.

R. Blessed art thou, O Holy Virgin Mary and most worthy of all praise because thou didst form Christ in thy heart by faith and love. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy Heart, Jesus. V. He is the God of my heart and my portion forever. Blessed.

Lesson III. Ibid. (C. 8)

Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved? Put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a sea upon thy arm: for love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell. The lamps thereof are fire and flames. Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the flood drawn it; if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing.

R. I beheld her beautiful as a dove and roses and lilies of the valley surrounded her heart; she cried out in a loud voice, saying: "Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples because I languish

## OFFICE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

343 -

tui fructus honoris et bonestatis. Fulcite. Gloria Patri. Fulcite.  
etc.

In Secundo Nocturno

Ant. Omnis gloria tua regis est, intus. De bona thentum Cordis ejus proferuntur omnia bona.

Ant. Veni, dilecta, Cordis mei, et praebe mihi Carum, et pomm, in co thronum meum, et regnum filii dilectionis meae.  
my love.

Ant. Confirmatum est Carum Virginis, in quo divina mysteria, Angelo nuntiante, concepit.

V. Desiderium Cordis Matris tuae audivit Dominus.

R. Praeparationem Cordis ipsius audivit

guish with love. V. Thy flowers are the fruit of love and honesty. Stay me up,

Second Nocturn

Ant. All the glory of the King's daughter is from within; all graces flow forth from the vast treasury of her heart.

Ant. Come, beloved of my heart; give me thy heart; I will set up My throne therein and the Kingdom of the Son of

Ant. The Heart of the Virgin was confirmed, in which the Divine Mysteries were wrought at the menage of the Angel.

V. God heard the desires of Mary's Heart.

R. He heard the preparation of Mary's Heart.

auris ejus.

Lectio TV: Semen tatted Bernardini Sc-  
ncrais. Ex Scrm. ix. de Virair.

Quis mortalium, nisi divino rums vel  
frews oraculo, de vera Dei et hominis  
Genitrice quichluman modicum, vel gran-  
de pramurnat incircumcisis, imo pollutis  
labus dicere, quam Pater anut saccula  
Deus in perpetuarn, et dignissimarn Vir-  
ginent pracdcstinavit, Filius clegit in Ma-  
mcm, Spiritus sanctus ormis gratiae do-  
miciburn pr2eparavit? Quibus verbis ego  
h.munculus sensus altissimos Virginci  
Cordis sanctissimo ore prolaws efferam,  
quibus non sufficit lingua omnium ho-  
minurn et etiam Angelonarn? Dominus  
cnina ait: Bonus homo de bona t1unIUM  
cordis sui pmfct bona. Quit 2MCca inter  
puros hornines melior potest excogimfi,  
qU2M illa quae mcruit effici Mater Dei,  
quae in Corde et in utem sam ipsurn  
Deum hospitata cst? Quis thesaums me-  
lior, quama ipse divinus amor quo form-  
cemn Cot Virginis ardens crat?

lesson IV: Sermon IX of St. Bernardine  
of Siena on the Visitation.

What mortal, unless under the influence  
of Divine inspiration, may presume to  
speak little or much, with uncircumcised,  
my, polluted lips of the true Mother of  
the God-Man whom God the Father pre-  
destined from all eternity to be ever 2  
most pure Virgin; God, the Son, chose  
her for His mother; " the Holy Ghost  
prepared a dwelling full of grawc? In  
what words shall I, a miserable creature,  
express the noblest sentiments ever ut-  
tered by holy lips to her Virginal Heart?  
Not all the tongues of men, nor even of  
angels, would suffice to do so. For the  
Lord has said: A good Man utters good  
words from the treasury of his heam  
And who among pure creatures can be  
imagined better than she who was worthy  
to become the Mother of God, who bore  
God Himself in her heart and in her  
womb? What treasure is better than Di-  
vine Love itself of which the Heart of  
the Virgin was the ficry furnam?

344 -

#### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

R. In capite libri scripoum est de me, ut  
faciam voluntatent tuam; Deus mcus,  
volui, et legem tuarn in media Cordis  
mci. -Paramm car mcum, Deus cordis  
mci, paratunt car Mellon. V. VOC2beris  
voluntas mea in cattle cuo~Paramm.  
Lectio, V. Lesson V.

De hot igitur Cattle, quasi de fornace  
divini ardoris Virgo beam protulit verba  
bona, id est, verba ardemissimae ch2rita-  
tis. Sicut enim a vase SUMMO et Optima  
vino pleno, non potest mire nisi optimum  
vinum: aut sicut et a furnace SUMMi t  
ardoris non cgreditur aisi incendium fer-  
vens: sic de Corde Mattis Christi mire  
non poruit verbum, nisi surnmi summe-  
que divini amoris atque ardoris. Sapientis  
dominae atclue mauonae est, PaUC2 verba,  
solida tarnear atque sententiosa, habere.  
Proinde septem vicibus, quasi SCPTCM  
verba tantem, mirac sententiae, ct virtutis

R. In the head of the Back, it is written  
of me that I should do Thy will, O my  
God. I have willcd it and Thy law is in  
the midst of my heart. My heart is ready,  
O God of my heart, my heart is ready. V.  
Thou shalt call my will in thy heart.

Therefore, from this heart as from a fur-  
met of Divine love, the Blessed Virgin  
uttered good words, i.e., words of burn-  
ing charity. As from a vessel full of the  
best wine, nothing can come forth but  
he bc~t ~vinc, or as from a furnace of  
intense heat, there comes forth nothing  
but burning fire; so from the Heart of  
the Mother of Christ, no words could  
come forth but words of Divine love and  
burning zeal. We have few words spoken  
by the Mistress and Mother of wisdom,  
but they are weighty and wise. The seven  
words spoken by the Blessed Mother of

a Christi benedictissima Matre leguntur dicta, ut mystice ostendatur ipsam fuisse plenam gratia septiformi. Cum Angelo his tantummodo locum est: Quomodo fiet istud? ct: Eme ancilla Domini. Cum Elisabeth his ctiam, scilicet illam salutando, et Deum laudando, cum ait: Magnificet 2 anima mea Dominum. Cum Filio ctiam his, scilicet in templo: Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic? ct in nuptiis: Vinum non habent. Cum ministris sernel: Quaecumque dixerit vobis, facite. Et in his omnibus, scilicet valde partum locuta est: excepto quod in laude Dei et gratiam actione scilicet amplius dilaturavit, scilicet cum ait: Magnificat anima mea Dominum: ubi non cum homine, sed turn, Deo Incum fait.

R. Magnificate Deum Patrem mecum, et exaltemus nomen eius in idipsum, qui dedit mihi Car suum, Filium ejus uni. cum: 'Hic est Filius meus dilectus, et Car return amantissimum. V. Magnificet Deum Patrem omnes generationes, et exaltemus sanctissimum Car meum Jesum, Filium ejus unicum. -Hic est.

## OFFICE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

Lectio VI. Lesson VI.

Haec scripta verba, secundum septem amoris promissus et arma, sub miro gradu et ordine prolata, sunt quasi septem flammulae fornacei Cordis ejus. Quae verba considerate; atque rumina mens devota, cum ipso propheta sit: Quam dulcia faucibus meis, id est, omnibus affectionibus, cloquia oralis Form dulcedo haec, quam in verbis beatissimae Virginis devota mens scilicet, est ardor piae devotionis, quam in cis anima expunctualiter probat. Dicat igitur meus devota: Quam dulcia faucibus meis cloquia tua. Distinguamus veto per ordinem has septem flammulas amoris verborum Virginis benedictae. Prima est flammula amoris separantis: scilicet, amoris transformantis: tertia, amoris communicantis: quarta, amoris jubilantis: quinta, amoris saporis: sexta, amoris compatiens: septima, amoris consum-

Christi sunt so many marvels of wisdom and virtue~ mystic sign that she was full of the seven-fold grace. She spoke with the Angel: "How shall this be done?" and "Behold the handmaid of the Lord!" With Elisabeth with me, viz., to greet her and to praise God, when she said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord." With her Son twice, once in the Temple, "Son, why hast Thou done so to us," and at the Marriage Feast, "They have no wine." To the servants once: "Whatever He shall say to you, do ye." In all these cases she spoke little except that in praise and thanksgiving to God, she spoke more at length, viz., when she said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord," since she was speaking not with man, but with God.

R. Praise God the Father with me and cult His Name above all forever, for He gave me His Heart, His only Son. This is my beloved Son and my most loving heart. V. Let all generations praise God the Father and exalt Thy most holy Heart, O Jesus, His only Son. This is, etc.

These seven words came forth as seven outgrowths and acts of love, varying in kind and degree like seven flames from the furnace of her heart. The devout mind, meditating and pondering these words, says with the prophet: "How sweet are Thy words to my palate," i.e., my affections. This sweetness which the devout soul finds in the words of the Blessed Virgin is the fire of pious devotion which the soul experiences in their meditation. The devout soul, therefore, says: "How sweet are thy words to my palate." Truly we distinguish an order to these seven darts of love-the words of the Blessed Virgin. The first is a dart of separating love; the second of transforming love; the third, communicating love; the fourth, joyful love; the fifth, savouring love; the sixth, compensating



mantis.

R. Crude et aninno Christo canamus  
glociam, qui Cor suum dedit sanctissimam  
Materi suae, et Spiritum, quem posuit in  
media ejus: or sint \*Cor unum et animatus  
unus. V. Benedictus sit in aeternum et  
ultra Cor sanctissimum Jesu et Mariae-  
Cor unum. Gloria Patri. Cor unum.

In *Tertio Noeterno*

Ant. Ego dormio, et Cor meum vigilat, et  
meditatio Cordis mei in conspectu Dei  
semper.

Ant. Beata es, Maria, quae Dominum  
portasti in sinu tuo: sed beatissima,  
quia primum et feliciter portasti Curram Cattle  
quartus Ventre.

Ant. Ego Mater pulchrae dilectionis, et  
agnitionis, et sanctae spei: ego diligenter  
me diligo.        those who love me.

V. Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum. R.  
In Cordis regnante Mariam.

love; the seventh, consummating love.

R. Let us sing with heart and soul, the  
glory of Christ who gave His Heart to  
His most holy Mother, and set up His  
spirit in the midst of her that they might  
be one in heart and soul. V. Blessed for-  
ever be the most holy Hearts of Jesus and  
Mary. One in Heart and soul.

*Third Nocturn*,

Ant. I sleep, but my heart watches and  
the meditation of my heart is ever in the  
sight of God.

Ant. Blessed art Thou, O Mary, who  
didst bear the Lord, the Creator of the  
world, but most blessed because long  
before that, thou didst bear Him much  
more happily in thy heart than in thy womb.

Ant. I am the Mother of fair love, of  
knowledge and of holy hope. I love

V. Let every soul praise the Lord.  
R. Reigning in the Heart of Mary.

346 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Lectio VII: Lectio sancti Evangelii secun-  
dum Lucam (Cap. 2) (C. 2)

In illo tempore: Pastores loquebantur ad  
invicem: Transivimus usque Bethlehem,  
et videamus hoc Verbum, quod factum  
est: quod fecit Dominus, et ostendit no-  
his. Et reliqua.

Homilia sancti Bonaventurae Episcopi.  
(De Expositione in Capitulo 2 Lucae.)

Elic commendatur Pastorum diligentia, a  
certitudine inventionis, cujus laus ex tri-  
bus colligitur: scilicet quia fuit certissime  
comprobata, celeriter divulgata, et semper  
conservata. Primum quidem fuit cer-  
tissime comprobata, quia per probabilia  
signa et evidentia, propter quod dicitur:  
Et invenit eam Manan et Joseph, et infan-  
tem positum in praesepe. Ideo inven-  
runt quia solliciti quaeque erant et absque  
fictione. Et nota quod invenitur cum  
Materi Virgine, et Joseph vice, justo, et in  
praesepe; quia cum qui vult Christum  
invenire, oportet habere munditiam cor-  
dis respectu sui, justitiam respectu proxi-  
mi, humilitatem et reverentiam respectu  
Dei. Non solum fuit certissime compro-

Lesson VII: The Gospel of St. Luke

At that time, the shepherds said one to  
another; "Let us go over to Bethlehem  
and let us see this word which is come  
to pass, which the Lord has shewed us.

Homily of St. Bonaventura on St. Luke  
(C. 2)

Here is commended the diligence of the  
shepherds, whose praise may be summed  
up under three heads, with regard to the  
certitude of the discovery, viz., that it  
was fully confirmed, quickly published  
and studiously preserved. In the first  
place, it was fully confirmed by creditable  
signs and evidence, wherefore it is said,  
"And they found Mary and Joseph and  
the Child lying in a manger." They  
found Him because they sought Him  
diligently and earnestly. And now that  
He is found with Mary, a Virgin, with  
Joseph, a just man, and in a manger; for  
he who wishes to find Christ, must have  
purity as regards his heart, justice as re-  
gards his neighbour, and humility and

bats, sed et cetera divulgata; propterea subditur: Et omnes; qui audierunt nuntiati sunt, scilicet de parvulo nato, et de his close dicta crant a Pastoribus ad ipsos, quae scilicet audierant ab Angelo.

R. Audite, filii, et scitote quia vos ads in Corde meo, ad convivendum et ad commorienclum. Discite ergo a me, quia mitis sum et humilis Corde: -Et invenitis requiem in sinibus vestris V. Ponite hoc in cordibus vestris, et omnia vestra in humilitate et charitate fiant 'Et invenitis.

Lectio VIII.

Fuit tertio studiose conservata, unde subditur: Maria autem WDSrV2bat omnia verba haec, conferens in Corde suo, tanquam prudens et discreta, secundum illud; Miscricordia et veritas te non deserant. Circumdanda cas gutturi tuo, et de-

reverence with respect to God. Not only was it fully confirmed, but also quickly published, wherefore it is added, "And all who heard marvelled at the Child who was born, at what was told them by the shepherds, viz., what they had heard from the angel.

R. H~, O ye children, and know that you are in my heart in life and in death. Therefore learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart and you shall find rest for your souls.

V. Lay this up in your hearts and do all your works in humility and charity and you shall find rest for your souls.

Lesson VIII.

in the third place, it was studiously preserved whence it is added, "But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her Heart." It was also prudent and discreet, according to this: "Mercy and truth are not wanting to Thee. Compass

## OFFICE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

347 -

scribe in libris cordis mei. Et in Ecclesiis non: Qui ponit illis in corde suo, sapiens erit semper. Unde dicitur de fatuo: Cor fatui quasi vas confractum, et omnem sapientiam non tenebit. Unde Cor Virginis fuit ar~ continens divinorum eloquiorum arcana. Et ideo per me= Moyses designator, de quo dicitur quod continebat tabulas legis divinae. Et quia non solum conservabat, sed etiam intelligebat, idcirco additur: Conferens ea in Corde suo, ita ut posset dicere illud: In Corde MCO abscondi cloquia mea.

R. (a) Omnis spiritus laudet te, Domine, et omnes virtutes tuas benedicant tibi:

\*Quia regnum pulchritudinis, et thronum gloriat majestatis tuae in Corde Matris posuisti in aeternum. V. Tibi laus, tibi honor, tibi gloria, O beata Trinitas. \*Quia. Gloria. OQuia.

Lectio IX.

Et descendit cum eis, et venit Nazareth, et erat subditus illis. Et Mater ejus can-

them about with thy lips and transcribe them on the cables of thy heart." And in Ecclesiasticus, "He who layeth this up in his heart will be always wise." Hence it is said of the fool, "The heart of a fool is like a broken vessel and does not hold wisdom." Hence the Heart of Mary is the Ark, containing the secrets of Divine eloquence. And therefore it is designated by the Ark of Moses of which it is said that it contained the cables of the Divine law. And since she not only preserved them, but also understood them, it is added, "pondering them in her heart" so that she could say, I have hidden Thy words in my heart

R. Let every spirit praise Thee, O Lord, and all Thy powers bless Thee for Thou hast set up the Kingdom of fair love and the throne of the glory of Thy Majesty in the heart of Mary forever.

V. Praise, honour and glory to Thee, O Blessed Trinity, for Thou hast set up, etc, Lesson IX.

And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them and

servab2t omnia verba hacc in Corde suo. Hic describitur ejus clarificatio, et hoc per duo, scilicet per Mattis testimonium, ct per propriac virtutis indicium. Quan. turn ad matris Wstimonium dicitur: Et Mater ejus conservabat omnia verba hacc in 6rde suo, or pro loco cc tempore, w. timoniurn perhiberet. Sic dictum at: Tu autem, Daniel, claude scmones, et signa librum usque ad tempus statumm. Et quia hoc intelligebat, ideo dicitur: In Corde suo, secundurn illud: TCMPIUS ad responsionern cor sapientis intelligit; et dicitur de Transfigufatione Domini, quod Discipuli vcrburn confinucrunt spud sc. *Te Deum*

*Te D,*

His Mother kept all these things, pon claing them in her heart. Here is de scribed His glorification and this in two ways, viz., by the testimony of His Mother and the proof of His own power. As to the testimony of His Mother it is said, "And His Mother kept all these things, pondering them in her licart," that she might give testimony at the proper time and place. Thus it was said, "But do thou, Daniel, keep silence and scal the book until the appointed time." And since she understood this, it is said "in her heart" according to these words. "The heart of the wise men knoweth the time to . answer," and it is said of the Trans figuration of our Lord that the disciples kept the secret among themselves.

3 4 8 -

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

### AD LAUDES LAUDS

Ant. 0 bettrum Car Mariae Virginis, area sanctitatis, in qua sunt omnes the- sauri gratiae et caritatis absconclitil alle- luia. luia.

Psalmi de Dominica.

Ant. Invenit Deus Mari2ol sccondum Cor suum: close enim placita sunt ci, fixit semper, Corde MagnO Ct 2niMO VO- lenti, alleluia.

Ant. Beam CS, Maria, close Deum amasti in tow Corde too, ct fecisti ounces volun- tates ejus, Corde magno et aninno vo- lenti, alleluia.

Ant. Benedicturn Cor mum, 0 Marial tons vivus benedictionis, abyssus gratiae, fmnax amoris, thronus divinae volumatis, alleluia.

Ant. Gratia, pax, et gaudiurn omnibus cordibus quae chligunt Cor amantissimurn, Jesu ct Mariac, alleluia.

Capitulum. Cant. viii

Pone me ut signaculurn super Car to=, ut signaculurn super brachiurn room; quia fortis est or mors dflectio, clum si- cut infernus acmulatio: lampacles ejus, 12mpades ignis atclue flammarm.

Ant. 0 blessed Heart Of the Virgin Mary, ark of sanctity in which lie bidden all the UMUOCS of grace and charity, allc

Psalms for Sunday

Ant. God found the Heart of Mary like unto His own, for she accomplished all His desires with a gencrous heart and resolute will, alleluia.

Ant. Blessed an thou, 0 Mary, who didst love God with thy whole heart and didst fulfil all His wishes with 2 generous heart and resolute will, alleluia,

Ant. Blessed is thy Heart, 0 Mary, liv ing fount of blessing, abyss of grace, furnace of love, throne of the Divine will, alleluia.

Ant. Grace, Peace and joy to all hearts who love the most loving HC2M Of Jesus and Mary, alleluia.

Chapter (Cant. 8).

Put me as a seat upon thy heart, as a seat upon thy am: for love is strong 25 death, jealousy as hard as hell. The lamps thereof arc fire and flames.

Hymnus

Quid Corde Mattis Virginis  
Cali Forest sacratius?  
Corch supremi Numinis  
Quid Corde tanto gratius?

Amoris est miraculum,  
Triumphus almi Spiritus,  
Dignum Den spectaculum,  
Jucunda spes mortalibus.

Lcvamcn est lugerribus,  
Zelator ardens mentium,  
Cunctis datum fidelibus,  
Cor, vita, lux, oraculum,

O qualis hacc benignitas!  
Nostrum sibi cor abstulit  
Mattis Patrisque caritas,  
Suumque nobis conrulit.

Vos sacra proics pectoris  
Sic vos annanturn, noscite  
Tamac decus propaginis,  
dering your hearts.

Hymn

What be exists, more holy, more  
worthy of our praise, more pleasing to  
the Heart of God Most-High, than that  
of Mary, virgin purc and mother?  
It is the miracle of love, the triumph  
of the holy Ghost, the vision pleasing  
now God, the joyous hope of mom]  
man.

The comfort of the sorrowful, the ar  
dent advocate of souls, the gift to every  
Christian true, their heart and life, their  
light and oradc.

O what a blessing rich is this! the  
love of " the Father and of Macy, Vir~  
gin Mother, removes our mortal heart  
and gives us theirs instead.

O all ye favored children of this  
heart; seeing yourselves so loved, learn  
now the glory of your heritage, surren

OFFICE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

349 -

Et corda Cordi vaditc.  
Res miral mortis spurios  
Dart Cordis esse filios:  
Tantos favorcs pcditr,  
Vices amoris redditc.  
Cordis Parris mizabilern  
In corde vitam pingite,  
cordisque Mattis nobileno  
In mente formano sculPitc.

O Cor, Dei triclinium,  
O cxili solarium,  
immcnsa sunt magnalia,  
Immensa sint pr2econia. T  
O sacrosancta Trinitas,  
Acterna vita cordium,  
C.rdis Mariac sanctims,  
In corde regnes orouniurn. Amen.  
V. Vivet Cur Mariae, et lactabitur  
Domino.

R. Et annabit eum in sacculum saeculi.

Ad Bested. Ant. O Mater admitabilis, Benedictus Antip4om.

magnificent te ornnes genres; ct bene-  
dicant fidclissimum Cor mum in cter.  
nurn onnnes populi, alleluia.

or, mul

Deus, qui Unigenimm mum tecum ab

O miracle! F21se children, snared by  
death, become true children of her he2Al  
for such great favours make yc the re  
turn of giving love for love.

Imprint upon your heart the admirable  
life of your Royal Father's heart; engrave  
within your mind the noble pattern of  
the Mother's heart.

O Heart, the resting-place of God, O  
solace of our exile here, immense is thy  
magnificence, immerse should be thy  
praisel

hrice hallowed Trinity sublime, eter  
ral life of souls, grant that the holiness  
of Mary's heart may reign forever in all  
brans. Amen.

V. The Heart of Mary will live and re  
in joice in the Lord.

R. And will love Hion f.rcver and ever.

Ant. O admirable Mother, all nations  
shall praise thee and all pmples shall  
bless thy most faithful Heart forever, al  
leluia.

Lot us pray:

acterno viventem, in Corde Virginis Ma-  
 tris vivere et regnare voluisti: da nobis,  
 quacsumus, hanc sanctissimam Jew et  
 Mariac in corde uno vitam jugiter cele-  
 brace, cor unum inter nos et cum ipsis  
 habere, tansunq in omnibus voluntatcan  
 coad magno et aninto volend adimplere;  
 ut secundum Cor muni. t, im, cni  
 mereamur. Per curadern Dominum.

"me Lord.

**AD %PRIMAM**

Ant. 0 beatum.

In R. br. V. Qui natus es de Maria Vir-  
 gine. have mercy on us~

350-

**AD TERTIAM**

Ant. Invenit Deus.

Capitulum. Cant. viij.

Pone me of signaculum super Cor muni,  
 of signaculum super brachium muni:  
 quia foris est of mors dilectio, dura si-  
 cut infernus accumulatio: lampades ejus,  
 lampacles ignis atque flammam.

R. br. Paratum Cor muni, Deus, 0 Para-  
 tum Cur muni. Paratum. V. Ut faciam  
 comes voluntates tuas. Paratum. Gloria  
 Patri. Paratum.

V. Desiderium Cordis Mariac audivit Do-  
 minus. R. Praeparationem Cordis ipsius  
 audivit auris ejus,

**AD SEXTAM**

Ant. Beata es, Maria.

Capitulum. Luc. ij.

Omnes qui audierunt mirati sunt, et de  
 his quae dicta erant a pastoribus ad ipsos:  
 Maria autem conservabat verba  
 haec, conferens in Corde suo.

R. br. Desiderium Cordis Mariac Au-  
 divit Dominus. Desiderium. V. Praepara-  
 tionem Cordis ipsius audivit auris ejus.  
 Audivit. Gloria Patri. Desiderium.

O God who didst will that Thine Only  
 Begotten Son who dost dwell with Thee  
 from all eternity should live and reign  
 in the Heart of the Virgin Mary, grant  
 us, we beseech Thee, the grace to com-  
 brace continually with one only heart,  
 this most holy life Of JCSUS and Mary, to  
 have but one heart with them and one  
 among ourselves. To accomplish Thy  
 will in all things with a generous heart  
 and resolute will that so we may merit  
 to become like to thy heart. Through the

**PRIME**

Am. 0 Blessed Heart (from LOUIE)

V. Who was born of the Virgin Mary,

## THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

**TIERCE**

Ant. God found the Heart of Mary.

Chapter. Put me as a seal upon thy  
 heart, as a seal upon thy arm: for love is  
 strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell.  
 The lamps thereof are fire and flame.

R. My heart is ready, O God, my heart  
 is ready.

V. To do all that Thou wilt

R. My heart is ready.

V. Glory be to the Father, etc.

V. The Lord heard the desires of Mary's  
 Heart;

R. He heard the preparation of her  
 Heart.

**SEXT**

Ant. Blessed art thou.

Chapter. All who heard marvelled at  
 what was spoken to them by the Shep-  
 herds. But Mary kept all these words  
 pondering them in her Heart,

R. The Lord heard the desires of Mary's  
 Heart.

V. He heard the preparation of her  
 Heart.

R. The Lord heard, etc.

V. Glory, etc.

V. Omnis spiritus laudet Dommum. R.  
In Corde regnantem Mariac.

AD NONAM

Ant. Gratia, pax.

Capoulum. Luc. ij.

Et descendit cum eis, et venit Nazareth,  
of erat subditus illis. Et Mater ejus con-  
servabat omnia verba haec in corde suo.

R. br. Omnis spiritus \* Laude Domi-  
num. Omnis spiritus. V. In corde reg-  
nantem Maria, Laude Dominum. Glo-  
ria Patri. Omnis spiritus.

V. Let every soul praise the Lord.

R. Reigning in the Heart of Mary.

NONE

Ant. Grace, peace and joy.

Chapter: And He went down with them  
and came to Nazareth, and was subject  
to them. And His Mother kept all these  
words, pondering them in her Heart.

R. Let every soul praise the Lord,

V. Reigning in the Heart of Mary, etc.

V. The Heart of Mary will live and re-  
joice in God.

R. And will love Him forever and ever.

## OFFICE OF THE ADMIRABLE HEART

351 -

### IN 11 FESPERIS

Ant. r. O admirabile et venerabile Cor

Mariac Virginis, in quo omnis fons et  
plenus charitatis, Christus Jesus in-  
habitat, vivit et regnat in aeternum alle-  
luia.

2. (b) O verum altare holocausti, in quo  
ignis divinus semper accenditur, et sacri-  
ficio laudis et amoris Deo jugiter im-  
molatur alleluia. ally immolated to God.

3. Christus Jesus, benedicta sancta, semel in  
ara crucis, multoties in altari Cordis Vir-  
ginis aeterno Patri oblatus est, alleluia.

4. Beati Cor tuum, o Maria, speculum  
clarissimum vitae Christi, et imago per-  
fectae passionis et mortis ejus, alleluia.  
and death.

5. Audite, filii, et ponite hoc in cordibus  
vestris, et discite a me, quia mitis sum  
et humilis corde, alleluia. of me, for I am meek and humble of  
heart.

Capitulum. Cant. viij

Pone me ut signaculum super gressum tuum,  
ut signaculum super brachium tuum:  
quia fortis est ut mors dilectio, dura sicut  
infernus accumulatio; lampades ejus, lam-  
pades ignis atque flammularum.

Hymnus,

Quem forma coeli personat,  
In corde natum Numinis  
Hoc tutus orbis conat,  
In corde regem Virginis.

Hoc Corde quid sublimius?

### SECOND VESPERS

Ant. O admirable and venerated heart of  
the Virgin Mary in which Jesus Christ,  
the source and plenitude of charity lives  
and reigns eternally.

Ant. O true sacrificial Altar on which  
the divine fire is ever burning, on which  
a sacrifice of praise and love is perpetu-

Am. Jesus Christ, the sacred Victim, was  
offered to the Eternal Father, once on the  
Altar of the Cross, but an infinite num-  
ber of times, on the Altar of the Heart  
of Mary.

Ant. Blessed is thy Heart, O Mary; it is  
the brilliant mirror of the life of Jesus  
Christ and a perfect image of his passion

Ant. Hearken, my children, and en-  
grave this lesson on your hearts. Listen

Chapter. Put me as a seal upon Thy  
heart, as a seal upon thy arm: for love  
is strong as death, jealousy as hard as  
death. The lamps thereof are fire and  
flames.

Hymn

The court of heaven cloth proclaim the  
birth in God's Almighty Heart of Him  
Who now on Earth is praised as King  
of Mary's virgin heart.

What heart is there sublime as hers?

Abyssus aim gratiac,  
 Currus triumphans igneus,  
 Thronusque regis glaciata.  
     Thesaurus cst charismatum,  
 Astris jubar fulgentius,  
 C,ocli decus, sol, gaudium,  
 Coclumque cocis altius.  
     Summi Parris signaculum,  
 Vitae Dei compendium,  
 Series tonarris ignea,  
 Turris salutis flammea.

Abyss of grace most deep, triumphal  
 chariot of fire, exalted throne of Christ  
 the king of glory.  
 Tfewury of the gifts of God the Holy  
 Ghost, thy radiance doth dim the stars,  
 the glory, the bright sun and joy of  
 heaven, nay, the high heaven loftier than  
 heaven.  
 Thy heart is the seal of God the Eter  
 nal Father, compendium of the very life  
 of God, the fiery throne of Him Who  
 speaks through thunder, the flaming  
 tower of salvation.

352-

### THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Omnes gentes flectunt dum cantantur  
 duae strophae sequentes

Nos ergo tantae Virginis,  
 Cordisque tam mirabilis,  
 Colamus omnes regia  
 Flexo genu magnalia.

Eia, Patens, cor supplicum  
 Intra pium serva sinurn;  
 Amore Nati langueat,  
 Amore Matris ferveat

O Virgo, raptrix cordium,  
 Da Cor tuum colentium  
 Sursum rapi praecordia,  
 Ubi suprema gaudia.

O fax amanda cordium,  
 Flammis sacris nos devora;  
 Fac ut crementur omnium,  
 Amore Jesu, pectora.

O sacrosancta Trinitas,  
 Acterna vita cordium,  
 Cordis Mariae sanctitas,  
 In corde regnes omnium.

Amen.

V. Vivet Cor Mariae, et laetabitur in  
 Domino. R. Et amabit eum in saeculum  
 saeculi.

Ad Magnificat, Ant. Exsultet Cor tuum,  
 O Maria, in Deo salutari suo: quia fecit  
 ei magna qui potens est, alleluia.

Oratio.

Deus, qui Unigenitum tuum tecum ab  
 aeterno viventem, in Corde Virginis Ma-  
 tris vivere et regnare voluisti: da nobis,  
 quaesumus, hanc sanstissimam Jesu et

(During the next two verses, all kneel.)

So let us honour the truly admirable  
 Heart of Mary Virgin Queen, so let us  
 praise with bended knee her great mag  
 nificenccl

O Mother, look upon us prostrate at  
 thy feet; in Thy maternal bosom keep  
 our heart, making them yearn to love  
 Thy Son, and glow with love of Thee,  
 His Mother.

O Virgin, ravisher of Hearts, snatch  
 our hearts upward to that heavenly home  
 where thou a" praised eternally.

O Thou who makest all hearts to love,  
 consume us with thy sacred fl2mes; grant  
 that our hearts easy be consumed forever  
 with burning love of Christ, Thy Son.  
 T hrice-hallowed Trinity sublime . . .  
 etc.

V. The Heart of Mary will live and re  
 joice in the Lord.

R. And will love Him forever and ever.

Magnificat Antiphon: May thy Bean, O  
 Mary, rejoice in God, thy Saviour, for He  
 who is mighty has done great things in  
 thee.

Let us pray. O most merciful Father who  
 didst will to unite with most ardent love,  
 the most loving hearts of Thy Beloved  
 Son and Thy dearest Mother; grant, we

Mariae in corde uno vitam jugiter celebrare, cor unum inter nos et cum ipsis habere, tuamque in omnibus voluntatem, corde magno et animo volenti adimplere; ut secundum Cor tuum a te inveniri mereamur. Per eundem Dominum.

beseech Thee, that by Their intercession, having but one heart among ourselves and one with Them, we may love Thee perfectly with one heart, and the just desires of our heart being accomplished, we may die consumed by the fire of Thy love. Through the same Lord.



**APPENDIX II**

**Prayers  
in  
Honor of the Admirable  
Heart of Mary**

**Litany in Honor of the Most Holy Heart of Mary****(For Private Recitation Only)**

Kyrie eleison.	Lord have mercy on us,
Christe eleison.	Christ have mercy on us,
Kyrie eleison.	Lord have mercy on us,
Jesu, Cor Mariae, audi nos.	Jesus, Heart of Mary, hear us,
Jesu, Cor Mariae, exaudi nos.	Jesus, Heart of Mary, graciously hear us,
Pater de caelis, Deus, miserere nobis.	God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us,
Fili, Redemptor mundi, Deus, miserere nobis.	God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us,
Spiritus sancte, Deus, miserere nobis.	God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us,
Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nobis.	Holy Trinity one God, have mercy on us.
Cor Jesu sacratissimum, miserere nobis.	Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us,
Cor Mariae sanctissimum, ora pro nobis.	Most Holy Heart of Mary, pray for us,
Cor Mariae, speculum divini Cordis,*	Heart of Mary, Mirror of the Heart of God,
Cor Mariae, compendium perfectionum Divinitatis,	Epitome of divine perfections,
Cor Mariae, imago perfecta Cordis aeterni Patris,	perfect image of the Heart of the Eternal Father,
Cor Mariae, deliciae Filii Dei,	Delight of the Son of God,
Cor Mariae, signaculum Spiritus sancti,	Seat of the Holy Spirit,
Cor Mariae, sanctuarium Divinitatis,	Sanctuary of the Divinity,
Cor Mariae, triclinium sanctae Trinitatis,	Repose of the Most Holy Trinity,
Cor Mariae, thronus divinae voluntatis,	Throne of the Divine Will,
Cor Mariae, secundum Cor Dei,	Heart like unto the Heart of God,
Cor Mariae, custos divini Verbi,	Guardian of the Divine Word,

Cor Mariae, speculum Passionis  
Christi,  
Cor Mariae, cor unum cum Corde  
Christi,

Mirror of the Passion  
of Jesus,  
Heart which is but  
one with the Heart  
of Jesus,

### 356- THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

*Cor Mariae, spes et lactitia cordis nos-  
tri,*

*Heart of Mary, Hope and joy of our  
hearts,*

*Cor Mariac, fons totius consolationis,*

*Source of all consola*

*Cor Maniac, fornax divini amoris,  
Cor Marmc, miraculurn charitatis,  
OOT Mariac, centrum mansuetudinis,  
Car Marme, abyssm humilitatis,  
Cor Marme, donnus sapientiac,  
dom,*

*Furnace of divine love,  
Marvel of charity,  
Center of meekness,  
Abyss of humility,  
Dwelling place of wis*

*Cor Marme, thronus misericordiae,  
Cor Marme, zelawr 2niounlon,  
Cor Mariac, thronus Mariana virtu-  
turn,*

*Throne of mercy,  
Zealous for souls,  
Throne of all virtue,*

*Cor Mariar, abysms gratiarum,  
Cor Manse, thesaurus innumeromm  
bonorum,*

*Abyss of grace,  
Treasure of innumer-  
able blessings,*

*OOT Mariar, caelurn celosom,  
Cor Mariac, Sanctum sanctorum  
OOT Mariae, 2byssus mysteriorum,  
OOT Marme, abyssus miraculorum,  
OOT Marin, liber vite,*

*Heaven of heavens,  
Holy of holies,  
Abyss of mysteries,  
Abyss of wonders,*

*Book of life,*

*Cor Marmc, gazophyl, duen Ecclesiac,  
Church,*

*Treasure of the*

*Cor Marme, oraculurn Christianum,  
Cor Manse, sidus amantium,  
Cor Marme, divinae legis tabula,  
Cor Marme, cordis fidei regalia,  
heart,*

*Oracle of Christians,  
Sur of loving hearts,  
Table of divine law,  
Rule of the faithful*

*Cor Marme, raptor cordium,  
OOT Mariae, cordis nostri refugium,  
Cor Mariac, cordis nostri praesidium,  
OOT Maniac, cordis nostri domus an-  
Tea, heart%*

*Ravisher of hearts,  
Refuge of our hearts,  
Shield of our hearts,  
Golden house of our*

*OOT Mariac, turris nostra fortissima,  
tress,*

*Our impregnable for*

*Cor Marmc, cordis nostri paradisus,  
OOT Manse, cordis nostri júbilus,  
hearts,*

*Paradise of our hearts,  
Sweet joy of our*

*OOT M2ri2C, solarium exilii nostri,  
ile'*

*Consolation of our*

Cor Marmē, Rex cordis n̄tri,	Queen of our hearts,
Cor Mariac, Zoutor cordis nostri.	Filled with love for us.

Propitius esto, parce nobis, Jesu.	Be merciful, spare us O Jesus,
ProPitius csw, exaudi nos, Jmu	Be merciful, graciously hear us O Jesus.

## PRAYERS IN HONOR OF THE HEART OF MARY

357 -

Per divinissimū Cor Mū, exaudi Through Thy most divine Heart,  
nos Jesu.

Per Cor amantissimū simctissimū Through the most loving Heart of  
Maui\$ Mae, Thy most Holy Mother,

Per maximum ejus contra peccatū Through her extreme hatred for sin,  
odium,

Per insigne ejus mundi contemp- Through her supreme contempt of  
cum, the world,

Per profundissimā ejus humilitatem, Through her most profound humil  
ity, z

Per mellifluā ejus benignitatem, Through her admirable benignity,

Per speciale ejus erga sibi devotum Through her wonderful affection for  
charitatem, her devoted servants,

Per summū ejus in Patre, acter- Through her surpassing love for the  
nturn amare, Eternal Father,

Per andentissimā ejus in t: dilectio- Through her incomparable Tenderness  
nem, towards Thee, s,

Per pii\$911112 Wins desideria, Through her most merciful desires,

Per amantissima, illius suspiria, Through her burning sighs of love,

Per acerbissimos dolores illius, Through her overwhelming sorrows,

Per temporalium et aeternorum gaudia, Through her temporal and eternal  
joys,

Per excellentissimam ejus cum Christo Through her sublime union with Thy  
eternam unionem, Heart,

• pretiosissimum Cor Jan et Mariae, O most precious heart of Jesus and Mary,  
thesaurus cordis nostri, posside cor nos- treasure of our heart, Possess our heart  
trunc in aeternum. forever,

• amantissimū Cor Jesu et Mariac, vim O most loving Heart of Jesus and Mary,  
cordis nostri, vive in corde nostro in life of our hearts, Live forever in our  
aeternum, heart,

• dilectissimū Cor Jesu et Marmē, Rex O beloved Heart of Jesus and Mary, Ruler  
cordis nostri, regna super cor nostrum of our heart, Reign forever in our  
in aeternum. h"nl

Jesu, Cor Marmē, audi nos.	Jesu, Heart of Mary, hear us,
Jesu, Cor Marmē, esaudi nos.	Jesu, Heart of Mary, graciously hear us.

Oramus, Let us pray:

Onnipotens Deus, qui beati\$Simi Vir- Omnipotent God, Who didst will the ginis Mariac Cor santissimum, sacra- Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary To be rium Divinitatis, thronus oritur vir- the sanctuary of the Divinity, the throne tum, totiusque sanctitatis thesaurum m- of every virtue and the treasure of all voluisti: da nobis, clarescimus, ejusdem sanctity grant, we beseech Thee, through sanctissimum Cordis meritis et precibus, the merits and prayers of this most Holy
---

*ipsius imaginari in corde nostro jugiter  
portare; ut ejus imitatio, quae tibi sunt  
placita, temper facientes, secundum Cor  
Mum in actum, effici mereamur; Per  
Christum Dominum nostrum. R. Amen.*

*Heart, that we may unceasingly bear the  
likeness of her in our heart; ~ that, in  
imitation of her, by accomplishing all  
that is most pleasing to Thee, we may  
merit to become eternally conformed to  
Thy Heart. Through Our Lord Jesus  
Christ, Amen.*

**Salutation to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary(1)**

Ave, Cor sanctissimum,	Hail, Heart most holy.
Ave, Cor mitissimum,	Had, Heart most gentle.
Ave, Cor humillimum,	Hail, Heart most humble.
Ave, Cor purissimum,	Hail, Heart Most pure.
Ave, Cor devotissimum,	Hail, Heart most devout.
Ave, Cor sapientissimum,	Hail, Heart most wise.
Ave, Cor patientissimum,	Hail, Heart most patient.
Ave, Cor obedientissimum,	Hail, Heart most obedient.
Ave, Cor vigilantissimum,	Hail, Heart most vigilant.
Ave, Cor fidelissimum,	Hail, Heart Most faithful.
Ave, Cor beatissimum,	Hail, Heart most blessed.
Ave, Cor misericordissimum,	Hail, Heart most merciful.
Ave, Cor amantissimum Jesu et Mariae;	Hail, most loving Heart of Jesus and Mary.
Te adoramus, te laudamus, te glorificamus.	We revere Thee Tibi gratias agimus. We praise Thee, We glorify Thee. We give Thee thanks.
Te amamus ex toto corde nostre, ex	We love Thee with all our heart,
tota anima nostra et ex totis viribus nostris;	With all our soul, And with all our strength.
cor nostrum offerimus, donamus,	We offer Thee our heart.
consecramus, immolamus;	We give it to Thee. We consecrate it to Thee. We immolate it to Thee.
Posside illud totum, et purifica	Receive it, and possess it wholly,
Illumina et sanctifica;	Purify it, Enlighten it
Ut in ipso vivas et regnes et nunc et sem-	That Thou mayst live and reign
per et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.	now, always, and forever and ever.

1. This Salutation which is at once a magnificent consecration to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary and a real treatise in abridged form of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts, has been recited since 1643 in the various institutes of St. John Eudes. The Blessed Virgin promised the Servant of God "to give to all recite it with devotion, desires; to purify themselves more and more from all sorts of sins, in order to be more capable of receiving divine gifts and blessings." And, in fact, numberless graces which seem almost miraculous, have, at all times, been obtained, testifying to the efficacy of this prayer.

### Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary(1)

Ave, Maria, Filia Dei Parris.	Hail Mary, Daughter of God the Father.
Ave, Maria, Mater Dei Filii.	Hail Mary, Mother of God the Son.
Ave, Maria, Sponsa Spiritus sancti.	Hail Mary, Spouse of the Holy Ghost.
Ave, Maria, templum totius Divinitatis.	Hail Mary, Temple of the Divinity.
Ave, Maria, candidum liliū fulgidae semperque tranquilla Trinitatis.	Hail Mary, Immaculate lily of the most splendid and ever-pure Trinity.
Ave, Maria, rosa praeulgidā coelicae amoenitatis.	Hail Mary, Radiant True of heavenly fra- grance.
Ave, Maria, Virgo virginum, Virgo fidelis de qua nasci, et de cujus lacte pasci Rex coelorum voluit.	Hail Mary, Virgin of virgins, virgin most faithful, of whom the King of Heaven did will to be born.
Ave, Maria, regina Martyrum, cujus ani- mā doloris gladius petransivit.	Hail Mary, Queen of martyrs, whose soul was pierced with a sword of sorrow.
Ave, Maria, domina, mundi, cui data est omnis potestas in coelo et in terra.	Hail Mary, Queen of the universe, to whom all power has been given in heaven and on earth.
Ave, Maria, regina cordis mei, mater, vita, dulcedo, et spes mea charissima.	Hail Mary, Queen of my heart, my mother, my life, my consolation, and my dearest hope.
Ave, Maria, mater amabilis.	Hail Mary, Mother most amiable.
Ave, Maria, mater admirabilis.	Hail Mary, Mother most admirable.
Ave, Maria, mater misericordiae.	Hail Mary, Mother of Mercy.
Ave, Maria, gratia plena Dominus tecum.	Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus, Et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus. Jesus.	Blessed art thou amongst women. And blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Et benedictus sponsus tuus Joseph.	And blessed be thy spouse, St. Joseph.
Et benedictus pater tuus Joachim.	And blessed be thy father, St. Joachim.
Et benedicta mater tua Anna.	And blessed be thy mother, St. Anne.
Et benedictus filius tuus Joannes.	And blessed be thy adopted son, St. John.
Et benedictus angelus tuus Gabriel.	And blessed be thy angel, St. Gabriel.
Et benedictus Pater aeternus, qui te ele- git.	And blessed be the Eternal Father who chose thee.

(1). Saint John Eudes recommended this prayer for the conversion of sinners and advised his children to say it at the bedside of the sick. The Blessed Virgin promised him that "all who Say it with devotion, or at least good will if they are in the state of grace, receive an increase of divine love in their hearts at each of the twelve salutations or benedictions contained in it; if they are in mortal sin, she will knock at the door of their hearts with her own sweet virginal hand to urge them to open it to grace." And she added that when persons are found steeped in sin and difficult to convert, it would be well to encourage them to say this salutation, or at least to consent to having it said for them.

360 - THE ADMIRABLE HEART OF MARY

Et benedictus Filius, qui te amavit.  
Et benedictus Spiritus sanctus, qui te

sponsavit.

Et benedicti in aeternum omnes qui  
benedicunt te et qui diligunt te.  
Amen.

And blessed be the Divine Son who loved thee.  
And blessed be the Holy Ghost who espoused

*thee.*

And blessed be forever all those who  
bless and who love thee. Amen.

### **Rosary of the Admirable Heart of Mary(1)**

On the cross the *Creed* is said to adore all the mysarries of the Christian Religion in the Sacred Heart of the glorious Virgin, in union with the faith with which this same heart was always animated, and in union with all the adorations and praises which it has rendered and will *eternally render* to these same mysteries.

On the three first small beads the following words are said in union with the love of the Three Divine persons with regard to this most amiable Heart: Ave Cor Sanctissimae, beatissimae Virginis Mariae. "Hail Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

On each large bead the Gloria Patri is said to thank the Most Holy Trinity for all the graces poured so abundantly into this abyss of graces; and for all the favors which, through her intercession have been granted to the whole human race, and to ourselves in particular.

On the two first decades the following is again said:

Ave Cor Sanctissimae beatissimae Virginis Mariae. "Hail Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

This is done to fulfil our duties of respect towards this most worthy heart, in union with the devotion and praise which have been, are, and will be rendered it by all the hearts, of Angels and Saints; uniting ourselves at the first Ave to the devotion of the Seraphim; at the second with the Cherubim and thus through the whole angelic choir from which we proceed to the hearts of the Patriarchs, of the Prophets, of the Martyrs, etc.

On the third and fourth decade is said: Per Cor amantissimum sanctissimae Matris tuae, O bone Jesu, fiat cor nostrum secundum Cor tuum. "Through the loving Heart of Thy most Holy Mother, O Good Jesus, make our hearts like unto thine."

And this to beseech Our Lord by the heart all inflamed with love, of His Most Holy Mother, that our hearts be according to His Heart by a perfect imitation of the love, charity, humility, submission, obedience, patience, innocence, purity, hatred of sin, contempt of the world, entire disengagement from all that is not God, and of all the other virtues of this Adorable Heart.

On the fifth and sixth decades are said: Per Cor amantissimum, sanctissimae Matris tuae, exaudi nos Jesu. "Through the loving Heart of Thy most Holy Mother, Hear us, O Jesus."

This is to supplicate Our Lord, by the Heart of His Most Holy Mother by which He is more loved than by all the hearts of men and Angels *together*, to graciously hear the prayers which we offer and to grant us the particular favors we ask either for ourselves or for others. *Because He* can refuse nothing which we ask with humility and confidence by this most loving, most lovable and most loved Heart.

At the end is said the Salutation Ave Cor Sanctissimum, "Hail, Heart Most Holy," (P. 358).

(1) This rosary of six decades by St. John Eudes may be said in Latin or English.



Benedictum sit Cor amantissimum et dulcissimum Nomen Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, et gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae Matris ejus, in aeternum et ultra. Nos cum prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria. Amen.

Blessed forever be the Most loving Heart and the most sweet name of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the most glorious Virgin Mary, His Mother. May the Virgin Mary and her most merciful Son bless you. Amen.

#### Consecration to the Admirable Heart Of Mary

O most holy Heart of Mary, ever Immaculate, ever Virgin, holiest, purest, noblest, greatest, inexhaustible fountain of goodness, sweetness, mercy and love; model of every virtue, image of the Adorable Heart of Jesus Christ ever burning with the most ardent charity, who invest God more than all the Seraphim together. Heart of the Mother of the Redeemer, seat of peace, wherein mercy and justice are allied, whence peace between Heaven and earth has begun to be treated, who didst feel our miseries so deeply, who didst suffer so much for our salvation, who still lovest us so ardently and who dost merit by all these rights, the respect~ love and confidence of all men to accept my poor tribute of love.

Prostrate before thee I tender thee the most profound homage of which I am capable; I thank thee for the feelings of love and mercy with which thou art so deeply moved at the sight of our misery; I offer thee my humble thanks for all the gifts I have received from thy goodness, and I unite with all the pure souls who delight in honoring, praising and loving thee. They have learned from the Holy Spirit Who directs them, that it is through thee they must go to Jesus Christ, and offer to this God-Man their need of adoration.

Therefore, O most loving Heart, thou shalt henceforth be the object of my veneration, of my love and most tender devotion; thou shalt be the way whereby I shall go to my Saviour, as it is through thee that His mercy shall come to me; thou shalt be my refuge in every need, my consolation in every affliction; from thee I shall learn the purity, humility, meekness and above all, the love of Jesus; I shall ask for these virtues through thy merits and so shall infallibly obtain them. I presume to offer thee my heart sullied with a thousand sins; all unworthy as it is I trust that thou wilt not despise it. Grant by thy powerful mediation that it may be purified and detached from every creature; penetrate it with sorrow for my sins; fill it with the love of the Divine Heart of Jesus, thy Son, that it may be eternally united with thine in Heaven, there to love God forever. Amen.

**The Sacred Heart of Jesus**

**BY**

**SAINT JOHN EUDES**

Translated by

DOM. RICHARD FLOWER, O.S.B., MA.

OF THE PORTSMOUTH PRIORY

PORTSMOUTH, R. 1.

With an Introduction by

THE REVEREND GERALD B. PHELAN

PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF MEDIEVAL STUDIES

TORONTO, CANADA

NEW YORK

P. J. KENEDY & SONS

Imprimi potest:

A. D'Amours, C.J.M.

Praepositus Provincialis

Laval-des-Rapides, P.Q. die 2<sup>a</sup> octobris 1944

Nihil obstat:

Arthur J. SCANLAND, S.D.).

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur:

Francis J. SPELMAN, D.D.

Archbishop, New York

September 26, 1944

COPYRIGHT 1946

P. J. KENEDY & SONS, NEW YORK

MADE IN U. S. A.

## GENERAL PREFACE

ST. JOHN EUDES has been called "the wonder of his age." Missionary, founder, reformer of the clergy, he crowded into a life of seventy-nine years so many and such varied accomplishments that one marvels how a single man could achieve so much. In addition to the activities of an incessant and many-sided apostolate, he wrote a number of valuable books, which rank him among the most prolific ascetic writers of the seventeenth century.

For many years the devotional works of St. John Eudes were practically unknown.(1) Occasionally a volume was discovered in the library of some seminary or religious house. Many others preserved in manuscript form were lost in the chaos of the French Revolution(2) At the beginning of the present century the sons of St. John Eudes united in a tribute of filial piety to bring out a complete edition of the works of their spiritual father, seeking them in public and private libraries throughout the world(3) About twenty volumes were found and edited in 1905 by the late Fathers Charles Lebrun, C.J.M., and Joseph Dauphin,

(1).Before the French Revolution the works of St. John Eudes were popular in France. In 1792 the houses of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary were confiscated by the Government and its members were massacred or dispersed throughout Europe. With the suppression of the Eudists, their rich literary heritage was widely scattered and partially destroyed. It was not until the re-establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1826 that effort was made to recover the printed and manuscript works of St. John Eudes. The research was carried on until the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the "Preface Générale to the Oeuvres Complètes (Vannes, 1905), Father Charles Lebrun points out that one of the purposes of the edition was "to unearth these works buried too long in oblivion," exhumers ces ouvrages ensevelis depuis trop longtemps dans l'oubli...

(2)The following manuscripts were not found: The Christian Man, All Jesus, The Divine office, The Admirable Sacrifice of the Mass, Meditations, (2 vol.), Sermons of St. John Eudes (3 vols.), Favors obtained by the Diocese of Coutances through the Blessed Virgin, The Divine Childhood of Jesus, The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, The Admirable *Life of* Mary des Vallées, (incomplete copy found at Laval University Library, Quebec) and Correspondence of St. John Eudes.

(3). cf. *oeuvres Complètes*, P. xiv.

V -

## GENERAL PREFACE

C.J.M. The first edition in French, *Oeuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, ran into twelve octavo volumes with introductions, explanatory notes, analytic and alphabetic indexes of great value. These writings constitute a complete summa of ascetic and pastoral theology. The list is as follows:

*Volume 1 The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls.* In this work the Saint develops his spiritual teaching on the Christian life, namely, that the Christian life is simply the life of Jesus extended and continued in each one of us.

*Volume 11.* This volume contains six short treatises on subjects relating to the Christian life:

1. *A Treatise on the Respect Due to Holy Places*, which is an echo of the fiery denunciations he pronounced during his missions against profaners of the temple of God.

2. *Meditations on Humility*, a series of meditations on the profession of humility as used daily in his order of Priests, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

3. *Interior Colloquies of the Soul with God*, meditations on creation, the end of man and the grace of Baptism.

4. *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, a summary of the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Tradition on the Sacrament of Baptism.

5. *The Practice of Piety*, a brief explanation of what is necessary in order to live a Christian life.

6. *Catechism of the Mission*, an outline of the catechetical instructions given during a mission.

*Volume III.* Contains two important works on sacerdotal perfection:

1. *The Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*, an explanation of the dignity and duties of the priesthood.

2. *A Manual of Piety for Use in an Ecclesiastical Community*, in which the author explains how the means of sanctification he recommended to his priests should be practically applied in their daily lives.

*Volume IV.* Comprises significant works on the priestly ministry.

1. *The Apostolic Preacher* is one of the first treatises written on the ministry of the Word of God and is even yet one of the most practical.

## GENERAL PREFACE

V 11 -

2. *The Good Confessor* explains the qualities, and obligations of the minister of the Sacrament of Penance.

3. *Counsels for Mission Confessors* suggests practical means of assisting penitents to make their examination of conscience and excite themselves to contrition.

4. *The Manner of Serving Mass* explains the dignity and holiness of this act and what one must do to perform it devoutly and worthily.

*Volume V. The Admirable Childhood of the Most Holy Mother of God.* This book treats of the holy childhood of Mary and the practical means of honoring the mysteries and virtues of her early life.

*Volumes VI, VII, VIII* contain the entire writings of the Saint on the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The work is entitled: *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God.* It comprises twelve books covering the complete theology of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. Eleven books discuss the theory, history, and practice of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The last book deals with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is this work, together with the Offices of the Sacred Hearts, that merit for him the title of Father, Doctor and Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts.

*Volume IX. The Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*

*Volume X.* Contains *The Rules and Constitutions of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, the *Directory* of the Order, and a collection of two hundred and forty letters.

*Volumes XI and XII* embrace the Saint's *Liturgical Works*, comprising twenty-five Offices and Masses for feasts to which he urged special devotion, the *Memorial of God's Blessings* and several other minor works.

The second French edition appeared in 1935, *Oeuvres Choies de Saint Jean Eudes*, prepared under the direction of Father Lebrun, the leading authority on Eudistic research. It comprises nine volumes: *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, *Meditations of Various Subjects*, *Regulae Vitae Christianae et Sacerdotalis*, *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, *Letters and Minor Works*, *Writings on the Priesthood*, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, and *The Admirable Childhood of the Mother of God*. The format of

these volumes is compact and more convenient than the 1905 edition, which is now out of print.

The publication of the works of St. John Eudes revealed the extent and depth of their spiritual doctrine. Cardinal Pitra, who was associated with the cause of Beatification, discovered in the writings of St. John Eudes a remarkable depth of thought and purity of doctrine. Cardinal Vives has more recently expressed his admiration:

I was acquainted with the Doctors of the Order of Saint Francis; I was acquainted with Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, the mystical writers of my own country, Spain; but I was completely ignorant of the writings of Father Eudes. As a member of the Sacred Congregation of Rites it was my duty to study his life and his works, and I am in admiration. Blessed John Eudes must be ranked with the great lights of the Church. His spiritual doctrine is profound and of wonderful exactitude. He is one of the writers who has best propounded the doctrine of the Gospel.(4).

The late Father Ange Le Doré, for fifty years Superior General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, wrote:

The works of Blessed John Eudes, although they do not bear the scientific touch of the professional theologian, are nevertheless proof of his remarkable theological, ascetic and scriptural knowledge.... He is not a Doctor after the fashion of the scholastics of the thirteenth century or of the great theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As they, he might have built up theses and composed books didactic in form; but he was before all a savior of souls. For him the science of theology found its chief field of usefulness in the practice of virtue and in the acquisition of sanctity of which it is the principle.... He was a Doctor after the manner of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus de Liguori. The science which shines in his works not only emits light; it engenders piety and sanctity.(5)

The spiritual doctrine expounded by St John Eudes follows the teaching of Cardinal *Pierre de Bérulle* and Father Charles de Condren, two prominent members of the seventeenth-century French School of Spirituality. St. John Eudes applies this doctrine to the devotion to the

(4). Quoted by P. A. Bray, C.J.M., *Saint John Eudes* (Halifax, 1925), P. 116.

(5). Quoted by Bray, op. cit., p. 117.

## GENERAL PREFACE

1 X -

Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, developing and rendering it more precise and practical. He has the rare gift of expressing the most sublime truths in simple, familiar language. He also excels in condensing into a few pages a complete scheme of Christian life and perfection.

The wish was repeatedly expressed that these inspirational writings could be made available to English-speaking readers. Excellent abridged editions of certain books were published in England and in Canada, but they did not do justice to the literary value of the Saint. Consequently, the Eudist Fathers commemorating their tercentenary in 1943 resolved to publish a complete translation of the principal works of their founder. Competent translators were secured and much time and effort were expended to produce readable volumes in modern English, faithful to the spirit and style of the original.

The first English edition, *Selected Works of Saint John Eudes*, is the result. In presenting it to the public the Eudist Fathers and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, and of the Good

Shepherd, wish to thank all those who contributed to the success of this comprehensive undertaking. They are especially grateful to the distinguished churchmen who have so graciously accepted to introduce these volumes to Catholic readers, because they consider that the works of St. John Eudes should be more widely known. The Saint in his apostolic work and in his writings ranks with the eminent figures who belong not to one country and to one religious order but to the universal Church. Three centuries have passed since he wrote the works now being printed in the new world, a striking illustration that he wrote for all time. He still speaks in accents that penetrate the mind and heart of the reader to enlighten, purify and sanctify so that Jesus Christ may live and reign in the Christian soul.

WILFRID E. MYATT, C.J.M.

PATRICK J. SKINNER, C.J.M.

*Editors*

Holy Heart Seminary

Halifax, N. S.

Feast of St. John Eudes, 1945.

## CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . . xiii

### CHAPTER

1. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a Furnace of Burning Love for His Eternal Father . . . . .	1
2. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a Furnace of Ardent Love for His Most Holy Mother . . . . .	5
3. The Sacred Heart of Jesus Has Endowed His Blessed Mother with Wondrous Authority and Power in Heaven . . . . .	10
4. The Sacred Heart of Jesus was Filled with Bitter Sorrow at the Sight of His Loving Mother's Anguish during His Passion . . . . .	13
5. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a Furnace of Love for the Church Triumphant, Militant and Suffering . . . . .	21
6. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a Furnace of Love for Each One of Us . . . . .	25
7. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a Furnace of Love for Us in the Blessed Sacrament . . . . .	31
8. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a Furnace of Love for Us in His Sacred Passion . . . . .	36
9. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is One with the Heart of the Father and the Holy Ghost; the Adorable Heart of the Blessed Trinity is a Furnace of Burning Love for Us . . . . .	40
10. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is Our Treasure House . . . . .	46
11. The Sacred Heart of Jesus Loves Us as His Father Loves Him. What We Should Do in Order to Love Him . . . . .	51
12. Beautiful Words on the Love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Taken from the Thirty-Sixth Chapter of Christian Warfare . . . . .	57
13. Thoughts of the Seraphic Saint Bonaventure on the Love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . . .	60
14. Several Wonderful Things about the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Related in the Life of Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, a Carmelite Nun of Beaune . . . . .	62
15. A Pious and Loving Exercise on the Sorrows of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Holy Heart of His Blessed Mother . . . . .	66
16). Exercises of Love and Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, from Pharetra Divini Amoris, "Quiver of Divine Love," by Lanspergius, the Carthusian . . . . .	72
17. Another Exercise to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Taken from Saint Gertrude's Exercises on Preparing for Death . . . . .	75
18. Colloquy of a Holy Soul, in Solitude, with the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . . .	77
19. Forty Flames or Aspirations of Love Offered to the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . . .	79

### MEDITATIONS

for

### THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

First Meditation: For the Vigil of the Feast: Dispositions Required  
for the Worthy Celebration of this Feast . . . . . , 85

Second Meditation: For the Day of the Feast: The Gift of The Sacred Heart of Jesus to Us . . . . . 88

Third Meditation: The Gift of This Feast is a Great Favor from Our Lord . . . . .90

Fourth Meditation: The Sacred Heart of Jesus is Our Refuge, Our Oracle, and Our Treasure . . . . . 93

## CONTENTS      Xi

Fifth Meditation: The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Perfect Model and Rule of Our Lives . . . . . 96

Sixth Meditation: Jesus Has Given Us His Sacred Heart to be Our Heart . . . . . 99

Seventh Meditation: the Most Profound Humility of the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . . . 102

Eighth Meditation: The Sacred Heart of Jesus is The King of Martyrs 105

Ninth Meditation: The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Heart of Mary 108

## OTHER MEDITATIONS on THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

First Meditation., The Blessed Trinity Lives and Reigns in the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . . .

Second Meditation: The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Sanctuary and the Image of the Divine Perfections . . . . . 114

Third Meditation: The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Temple, the Altar, and the Censor of Divine Love . . . . . 117

Fourth Meditation: The Sacred Heart of Jesus Loves us with an Everlasting and a Boundless Love . . . . . 120

Fifth Meditation: The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Source of the Life of the God-Man, of the Mother of God, and of the Children of God 123

Sixth Meditation: The Three Hearts of Jesus Which Are but One Heart . . . . . 126

Seventh Meditation: The Miracles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus - . 130

Eighth Meditation: The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a Furnace of Love, Purifying, Sanctifying, Transforming, and Deifying . - - 133



MASS AND OFFICE  
of  
THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

PAGE	
Mass of the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . . .	136
Office of the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . . .	145

PRAYERS  
to  
THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . . .	169
Salutation to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary . . .	173
Magnificat of Saint John Eudes . . . . .	175
Prayer to Be Recited after Divine Office . . . . .	178
Ejaculatory Prayer: Benedictum Sit . . . . .	178
Appendix . . . . .	179
Index . . . . .	181

## INTRODUCTION

DEVOTION to the Sacred Heart of Jesus today ranks among the most appealing devotions in the liturgy. Its widespread popularity among the faithful, as well as the transcendent dignity of its object, gives to this devotion a place of high honor among the numerous devotions which the Spirit of God has raised up and fostered in the bosom of Holy Mother Church. Yet, it is a devotion of comparatively recent origin. Not until late in the seventeenth century did the Devotion to the Sacred Heart become firmly established in the Church. At that period God sent a holy priest, St. John Eudes, to be the Father, the Doctor and the Apostle of this sweet devotion and to be the Author of the liturgical worship of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.<sup>(1)</sup> Subsequently, he chose a holy Visitation nun, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, to be the instrument in the hands of Divine Providence for the world-wide diffusion of this devotion and *for* the establishment in the universal Church of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Today, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus flourishes everywhere. Millions of Catholics find strength and comfort in its practice. The Church bestows rich blessings on all who participate therein and day by day more and more souls are drawn to share in the exercise of this beautiful and consoling devotion.

The book which is here presented in English dress was written in French by that great servant of God, St. John Eudes, to whose zeal and holiness and learning we owe the origins of the public worship of the Sacred Heart, and I deem it a high privilege to have the honor of introducing it to the reader.

(I). Pope Leo X111, in declaring the heroism of the virtues of Father Eudes by the Papal Decree (Jan. 6, 1903) which proclaimed him "Venerable," bestowed upon him the title of Doctor liturgici cultus SS. Cordium Jesu et Mariae," and Pope Pius X, in the Decree of Beatification (April 25) 1909) pronounced Father Eudes "*Hujus* suavissimae religionis, tam Pater . . . tam Doctor . . . tam denique Apostolus."

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

The task of rendering into lucid and idiomatic English the rich prose of St. John Eudes without sacrificing either the simplicity of his language, the peculiar flavor of his seventeenth-century French, or the unction of his literary style presents a problem before which any translator might reasonably hesitate.

Dom Richard Flower, however, has courageously faced and overcome the difficulties of his task. His translation is smooth and easy, unencumbered by such obvious gallicisms as mar many translations, too hurriedly made, of notable French works. At the same time his choice of words remains as faithful to the letter of his original as is compatible with clear and correct English.

The rhythmical and rimed translations of the Sequence of the Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart and the Hymns of the Divine Office (printed at the end of this book) have been done with grace and skill. They truly preserve and reflect the spirit of St. John Eudes' strong but sensitive Latin poetry.

Throughout the long history of Christian worship, the Holy Ghost has enkindled in the hearts of the faithful many beautiful forms of piety and devotion. Each one of them, in its own peculiar way, opens up fresh vistas into "the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God."<sup>(2)</sup> Each taps fresh sources of spiritual nourishment within the boundless treasure of grace and light and love stored up for us in the mysteries of religion.

Every new insight into the dealings of God with man, every new vision of His "incomprehensible judgments," (3) every new revelation of His "unsearchable ways," (4) brings to the mind fresh floods of light, stirs the soul to new transports of praise and love, arouses in the heart a deeper sense of man's unworthiness, his coldness and ingratitude towards "the Giver of all good gifts." (5) Gradually each of these aspects of the goodness and mercy of God becomes the focus of particular acts of piety and a special devotion arises to urge the soul onward to still greater generosity in the service of our loving Master.

(2) Rom. 11, 33.

(3). Ibid.

(4). Ibid.

(5). James 1, 17.

## INTRODUCTION XV-

As a rule, it takes a long time for a new form of devotion to develop to the fulness of its beneficent power. Often it begins in some special insight of faith and fresh favor of love granted by the Holy Ghost to certain privileged souls. They perceive, in the light of God's wisdom and love, some new manifestation of His holy designs within this or that event of the life of Jesus Christ (whose special significance had hitherto passed unnoticed), or in some mystery of revealed truth (whose depths can never be plumbed), or in some word or deed recorded in the deposit of divine revelation (in which no one had previously noted this particular meaning and import). This fresh vision of the wisdom and love of God becomes for them a spur to some special devotion, appropriate to the grace and insight granted to them by the Holy Spirit. They begin to practise this new devotion in their private exercises of piety and find therein an increase of spiritual strength and courage, solace, comfort and love in the pursuit of Christian perfection.

Little by little the new devotion spreads. Other pious persons adopt its practice. It springs up here and there in various forms, not all of them alike and some of them, indeed, at times quite incompatible with others. And so it develops; while its object, aim and purpose become increasingly clear, its connection with some truth revealed by God more patently evident and its basis in Christian doctrine more firmly established. For, every devotion in the Church has some definite object and end; and all must rest upon the solid ground of dogmatic truth.

Only the revealed word of God, contained in the Holy Scriptures and Tradition, the deposit of Christian Faith which the Apostles bequeathed to the Church, can provide an adequate foundation for Christian worship. The extraordinary piety of individual souls, the holy inspirations which the Spirit of God so lavishly bestows upon all men, especially upon those who seek with all their hearts to reach the heights of Christian perfection, the special revelations which God vouchsafes to make from time to time to those chosen ones who are His special and particular friends, whether in the Person of our Blessed Lord Himself or through His holy Mother or His angels and His saints—even these exalted privileges and unusual signs of

## XV1-

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

divine favor—cannot furnish a sufficient reason or provide an adequate motive for the establishment of a special devotion as a part of the public worship of the faithful, much as they may serve to initiate the process of its development, accelerate its progress or occasion its final acceptance and approval by the Church. But when some holy and learned man of God arises and gathers together the scattered traditions of past ages, sifts them out, studies their implications, finds their roots in the revealed word of God, and proceeds systematically to expound the theological justification for the special devotion in question, then the way is at last prepared for official action by the competent

ecclesiastical authority. Once this official approval is granted, the hitherto private devotion becomes part of the public worship of the Church, an authorized liturgical cult.

The highest authority in this matter has always been, of course, that of the Supreme Head of the Church, our Holy Father the Pope. According to an ancient custom, however,--a custom which persisted well on into the eighteenth century in many countries, notably in France--the local Ordinary was wont to approve and sanction, for his own diocese, the introduction of new feasts into the liturgy. This widespread practice was supported both by the common opinion of learned theologians and the authority of many prelates, saints and doctors, while the Holy See allowed it to continue without protest. Subsequently, indeed, it became clearly established that such innovations could be sanctioned only by the supreme authority of the Vicar of Christ. Certain feasts, therefore, which had theretofore been authorized by episcopal decree alone afterwards received the approval and sanction of the Holy See and were thus officially given the standing which they had long enjoyed by established custom and practice and by the tacit approval of the Supreme Pontiff.

Today, it is universally recognized and acknowledged that the only competent authority for the adoption of new feasts into the Liturgy of the Church is the Pope. Normally the Holy Father acts in these matters through the medium of the Sacred Congregation of Rites which was established in the latter half of the sixteenth century. In the usual course of the exercise of this authority, a new feast is at first approved for certain definite localities--dioceses, missionary regions,

## INTRODUCTION

xvii-

religious orders or congregations, pious or charitable institutions. only later, when evidence is forthcoming that the faithful and the hierarchy earnestly desire and urgently plead for its extension to the universal Church, does the Holy See sanction its celebration throughout the whole world.

In its growth and development, the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has followed the broad outlines of this historical pattern. From the earliest times the faithful looked upon the love of God, made abundantly manifest in the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Redemption of mankind upon the Cross, as the central element, the very core, of all Christian devotion. The spontaneous response which the Holy Ghost stirred up in the souls of pious persons in answer to that unspeakable, infinite, divine love expressed itself in an ardent love of the Christian soul for Jesus Christ and in the love of all Christians for one another and for all men for the love and sake of Christ. These two elements--the love of God for man and the reciprocal love of man for God--have always been present in the devotions of Christian people. They were destined to enter in a very special manner into the theory and practice of the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Moreover, the metaphorical significance of the term "heart" as the figurative expression of "love" has been at all times a familiar notion in the history of Christian worship, as indeed it has been from time immemorial a commonly accepted figure of speech in the language and literature of men. "To give one's heart" has ever been synonymous with "to give one's love." Yet in the early centuries of Christian devotion there is no trace of the complicated symbolical meaning later perceived in the use of this term and there is no indication that the Heart of Jesus was especially revered as the symbol or the seat of the love of Jesus Christ either for His Heavenly Father or for mankind. This was to come only much later in history, when the sacred humanity of Christ began to be the object of particular homage.

Likewise, the faithful followers of Christ realized from very early times that the piercing of the sacred side of Jesus on the Cross by

the lance of Longinus bore a deep and mysterious meaning, far beyond the mere physical act of a public executioner to assure himself that his victim is dead. For a long time, *however, the* mystic significance of this event was associated only with the origin of the Church of Christ. just as Eve, the spouse of Adam, had come forth from the side of her husband when God had cast a deep sleep upon him, so the Church, the Spouse of Christ, issued from His sacred wounded side when He had slept in death; for, from the sacred side of Jesus wounded by the lance *there gushed* forth blood and water, symbols of the origin of the Church of Christ and the fulness of redemption and grace which flowed from His Passion and death upon the souls of men ransomed by His Precious Blood and washed in the waters of Baptism. Thus too, the wounding of the heart referred to in the Song of Solomon-"vulnerasti cor meum,"(6)-was thought of in this context as the love of Jesus Christ for His Holy Spouse, the Church.

All these elements of traditional piety and devotion existed in some form or another in practically every period of Christian worship, but only in a scattered, disconnected and unrelated fashion. They had to await a much later period to be gathered together in that marvelous synthesis of doctrine and piety, the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which, in the words of Cardinal Pie, "is the very quintessence of Christianity and the substantial summary and compendium of all religion.(7)" It would be vain, therefore, as Dom Berliere aptly remarks, to seek any trace of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart in the early centuries of the Church.(8) The spiritual element of the love of God and the metaphorical significance of the heart, figuratively expressing love, were indeed there; but that does not constitute devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. There is as yet no mention of the union of that divine love of God with the burning love of soul of our Blessed Lord, expressed and symbolized in His Heart of flesh which beat within His sacred bosom and poured forth the last drop of Its Precious Blood upon the Cross for the salvation

(6). Canticle 4, 9

(7). Cardinal Pie, Oeuvres Episcopales, 3,37

(8). Dom Ursmer Berliere, La Dévotion au Sacré Coeur dans l'ordre de St. Benoît (Paris, 1923), P. 3

## INTRODUCTION

X1X-

of men. Yet, in the perspective of history, all these profound insights and tender effusions of love which characterized the devotions of pious Christians in ages past foreshadowed the formal devotion to the Sacred Heart as we know and love and practise it today.

These early adumbrations of this tender devotion gave place a little later to a somewhat clearer light. This came with the origin and spread of devotion to the sacred wounds of our Blessed Lord, especially to the wound in His sacred side. Many holy souls found a rich source of grace and consolation in the Devotion to the Five Wounds. For, as St. Gregory the Great had said, "Just as the dove finds nourishment in hollow places, so the simple soul seeks in the wounds of Christ the food that makes it strong." (9) St. Bernard and St. Francis of Assisi did much to propagate this form of devotion to the sacred body of Christ and the holy nuns, St. Mechtilde and St. Gertrude- whose influence was so strong in developing the devotion to the Sacred Heart-made frequent reference in their writings to the salutary power of devotion to the wounds of Christ.

The wound made by the lance in the sacred side of Jesus gradually became the object of a special and very popular devotion. As we look back over the historical evolution of Christian worship, this may well be regarded as the first stage in the development of Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. "Tardily, and as it were by a sudden enlightenment," says Dom Gougaud, "the thought

of the Fathers of the Church was drawn towards the Wounded Heart of Jesus. Mediaeval contemplatives and masters of the spiritual life began timidly to turn thither their own devotion and to guide the devotion of chosen souls in this direction." (10) In the Middle Ages, mystics, theologians, directors of souls frequently and eloquently extol the merits and advantages of devotion to the wounded Heart of Jesus and record innumerable instances of great spiritual rewards granted to those who practise it.

From that period onward, devotion to the Sacred Heart became a favorite devotion for many privileged souls and their number

(9). Migne, Comm. in Cant. Canticor, P.L. 79:499.

(10). Dom G. Gougoud, 'Le coeur vulnéré du sauveur,' *Vie et arts liturgiques*, Man, 1921, P. 198.

XX-

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

steadily increased. Although its devotees were quite aware that the object of their devotion was the Sacred Heart of Jesus and although their homage and love were consciously directed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the practice of the devotion nevertheless most frequently appeared in connection with some other devotion, for instance, devotion to the Passion, the Five Wounds, the sacred body of Jesus pierced with the lance, or the Blessed Eucharist, from which it was not as yet clearly and definitely distinguished. Gradually, however, Devotion to the Sacred Heart developed still further in clarity and distinctness until, even before the lifetime of St. John Eudes, it had become known and was practised by many holy persons. St. Bonaventure, the holy nuns of Helfta, St. Mechtilde and St. Gertrude, the pious Carthusian monk, Lanspergius, the Venerable Abbot Louis of Blois and many others had shed great light upon the theory and practice of the devotion and St. John Eudes drew heavily upon their store of wisdom and piety in elaborating his doctrine and method of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Up to this time, however, it was still a private devotion with no special form of its own, no generally accepted mode of practice and no authorized method. Above all, no ecclesiastical authority had as yet given it formal and official approval. Its general character, although greatly clarified over the passing years, had not yet become quite definite and clear because nobody had accurately set forth in due theological form its proper, specific object, its distinctive end and purpose, its doctrinal foundation and the exact method of its practice.

It was the divinely appointed mission of St. John Eudes (for, as His Holiness, Pope Pius X has declared, St. John Eudes did not enter upon his work without divine inspiration) to inaugurate in the Church the public worship of the Sacred Heart. That mission could not have been accomplished, however, until he had first established the theological soundness of the devotion, defined its precise object, and provided a suitable liturgical Office and Mass for the proper celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. These tasks he undertook with characteristic courage, zeal and learning. Moreover, the tireless energy he expended in propagating this most tender and salutary devotion not only resulted in spreading far and wide a clearer

## INTRODUCTION

XX1-

understanding of its aim and object but also deepened, developed, and spread its regular and formal practice among great multitudes of the faithful. At long last, the Devotion to the Sacred Heart was firmly established. To this great saint we owe the first public celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart in the liturgy of the Church. The heroic sanctity of his own personal life, his zeal for the establishment and propagation of his cherished devotion, his fruitful apostolate in its behalf, his great learning and piety, displayed both in the composition of his liturgical Offices and Masses in honor of the admirable Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in his enlightened exposition

and defense of the doctrinal foundations of this form of devotion and worship gained for St. John Eudes the honors of the altar as well as high titles of praise and reverence from the Sovereign Pontiffs who declared him Venerable, Blessed and Saint.

it is popularly believed that Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus originated with the revelations which our Blessed Lord granted to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and that the Venerable Claude de la Colombière, St. Margaret Mary's spiritual director, was the first to preach that devotion to the people. But this is not true. What is true, however, is that the enormous importance of the mission which St. Margaret Mary received from our Lord Himself and the great zeal with which Father de la Colombière and many other priests of the Society of Jesus labored to fulfil the express desires of the Sacred Heart for spread of this devotion to the universal Church have unduly obscured the role of St. John Eudes as the Father, Doctor and Apostle of this beautiful devotion.

St. John Eudes had practised and preached devotion to the Sacred Heart for many years before Our Lord appeared to St. Margaret Mary. In fact, his zealous work had gone so far forth before that date, that the Office and Mass which he had composed in honor of the Sacred Heart received ecclesiastical approval some years before St. Margaret Mary entered the Convent of the Visitation, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart was publicly established and celebrated in several dioceses a year or so before the first of those marvelous apparitions of Our Lord to His holy and humble servant, St. Margaret Mary.

Nor was the character of the devotion, which St. John Eudes had

XX11-

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

preached, altered by the revelations made to this saintly nun. For, the Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart which St. John Eudes had composed and in which his teaching on the nature and purpose of devotion to the Sacred Heart is gloriously enshrined, was adopted for the celebration of the Feast prescribed by our Blessed Lord in one of His revelations to St. Margaret Mary and continued to be used even in convents of the Visitation Nuns for at least fifty years after the death of St. Margaret Mary.

Although St. John Eudes has been honored by the supreme authority of the Holy See with the enviable titles of "Author of the Liturgical Worship of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary" and "The Father, The Doctor and The Apostle of this devotion," surprisingly few persons are aware of the decisive part he played in establishing and propagating the now widespread Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Yet it was he who, inspired by the Holy Ghost, first thought of rendering public worship by a special liturgical Office and Mass to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was he who inaugurated many solemn festivals in honor of the Sacred Heart, first in the institutions conducted by the religious communities of which he was the founder, namely, The Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudist Fathers) and the Order of Our Lady of Charity (Good Shepherd Nuns), and subsequently, with the approval of the hierarchy, in various dioceses of Normandy and Brittany. It was he who composed the Office and Mass to which these bishops gave their whole-hearted approval. It was he who laid firm the theological foundations upon which Devotion to the Sacred Heart, like all devotions of the Church, remains so solidly grounded. It was he who expounded and defended the doctrine and practice of Devotion to the Sacred Heart against its earliest adversaries. It was he who labored all his life long with unflagging zeal and notable success to spread Devotion to the Sacred Heart by his preaching, through his writings, in his missions, by his personal exhortation and example and by the founding of pious confraternities whose members dedicated themselves in a special manner to the practice and propagation of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Upon these pious associations the Holy See showered its choicest favors and blessings, enriching the practice of the devotion cultivated by them with

numerous and precious indulgences.

## INTRODUCTION

XX111-

When all this labor of love had been accomplished and the ground so, well prepared for world-wide acceptance of this highly important devotion, our Blessed Lord appeared to the holy Visitation nun, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, and confided to her the desires of His most Sacred Heart. Jesus Christ Himself picked this saintly religious to be the divinely appointed instrument for the diffusion of devotion to His Sacred Heart throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, to be the privileged depository of those heavenly promises made by our Blessed Lord Himself in favor of all who love and practise this devotion, to be the providential means of establishing the Feast of the Sacred Heart to be celebrated on the Friday following the Octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi throughout the universal Church.

By the time the extraordinary favors which the Sacred Heart of Jesus had bestowed upon St. Margaret Mary became generally known and the revelations and promises made to her were made public, St. John Eudes had passed to his eternal reward. His work had been accomplished and his labors ended. The Office and Mass he had composed in honor of the Sacred Heart was already incorporated into the liturgy and the soil had been prepared by his apostolic zeal for the diffusion throughout the whole world of the devotion he so ardently loved. From that time onward the mission of St. Margaret Mary became the decisive factor in the spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart. The saint herself did not live to see the fulfilment of that mission, but the efforts of all those who espoused the holy cause (especially the work of Father de la Colombière and many other priests of the Society of Jesus) were at last crowned with success and the Sacred Heart finally conquered the whole world.

In the fulness and fervor of our gratitude to our dear Lord for having disclosed the love of His most Sacred Heart by means of special revelations made to His servant, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, it behooves us to remember with equal fulness and fervor of gratitude the less striking, though not less important, mission which He deigned to confide to the great saint to whose zeal and learning the Church owes the origin of the public worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the demonstration of its doctrinal stability, the statement of its theological justification and the earliest diffusion of its practice. It is but just that due honor be paid to all whom God has chosen to

XX1V-

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

be His instruments in the glorious work of establishing and propagating the worship and love of the Sacred Heart of His Divine Son. It cannot detract from the honor due to St. Margaret Mary to confess and proclaim with the Holy See the honor due to that other holy servant of God, St. John Eudes. We should join with St. Margaret Mary herself and with all those good priests who helped to further the explicit desires of the Sacred Heart and who, please God, are with her now in heaven, in gratefully acknowledging and rejoicing in the privilege which Jesus Christ our Lord has bestowed upon St. John Eudes in deigning to make use of his mind and heart, his tongue and pen, to set up in the Church and spread abroad the public worship of His most Sacred Heart.

From early childhood, St. John Eudes had cherished a tender devotion to our Blessed Lady, a devotion which grew more intense and deeper through all the years of his long life. Only in his young manhood, after reading St. Mechtilde and St. Gertrude, did he begin to practise Devotion to the Sacred Heart. In his early work, *The Life and the Kingdom of Jesus*, we find unmistakable traces of what was later to become the full picture of this devotion which was drawn with the bold firm strokes of his learned pen in the twelfth book of his monumental work, *Le Cœur Admirable de la Très Sacré Mère de Dieu*. It is this book which is here published in English translation.



Mary had led St. John Eudes to Jesus. And in Jesus he found Mary more glorious, more lovable, more admirable than ever. That is why, in the thoughts and affections of St. John Eudes Mother and Son are never separated. The love he praises in the most pure Heart of Mary is the love of Jesus Himself; and he sings with one single hymn, *Ave, Cor Sanctissimum*, the love of the admirable Heart of Mary and the love of the adorable Heart of Jesus. This does not indicate, as some have thought, a certain confusion in his mind regarding the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. On the contrary, it manifests a penetrating insight into the deepest meaning of the devotion and a profound appreciation of the mystery of sanctification, the mystery of that union in love which transforms the soul and makes it one with God. St. John Eudes was keenly aware of the infinite difference

## INTRODUCTION

XXV-

between the honor due to Mary, the Mother of God (in whom the love of Jesus, though shared in the plenitude of creaturely capacity, was still a gratuitous gift of God), and the supreme honor due to her Divine Sort (in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells and whose love is God's subsistent and eternal love, in which Our Lady shares). Even while his thoughts were occupied with establishing the cult of the admirable Heart of Mary, his plans were maturing for the writing of his treatise and his meditations on the Sacred Heart of Jesus and for the composition of his Office and Mass in honor of the adorable Heart of our divine Lord.

Although the book he wrote on *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus* is not now extant, and perhaps was never published, the section of his writings which is here presented in English contains the substance of his teaching on the subject. It is the first theological treatise ever written on Devotion to the Sacred Heart and, when read in conjunction with the Office and Mass of the Sacred Heart which St. John Eudes composed and with appropriate passages in the earlier sections of this same great work, *Le Coeur Admirable*, provides as profound and exact a study of the theology of the Sacred Heart as has ever been produced. Certain expressions which St. John Eudes uses to convey his ideas are no longer in current usage but the doctrine expounded in this work has stood the test of time. Many learned writers would have saved themselves much labor in developing the theory of the devotion to the Sacred Heart and not a few historians of the devotion would have been spared undue mistakes had they given more careful attention to this work.

For St. John Eudes, as for all Catholics, the ultimate object of all devotion is God, in the unity of His divine nature and in the Trinity of His Persons. But God sent His Only-begotten Son to redeem and save mankind from the penalty of sin. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour and through Him alone can we mortals have access to divinity. All the religious life of Christians is, therefore, centered in the Word of God made Flesh. Yet it extends to all Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity and, by participation, to all persons, places and things made holy unto God.

XXV1-

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

The worship of the Incarnate Word embraces all that Jesus is in Himself—His divine nature and His sacred humanity—and to all He does in heaven, on earth and in hell, whilst the homage which is offered through any and every act of worship is directed to the Person of the Word. Whence, in virtue of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in Christ, every part and every perfection of the being and the life of Jesus Christ may be made the object of a special devotion provided only that it be not separated from the Person of the Incarnate Word. Jesus is adorable in Himself and in all the mysteries of His existence, in all the perfections of His divine and human natures, in His human soul, with all its powers, faculties and virtues, in His human body, with all its parts and organs, in all His thoughts and words and deeds. Above all, Jesus is adorable in the love He bears to His Heavenly Father, in the love He bestows upon His holy Mother and in the love He

lavishes on all His creatures.

But Jesus is both God and Man. Being very God, He loves His Heavenly Father with an infinite and eternal love and He loves us, too, from all eternity with that uncreated love which moved Him to *become Man* to save us from perdition and to fill our souls with His divine life and love. Being very man, He loves us with all the fervor of His most perfect soul, a human love so tender and so strong, so ardent and so full, that no other human love could be conceived to be so great. The uncreated love of God, which is the principle and source of Christ's created human love and that human love itself, more powerful than any love mere man could ever cherish, reverberate within the Heart of Flesh which throbs within His sacred bosom and adds the human glow of purest passion and emotion to all that great torrent of love which flows from all eternity, through time and unto everlasting.

It is this immense and ineffable love of Jesus Christ in all its aspects and in all its phases which is the specific object of Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

St. John Eudes had gleaned from his prayerful study of Holy Writ many meanings given by the inspired writers to the word, heart. He found the word sometimes referred to the material,

## INTRODUCTION

XXV11-

corporeal organ which we bear in our breasts; sometimes it was used to signify the memory, the understanding or the will; again, it meant the highest point of the soul, the apex mentis of patristic and mediaeval writers, the seat of contemplation or even the whole interior of man; finally, the Holy Ghost was referred to as the "new spirit" and the "new heart" which God would fain give to men and the Son of God Himself was called the Heart of the Eternal Father.

All *these meanings* St. John Eudes gathered up into one theory which embraced them all. For him, the Sacred Heart of Jesus was the synthesis of (a) the divine, uncreated love of Jesus Christ (i.e., the essential love of God, common to all Three Divine Persons of the Most Holy Trinity; the notional love of God, the reciprocal love of God the Father and God the Son from which the Holy Ghost *proceeds*; the personal love of God which is the Divine Person of the Holy Ghost Himself); (b) the human love of Jesus proceeding from His human will and affecting concomitantly all the higher powers of His soul; and (c) the sensible, passionate, emotional love of Jesus, symbolized by the Heart of Flesh, the seat of the emotions, and which St. John Eudes also regarded as the organ of the passions.

To designate this threefold object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, St. John Eudes distinguished three Hearts in Jesus, namely, *His divine Heart* (indicating His uncreated love), *His spiritual Heart* (indicating the love of His soul, His human will and higher faculties), and *His corporeal Heart* (indicating the echo of love in the bodily organ which is its symbol and the seat of its emotional warmth). These expressions are no longer in use but they convey a doctrine which has not been altered with the ages. St. John Eudes hastens to add that these three Hearts are but one absolutely single Heart, filled with infinite love for the Holy Trinity and inconceivable charity for mankind; for, he says, the divine Heart of Jesus is the soul, the life and the heart of both His spiritual Heart and His corporeal Heart.

The aim and purpose of Devotion to the Sacred Heart are to inflame our hearts with a reciprocal love of Jesus and to stir up in our souls appropriate acts of adoration, thanksgiving, repentance and petition enlivened by that love. For, the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a "flaming

furnace of love" which, like a burning fire, seeks to enkindle in our souls an ardent flame of love and to transform them with its consuming power. Father Bainvel has well said, "The whole Devotion to the Sacred Heart can be summed up in this: on the one side, a love which calls for love, a tender, overflowing love which calls for a proportionate love; on the other side, a love which answers the call of love, a love concerned not to fall too far short of the immense love which has anticipated and aroused it." This is the doctrine of St. John Eudes as may be clearly seen in the pages that follow. In this fashion he understood those powerful words of our Blessed Lord, "I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled." (11)

Every act of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus must be enlivened by this all-pervading spirit of love. St. John Eudes sums up under four general headings the appropriate acts which constitute the practice of this devotion. First, to adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Secondly, to praise, bless, glorify and thank Him for His love. Thirdly, to ask pardon for our offenses against His great love and to make reparation for them. Fourthly, to love Him in return for all His love and beg Him to establish within our hearts the reign of His Holy love.

In the concluding words of that beautiful prayer, Ave, Cor Sanctissimum, composed by St. John Eudes and prescribed by him for daily recitation in the religious communities he founded, these acts, proper to the devotion to the Sacred Heart, are set forth with unusual fervor and unction. This prayer teaches us that the Sacred Heart must be adored, praised and glorified in all His manifestations of love. With our whole hearts, with our whole strength and with all our minds we must return this love. To Him we offer, dedicate, consecrate and immolate our hearts that He may wholly take and possess them, live and reign in them now and always, forever and forever.

The contemplation of the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for His Heavenly Father, for His Blessed Mother, for all members of His Church Triumphant, Suffering and Militant, constitutes the deepest foundation of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Upon this foundation St. (11). Luke 12, 49

## INTRODUCTION XX1X

John Eudes builds the whole practice of the Devotion. From the contemplation of these great truths, he bids us pass to the consideration of what the love of God has done for each of us in particular by creating us, by redeeming us, by giving us the gift of divine grace and the promise of eternal reward. And, since that great love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is especially manifest in the sufferings and death of Our Lord upon the Cross and in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, there exists a particularly cogent reason for practising the devotion to the Sacred Heart in and through devotion to the Passion of our Saviour and to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

The most striking characteristic of the teaching of St. John Eudes on Devotion to the Sacred Heart--as indeed of his whole teaching on the spiritual life--is that Christ is always its centre. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ--per Ipsum, cum Ipso et in Ipso--all devotion and all piety achieves its end.

Since the Sacred Heart of Jesus is God's Love symbolically (though by no means merely metaphorically, figuratively or arbitrarily) expressed, all those acts which belong to strictly divine worship (*Cultus patriæ*) have first place in this devotion. For, God Himself is its object. But these acts, as such, are common to all forms of divine worship. In order to become part of a particular devotion they require to be specified by the formal aspect of the particular object which

characterizes that devotion. In the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, this object is the love of the Word Made Flesh both for His Father in Heaven and for all men; and its end is to arouse in the hearts of all who practise it an ardent reciprocal love for Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. Thus all the particular acts appropriate to the practice of this devotion and to the achievement of its end and purpose must stem from the specific act which constitutes its proper act and marks it as a special and distinct devotion, namely, the act of love. The love of Jesus, symbolically expressed and most aptly conveyed by the phrase, "The Sacred Heart of Jesus," evokes a reciprocal love from the hearts of all men. All other acts which enter into the practice of this devotion flow from this, its proper act, and are instinct with the spirit which it breathes.

XXX-

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

In the teaching of St. John Eudes, this order and balance among the various acts which constitute the method and practice of Devotion to the Sacred Heart are admirably maintained. And, although the Devotion, as preached and taught by St. John Eudes, is suffused with the tenderest affection and unction, this is always controlled by strict theological reason and never becomes purely sentimental or emotional. The acts of dedication, immolation, consecration and reparation each has its proper place within that order. They all form part of the full practice of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, each in its proper proportion. All are dependent upon, and subordinate to, the specific act proper to this particular devotion, the act of love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which in turn is incorporated within the whole body of those acts of religion which belong to divine worship in its strictest form. In a word, the doctrine of St. John Eudes is unequivocally Christocentric.

The influence which, since the Renaissance, has tended to make human thought and life in all its phases, even in its spiritual and religious aspects, a man-centered life, is entirely absent from the spirit of St. John Eudes. Christ for him has been, is and always shall be the Centre of our life, the focus of all our thoughts and words and deeds. "Christ yesterday, Christ today, Christ forever."

There are notable indications in the writings of scholars who are expert in the history and the theology of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart pointing towards a deeper and fuller understanding of the teaching of St. John Eudes. The contrasts which have at times been drawn between the devotion to the Sacred Heart as preached by St. John Eudes and as revealed to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque are being progressively revealed as historically and theologically indefensible. Please God, the time is not far off when the whole preaching and practice of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart will be consciously enlivened by the full theological spirit which St. John Eudes first\*infused into the great synthesis of doctrine which he elaborated as the basis of the public worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

GERALD B. PHELAN, The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, September 20, 1944.

## THE SACRED HEART

### OF JESUS

1 -

#### CHAPTER I

### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE OF BURNING LOVE FOR HIS ETERNAL FATHER

Innumerable reasons urge us to offer our worship and honor to the Sacred Heart of our most adorable Saviour with extraordinary devotion and reverence. All these reasons are embodied in the words of St. Bernardine of Siena, who calls this loving Heart: *Fornacem ardentissimae caritatis ad inflammandum et incendendum orbem universum*. "A furnace of ardent love to enkindle and inflame the whole universe." (1) Most certainly the admirable Heart of Jesus is a furnace of love for His Divine Father, for His Blessed Mother, and for His Church Triumphant, Militant and Suffering, and also for each one of us. This we shall see in the following chapters.

Let us consider, first of all, the most brilliant flames of this great furnace of love for the Eternal Father. What mind can conceive and what tongue express the tiniest spark of this illimitable flaming furnace of love for His Father? It is a love worthy of such a Father and of such a Son. It is a love that most perfectly equals the ineffable perfections of its beloved object. Here is a Son infinitely loving & a Father who is infinitely lovable, a God loving a God. Here is love in its very essence loving eternal love: a love that is boundless, incomprehensible, infinite, passing all limits, and loving in turn a love that is boundless, incomprehensible, infinite, and passing all limits.

(1). Sermon 514, *de Passione Domini*, P. 2, tit. 1. In the picture called *Our Lady of Hearts* St. John Eudes represented the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary by the emblem of 2 furnaces of love, whither his disciples go to light torches to enkindle the universe. It is really but a beautiful application of the words of Our Lord in St. Luke 12, 49: "I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled?"

2 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

In a word, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whether considered in His divinity or in His humanity, is more ardently enkindled with love for His Father, loving Him infinitely more at any given moment, than all the hearts of angels and saints together can love Him throughout all eternity.

There is no greater love than to give one's life for the person one loves. The Son of God so loves His Father that He would be ready to sacrifice His own life again, as He sacrificed it upon the Cross, and to sacrifice it by suffering the same torments for the love of His Father (if such were God's holy will) that He suffered on Calvary. Since His love is boundless, He would be ready to lay down His life throughout the whole universe as He did upon Calvary. Since His love is eternal and infinite, He would be ready to make this sacrifice over and over again, if it were possible, and with infinite suffering.

"O Divine Father, Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the whole world, there is no one so lovable as Thou. Thy manifold and infinite perfections, and the unspeakable blessings Thou hast in store for all Thy creatures, place upon them endless obligations to serve, honor and love Thee with all their strength. Yet there is no one in the whole world who is so little loved as Thou, no one who is so scorned and insulted by most of Thy creatures. Oderunt me et Patrem meum. 'They have hated both me and my Father' (2) Jesus Thy Son has said, 'without cause they have hated me. I have never done them any harm but have lavished on them all manner of good': *Odio habuerunt me gratis*. (3) I behold

hell filled with an untold number of the damned, ceaselessly venting their multitudinous blasphemies against Thy divine majesty. I behold the earth filled with unbelievers, Jews, heretics, and false Christians who treat Thee as if Thou wert their archenemy.

"But two thoughts are my consolation and joy. The first is that Thy perfections and Thy splendors, O my God, are so admirable. Thou dost take so great a pleasure and so perfect a satisfaction in the infinite love of Thy Divine Son and in all that He hath suffered

(2). John 15, 24

(3). John x 5, 25.

#### LOVE FOR HIS ETERNAL FATHER 3 -

with that infinite love, to repair the injuries that Thy enemies have striven and still strive to do Thee, that they have not been able or ever will be able to detract the least iota from Thy glory and Thy felicity.

"The second joyful thought is that Jesus, Thy Well-beloved Son, by His incomparable overflowing goodness willed to be our Head and chose us to be His members. He has associated us with Himself in His ineffable love for Thee. He has given us as a result the power to love Thee with the same love wherewith He loves Thee, with a love eternal, boundless, and infinite."

To understand this truth well, take note of three important facts. First, the love of the Son of God for His Heavenly Father, being eternal, does not pass away, but remains forever, stable and abiding. Secondly, the love of the Son of God for His Father fills all things by its immensity; consequently it abides in us and in our hearts: *Intimo meo, intimior*, as St. Augustine says. Thirdly, as the Father of Jesus has given us all things in giving us His Son--*cum ipso omnia donavit* (4)-the love of the Son of God for the Father belongs to us, and we can and must make use of it as a possession that is ours. On this basis, I can, with my Saviour, love His Divine Father and mine, with the same love wherewith He loves Him; with a love which I can put into practice, thus:

"O my Saviour, I give myself to Thee to unite myself to Thy eternal, boundless, and infinite love for Thy Almighty Father. O Adorable Father, I offer Thee all the eternal, boundless, and infinite love of Thy Son Jesus as a love which is mine. just as our lovable Saviour says to us: *Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos*, 'As the Father hath loved me, I also love you,' (5) I may say to Thee: 'O Divine Father, I love Thee, even as Thy Son loveth Thee.'"

The Father's love for the Son is no less mine than the Son's love for the Father; therefore I can make use of it, thus.

"O Father of Jesus, I give myself to Thee to be united to Thy boundless and eternal love for Thy Beloved Son. O my Jesus, I offer Thee all the eternal, boundless, and infinite love of Thy Father, and

(4). Rom. 8, 32.

(5). John 15, 9.

#### 4 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

I offer it to Thee as a love which is mine:' In this way, as our loving Redeemer says to us: 'I love you as my Father loveth me; I can say in turn to Him: 'I love Thee, my Saviour, as Thy Eternal Father loveth Thee.'"

O ineffable goodness! O wondrous love! What bliss for us that the Eternal Father gives us His

Only-begotten Son, and with Him all things else! He gives Him to us not only to be our Redeemer, our Brother, and our Father, but also to be our Head. What a privilege to be members of the Son of God, to be one with Him, as the members are one with the Head, hence to have but one spirit, one heart, one love with Christ, and thus to be able to love His Divine Father, and our Father, with one and the same Heart and love!

It is, therefore, not surprising that, speaking of us to His Heavenly Father, Our Lord says: *Dilexisti eos sicut et me dilexisti*, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast also loved me," (6) and He implores Him to love us always: *Dilectio, qua dilexisti me, in ipsis sit.* (7) If we love the Father as His Son loves Him, He loves us as He loves His Divine Son. He beholds us in His Son as members of Christ who are but one with the Son and love the Father with the same filial love. Truly He loves us with one and the same Heart and love wherewith He loves His Son.

Would that heaven and earth and all creatures might be changed into a pure flame of love for the Father of goodness and for the only Son of His divine delight, as St. Paul calls him: *Transtulit nos in regnum Filii dilectionis suae!* (8)

(6). John 77, 23.

(7). Ibid. 17, 26.

(8). Col. 1, 13.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE OF ARDENT LOVE FOR HIS MOST HOLY MOTHER

NOTHING is easier than the proof of this truth. The ineffable graces with which our Saviour endowed His Blessed Mother clearly manifest that His love for her is a love without measure or limit. She is, after His Divine Father, the first and most worthy object of His love. He loves her incomparably more than all His angels, saints and other creatures together. The extraordinary favors with which He honored her and the wonderful privileges He conferred upon her, far beyond any other creature, are clear proofs of this truth. Let us examine these numerous and impressive privileges.

First of all, the Blessed Virgin is the only human being whom the Son of God chose from all eternity to elevate above all created things, to set on the highest throne of glory and grandeur, and to adorn with the most admirable of all dignities, the Motherhood of God.

Let us descend in spirit from eternity to the fulness of time, and we shall see this hallowed Virgin alone among the children of Adam in her preservation from original sin, through a very special privilege~ in testimony of which Holy Church celebrates annually throughout the world the Feast of her Immaculate Conception.

Not only did the love of God's Son for His most holy Mother preserve her from original sin, but over and above that, He filled her from the moment of her conception with such eminent grace that, according to several great theologians, it surpassed the grace of the chief of the Seraphim and of the greatest of all the saints even taken in its perfection. She alone among all the children of Adam enjoyed this privilege.

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Moreover, from the first moment of her existence, she possessed the privilege of the light of reason and faith, by which she began to know God, to adore Him, and to give herself to Him. In virtue of another privilege she alone began to love God from the initial moment of her life, and she loved Him more ardently than the most flaming of the Seraphim. She alone loved Him continuously, incessantly, throughout the whole course of her life. For this reason we say that her life was one single act of love from the first to the last moment, an act that was never interrupted.

She is the only creature who has always perfectly accomplished the first of the divine commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength." (1) Hence several Doctors of the Church assert that her love was doubled with each hour, or even, according to some, with each moment. When a soul makes an act of love with his whole heart and according to the whole extent of the grace within him, his love becomes twice as great as it was before. The Blessed Virgin loved God continuously with all her heart and all her strength. If she had ten degrees of love at the first instant of her life, she had twenty at the second; if she had twenty at the second, she had forty at the third. Thus her love was doubled every moment or at least every hour throughout the course of her life. You can imagine, therefore, what a furnace and what fires of divine love inflamed that virginal heart in the last days of her abode upon earth.



Let us pass on to the consideration of the matchless privileges by which the Only Son of Mary enriched His holy Mother. According to several eminent Doctors, He gave to her alone the grace to merit, by her prayers and tears, the accomplishment of His Incarnation. She alone gave human flesh, from her own substance, to Him who was born from all eternity in the bosom of God of the substance of the Father. Yes, Mary gave a portion of her virginal substance and of her most pure blood to fashion the sacred humanity of the Son of God. In addition, she cooperated with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in the union which was formed of her substance with the Person of the Son of God. Thus she participated in the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation, and consequently in the greatest miracle that God ever has or ever will or even ever can perform.

(I). Deut. 6, 5.

## LOVE FOR HIS MOST HOLY MOTHER

7 -

There is another privilege that contributes to the matchless honor of Our Lady. The most pure blood and the virginal flesh which she offered for this mystery will remain united forever, by the hypostatic union, to the Person of the Incarnate Word. The virginal blood and the precious flesh of Mary are, therefore, to be adored in the humanity of the Son of God with the same adoration that is due to that very humanity itself, and they will be forever the object of the adoration of all the angels and saints. O incomparable privilege! O ineffable love of Jesus for His most holy Mother!

There are still other prerogatives. That loving Mother also gave the flesh and blood from which the adorable Heart of the Child Jesus was formed. The Sacred Heart of the Son of God received its nourishment and its increase from that same blood, during the nine months of its abode in the holy womb of the Blessed Virgin.

The incomparable Virgin is alone in occupying the place of father and mother in respect to the God-Man, and hence in having paternal and maternal authority over Him, and in receiving the honor of being obeyed by the Sovereign of the Universe, an honor that is greater than she would receive from the homage of all created beings.

She alone is Mother and Virgin together, and according to some holy Doctors she made the vow of virginity from the moment of her Immaculate Conception. She alone bore in her womb for nine months Him whom the Eternal Father embraces in His bosom for all eternity. She alone gave life to Him who is eternal life and who gives life to all living things.

Accompanied by St. Joseph, she abode with that adorable Saviour for the space of thirty years. O wondrous thing! Our divine Redeemer came upon earth to save mankind. Yet He set aside only three years and three months of His life for the work of preaching and instructing. The other thirty years He devoted to the ever-increasing sanctification of His holy Mother. What a wealth of graces and blessings He incessantly poured into the soul of His Blessed Mother! With what flames of heavenly fire did the divine Heart of Jesus enkindle ever

8 -

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

more and more the virgin Heart of His most worthy Mother, especially when those two Hearts were so close to each other and so firmly united, while she bore Him in her womb, nursed Him, and held Him in her arms; during the whole time that she lived with Him familiarly as a mother with her child, eating and drinking with Him, praying with Him, and hearing the divine words coming from His adorable lips as so many coals of fire ever enkindling more and more her most holy Heart with

the sacred fire of divine love!

After this who can estimate how ardently the blessed Heart of the Mother of the Saviour was afire with love for God? Certainly there is great reason to believe that, if her Son had not miraculously preserved her until the decreed hour of death, she would have died of love, not only once, like St. Teresa, but a thousand times, since her love was immeasurably more than that of the great Carmelite mystic. From earliest childhood her love was sufficiently intense to have caused her death and, when her Beloved Son did call her, she died of love that He might give her, after His own, the happiest and most glorious life possible.

Let us repeat concerning the marvelous Virgin that she is the only one, after her Divine Son, to have been transported body and soul into heaven. In accordance with the tradition of Holy Church, Mary's Assumption is solemnly celebrated throughout the world. She alone is raised on high above all the choirs of angels and saints and sits at the right hand of her Son. She alone is crowned Queen of heaven and earth, of angels and men, the Sovereign Empress of the universe. She alone has all power over the Church Triumphant, Militant, and Suffering. *In Jerusalem potestas mea.*(2) She alone has more influence with her Divine Son Jesus than all the citizens of heaven together: *Data est tibi omnis potestas in coelo et in terra*, says St. Peter Damian.

There is yet another particular privilege, emphasized in these words of St. Anselm: *Te, Domina, tacente, nullus orabit, nullus adjuvabit; te autem orante, omnes (nempe Sancti) or omnes adjuvabunt*: "O my Queen, if thou prayest not for anyone or for anything, no (2). Eccles. 24, 15

LOVE FOR HIS MOST HOLY MOTHER

9 -

one shall proffer help, but when thou prayest all the saints pray with thee, all the saints put forth their aid."

Is it not true then that here is a great number of privileges and advantages with which our Saviour has honored His most holy Mother? What has constrained Him to do so? The burning love with which His filial Heart is all on fire for her. Why does He love her so much?

1. She is His Mother, from whom He received a new being and a new life by the new birth which she gave Him on earth.

2. He loves her alone more than He loves all creatures together because she loves Him more than all created things.

3. He loves her most ardently because she cooperated with Him in the accomplishment of His great work of the Redemption of the world. Her cooperation was to, give Him a mortal body capable of suffering and of sustaining the torments of His Passion. She also imparted to Him the Precious Blood which He shed for us, and she offered that body, that blood, and that life as a sacrifice at the foot of the Cross.

As our Saviour's love for His Blessed Mother is so great, we must be obliged to love and serve her to the best of our ability. Let us then love her with her Son Jesus, and if we love them let us hate what they hate and love what they love. Let us have but one heart with them, a heart detesting what they detest, that is, sin, especially the sins against charity, humility and purity, and a heart that loves what they love, particularly the poor, all Christian virtues, and trials. O Mother of goodness, obtain for us these graces from Thy Son!

## CHAPTER 3

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS HAS ENDOWED  
HIS BLESSED MOTHER WITH WONDROUS  
AUTHORITY AND POWER IN HEAVEN**

LET US ADD to the foregoing privileges still another prerogative, the greatest of all. It is this: the Mother of God is eternally associated in heaven not only with the highest authority of the Eternal Father, His adorable paternity, but likewise she possesses the authority of the Mother of the Divine Son as on earth: *Et erat subditus illis*. (1) This is a greater glory for her than if she exercised power over a million worlds. Her Son infinitely surpasses her in glory, power and majesty; yet He will eternally look upon her and honor her as His real Mother. His place as Son of God, says St. Ambrose, did not dispense Him while on earth from the divine and natural obligation which He had like all other children of obeying His Mother, according to the words: *Et erat subditus illis*. This submission was to Him not a matter of shame but rather of honor and glory; it was voluntary and proceeded not from weakness but from filial devotion: *Non utique infirmitatis*, as this holy Father declares, *est ista subjectio, sed pietatis*.

Several eminent theologians are agreed that the Mother of the Saviour had actual authority over the person of her Son, whether it was by a right of nature or by virtue of His goodness and humility. The greatest of all names that one can bestow upon the Blessed Virgin, says the devout Gerson, is that of Mother of God, all the more because that character gives her authority and natural dominion over the Lord of the whole world: *Quoniam per hoc habet veluti auctoritatem, et naturale dominium ad totius mundi Dominum*. (2) One must not

(1). Luke 2, 51.

(2). Serm. de Annunt.

#### HIS BLESSED MOTHER'S POWER IN HEAVEN 11 -

imagine that her Son, having given her this power on earth, would take it away from her now that she is reigning in heaven. His respect and love for her now are just as great as when He was on earth.

It is only right, therefore, to believe that she is as powerful in heaven as she was on earth and that she still maintains there a measure of authority over her Divine Son. *Eadem potestas est Matris et Filii*, says Arnold Of Chartres; or as Richard of St. Lawrence puts it: *Quae ab omnipotente Filio omnipotens facta est*. The Son and the Mother, having but one and the same flesh, but one and the same heart and will, have also, in a certain way, but one and the same power.

Let us listen to the words of a worthy and learned prelate, George, Archbishop of Nicomedia. Addressing the glorious Virgin he says: "Nothing resists thy might, everything obeys thy imperium; He who is born of thee hath raised thee above all things; thy Creator makes thy glory His and deems Himself honored by those who honor thee; thy Son rejoices beholding the honor that we give thee, and as if He were paying off the obligations He hath to thee, He gladly grants thee whatsoever thou dost ask Him: *Nihil, O Virgo, tuae resistit potentiae; tuam gloriam Filius putat esse propriam, et quasi exsolvens debitum, implet petitiones tuas*." (3)

We know for certain, says St. Anselm, that the Blessed Virgin is so filled with grace and merit that she always obtains the fruition of her desires: *Scimus beatam Virginem tanti esse meriti et gratiae apud Deum, ut nihil eorum, quae velit efficere, possit aliquatenus effectu carere*. (4) It is impossible, says St. Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople, that her prayers should not be heard, everywhere and in all things, because her Divine Son is always submissive to her behests: *Non potest*

*non exaudiri, cum Deus ut verae Matri; suae, quoad omnia, et per omnia, et in omnibus morem gerat.*  
( 5 )

*Utrunque stupor, says St. Bernard, utrinque miraculum; miracles on both sides. Quod Deus feminae obtemperet, humilitas absque exemplo; et quod Deo femina principetur, sublimitas sine socio:* "That God

(3). Orat. de Oblat. Deiparae.

(4). De Excel, Virg.. cap. 12.

(5). Serm. 2 in B. Mar. dormit.

12-

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

should obey a woman is humility unexampled, and that a woman should command God is an authority which has no like." Hence it is that St. Peter Damian is not afraid to say that our Blessed Lady appears in heaven, before the sacred altar of our reconciliation, *non solum rogans sed imperans*, "not only as a servant but as a mother who commands." (6) *Roga Patrem, jube nato, jure Matris impera*, sings the Church of Paris in one of its sequences: "When thou hast aught to ask of the Eternal Father, O holy Virgin, resort to prayer and supplication; but when it is a question of the Son, then thy maternal authority gives thee the right to utter a command."

If anyone should claim that here the creature is being put above the Creator, I would ask him whether Sacred Scripture raises Josue above God when it says that the sun stood still and God obeyed the voice of a man. (7) No, this is not putting the *creature above* the Creator; the fact is that the Son of God has such love and respect for His holy Mother that her prayer to Him is equal to a command.

The Blessed Virgin, says St. Albertus Magnus, (8) is able to entreat her Son for the salvation of her servants, and she is able to command Him with the authority of a Mother. This is the favor we ask of her, he adds, when we use the words: *Monstra te esse Matrem*. It is a frequent prayer of the Church, a prayer that is most pleasing to her and most profitable to our souls. It is as if we said to her: Most holy Mother of God, let us see the incomparable mercies with which thy motherly heart is filled on behalf of thy most unworthy children; show us the mighty power that thy most benign heart hath upon the most merciful Heart of thy beloved Son: *Monstra te esse Matrem, sumat per te preces, qui pro nobis natus tulit esse tuus*.

(6). Serm de Nativ. B. Mariae

(7). JOSUE 10, 74.

(8). De Laud. Virg., Jib. 2.

## CHAPTER 4

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS WAS FILLED  
WITH BITTER SORROW AT THE SIGHT OF  
HIS LOVING MOTHER'S ANGUISH  
DURING HIS PASSION**

As THE ADORABLE HEART of our Saviour was on fire with infinite love for His most holy Mother, the anguish which He bore in seeing her plunged into a sea of sorrow at the time of His Passion was beyond the power of human word or thought. The Blessed Virgin was the Mother of our Redeemer and she ever sustained in her heart an unceasing combat of love. She knew that it was God's will that her Beloved Son should suffer and die to save souls. Thus her most ardent love for that divine will and for the salvation of souls placed her in utter submission to the commands of God. Her incomparable motherly love for her dear Son, however, caused her unspeakable sorrow, in view of the torments that He was to suffer to redeem the world.

The saints teach that when the day of His Passion had come, in accordance with the loving obedience with which He always honored His holy Mother, and the goodness He always showed in consoling His friends in their affliction, He took leave of His dear Mother before the beginnings of His sufferings. To do all things out of obedience to the will of His Father and His Mother, since she had not a will different from the Father's, He asked permission of her to carry out what His Eternal Father had commanded Him. He told her that it was the will of the Father that she should accompany Him to the foot of the Cross and that, after His death, she should wrap His body in a shroud and place it in the tomb. The saints also teach that He commanded her what to do and where to remain until His resurrection.

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

It is also possible that He revealed to her what He had to suffer, as much to prepare her as to encourage her to accompany Him in His sufferings. Because their interior sorrows were unutterable, they did not declare them to each other in words; their eyes met and their Hearts understood their mutual afflictions. The most perfect love of both and their entire conformity to the divine will did not permit any imperfection in their natural feelings. On the one hand, the Saviour being the Only Son of His beloved Mother felt very keenly her sorrows; but, on the other, being her God and willing to fortify her in the greatest sorrow ever borne by a human being, He consoled her by His divine words, which she heard and kept carefully in her Heart. He poured an abundance of new grace into her soul so that she might endure and overcome the exceedingly terrible sorrows prepared for her. These sorrows were so great that if it had been possible and fitting for her to suffer in place of her Son, it would have been easier for her to do so. Her torments would thus have been much more bearable than the sight of her Son's Passion. It would have been infinitely preferable for her to give her life for Him than to watch Him suffer such dreadful tortures. Since God had willed otherwise, she offered her Heart and Jesus gave His body, so that each should suffer what God had ordained. Mary had to suffer all the torments of her Son in her extremely sensitive Heart; Jesus had to endure in His body inexplicable torments and in His Heart the inconceivable sufferings of His holy Mother.

When He had taken leave of His Mother, the Saviour plunged Himself into the immense ocean of His sorrows, and His desolate Mother accompanied Him in spirit as she remained in constant prayer. Thus that sad day began for her with prayers, tears, inner agonies, and a most perfect submission to the divine will, as she uttered in the depths of her Heart what her Son said to His Father in the Garden of Olives: "Father, not my will but thine be done." (1) The night that our Redeemer was seized in the

Garden of Olives, the Jews led Him, bound and manacled, first to the House of Annas, then to that of Caiphas, where, weary of mocking and insulting Him, they kept Him a prisoner until the next day.  
(I) LUKE 22, 42.

#### HIS LOVING MOTHER'S ANGUISH

15 -

St. John the Evangelist also left the house of Caiphas, whether by in order from our Saviour or by some divine inspiration, and went to the house of the Blessed Virgin to inform her of what had taken place. Who, O my God, could express the grief and sorrow of the Mother of Jesus as His beloved disciple recounted what had happened since the opening events of the Passion? Surely the feelings and the griefs of them both were such that whatever one might say of them would be as naught compared with the reality. They conversed more with their hearts than with their tongues, more with tears than with words, particularly the Blessed Virgin, whose grief was so intense that she could give no outward expression to it. Later, when the time came to accompany her Only Son to Calvary, she set out at daybreak in silence, even as her Divine Son, her Lamb, took up His Cross without a word. She bathed the way with her tears and her Heart set up a thousand ardent sighs to heaven. Let the devout followers of this sorrowing Virgin henceforth gladly pursue a way whereby they can accompany her in her sorrows.

The Jews led the Saviour to the house of Pilate and Herod, with every sort of insult and shame, but His sad Mother could not see Him because of the multitude and the noise of the people, until that moment when Pilate, after the scourging and the crowning of thorns, showed Him to the populace. Then it was that she heard the voices of the rabble, the uproar of the city, the insults vomited forth against Her Son, the outrages done Him, the blasphemies flung at Him. Her heart underwent immeasurable suffering and her eyes streamed with tears: *Deduc quasi torrentem lacrymas.* (2) As she had placed all her love in Him, she desired His presence above all else, even though it must have afflicted her the most, for love can be so ardent that it endures much less the absence of the object loved than the pain caused by the beloved's presence, however great the pain.

In all this bitterness and anguish, passing all imagination, this innocent Mother aspired to the sight of her Divine Son. Finally she saw Him all torn from head to foot with whips. His sacred head was pierced with cruel thorns, His adorable face bruised, swollen, stained with blood and spittle. With a rope around His neck and His hands  
(2). Lam. 2, 18.

16 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

bound, He wore the scarlet robe of mockery. Well did He know that His sorrowful Mother was there; and she, too, knew full well that His divine majesty read the feelings of her Heart, which was *pierced* with sorrows not inferior to those He bore in his own body. There she heard the false testimony given against Him; she heard them *prefer* Barrabas, a thief and a murderer. She heard thousands of voices shouting in anger: Tolle, tolle, crucifige, crucifige! (3) She heard the cruel and unjust *sentence pronounced* against the Author of life. She saw upraised the Cross, on which they were to crucify Him; she saw Him bearing it on His shoulders and beginning His march to Calvary. She followed his blood-stained footsteps and washed the way with as many tears as He shed drops of blood; and she bore inwardly the burden of the Cross, as heavy upon her heart as upon His shoulders.

At last she reached Calvary, accompanied by the holy women who sought to console her. Like her gentle Lamb she was silent, suffering unspeakable agony, hearing the hammer-blows struck by the executioners on the nails fastening her Son to the Cross. As she was extremely weak from her night of watching, tears and fasting, when she saw Him whom she loved more deeply than herself

raised on the Cross, without being able to relieve Him in any way, she fell into the arms of those accompanying her, as ordinarily happens under the stress of great and excessive sorrow. Then as her tears dried, she lay there, pale, trembling mightily. No other fragrant water could be found to throw upon her face but the tears of grief of those who were supporting her, until such time as her Son *restored her* strength that she might accompany Him unto death. (4)

Whereupon, shedding new streams of tears, she began to suffer a fresh martyrdom of sorrow at the sight of her Son and her God hanging upon the Cross. Nevertheless, this did not prevent her from performing, within her soul, the office of mediatrix between God and

(3). John 19, 15

(4). The fact mentioned here by St. John Eudes is reported by several authors, but the most reliable theologians reject it because they think it is in opposition to the perfect control of all the notions of sensibility which they unanimously recognize in Mary, and to the quasi-priestly role that she had to fulfil during the Passion of her divine, Son. Cf. Terrien: *La Mère des hommes*, 1, p. 200, note 5.

#### HIS LOVING MOTHER'S ANGUISH 17 -

sinners, cooperating with their Redeemer in saving them, and offering to the Father for them His blood, His sufferings, and His death, with the most ardent desire for their eternal happiness. On the one hand, the unspeakable love that she bore her dear Child made her fear to behold Him expire and die; on the other, it filled her with sorrow that His torments were dragging on so long, only to end in His death. Although she wanted the Eternal Father to soften the rigor of His torments, she also wished to conform wholly to His *every command*. Thus divine love engendered in her Heart a combat between conflicting desires and feelings which, from this same love, caused her to suffer unspeakable sorrows.

These sacred Lambs, divine and human, beheld and understood each other and communicated to each other their sorrows. It may be said with certainty that no one can understand their anguish except the two Hearts of Son and Mother who, loving each other perfectly, *together suffered these* cruel torments. Their mutual love being the measure of their sorrows, those who consider their excruciating pain are all the less able to understand it the further they are from comprehending the love of such a Son for such a Mother, and of such a Mother for such a Son.

The sorrows of the Blessed Virgin went on increasing. They were being renewed continually by new insults and torments inflicted on her Son by the Jews in their wrath. What sorrow when she heard Him utter these words: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (5) What sorrow to see gall and vinegar given Him to quench His burning thirst! What sorrow when she watched Him die on the gibbet between criminals! What sorrow to behold His Heart *pierced* with a lance! What sorrow when she received Him dead, taken down from the Cross and placed in her arms! What sorrow when the disciples took His holy body from her embrace to enclose it in the sepulchre! With what sorrow must she have returned home, there to await His resurrection! How gladly would the holy Virgin have suffered all the pains of her Son rather than witness His endurance!

It is a result which perfect charity produces in the hearts of those who strive to imitate their Divine Father and their good Mother that

(5). Matt. 27, 46.

they bear with joy their own afflictions and keenly feel those of others. Thus it is easier for them to endure pain themselves than to see the loved ones suffering. That is what our Saviour did throughout

the course of His life and particularly on the day of His Passion. Knowing that the traitor had sold Him for money, He showed far deeper concern over the lost soul of Judas (saying it would have been better for him if he had never been born rather than merit damnation), than over the torments that He had to suffer by betrayal.

He also showed to the weeping women who were following Him as He carried His cross on His shoulders, how the tribulations which they and the city of Jerusalem would have to suffer, were more painful to Him than all that He was undergoing. "Daughters of Jerusalem," He said to them, "weep not over me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days shall come wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have never borne, and the paps that have not given suck." (6)

Even while He was fastened to the cross, forgetting His own torments, He made it clear that the trials of sinners were felt more by Him than His own sufferings, in that He prayed His Father to pardon them. From this we know that His love for His creatures rendered Him more sensitive to their afflictions than to His own.

The greatest torture that our Saviour suffered on the Cross, a torture more painful to Him than His own bodily sufferings, was to see His most holy Mother whom He loved more than all creatures together, overwhelmed with sorrow. She was of all mothers the most perfect, the faithful companion of His journeys and of all His labors, who, being immaculate, deserved not to suffer for any fault that she had committed. Her motherly love was greater than that of all angels and saints. She saw Him suffering torments that never had nor ever will have their like. How great is the agony of such a Mother, who sees before her eyes such a Son so unjustly tortured and agonizing in a sea of sorrows, without being able to help Him! Truly this cross was so huge and heavy that no human soul is capable of comprehending it. It was a cross which was reserved for the grace, the love~ and the heroic virtues of the Mother of God.

(6). Luke 23, 28-29.

#### HIS LOVING MOTHERS ANGUISH

19 -

The fact that she was the innocent Mother of God did not prevent her from suffering such great torture. On the contrary, her Son would not permit anyone, even those who were crucifying Him, to dare to offer her insult or cause her grief. Desiring to make her like unto Himself, whose love was the principal and first cause of His sufferings and His death, He also willed that His love for His Mother and her love for Him should be the cause of the martyrdom of His heart at the end of His life, just as at the beginning it had been the source of His joys and satisfaction.

The Son of God witnessed from His cross all the griefs and sorrows of the holy Heart of His Blessed Mother; He heard her sighs, He saw her tears and the loneliness in which she was to remain after His death. Each vision was a new torment and a new martyrdom for the divine Heart of Jesus. Thus everything was present that could afflict and crucify the most lovable Hearts of the Son and the Mother. Therefore, some authorities think that when the Saviour spoke from the Cross to His sorrowful Mother, He did not wish to call her Mother, so as not to cause her more pain. He spoke only words which showed that He had not forgotten her and that, in accordance with His Father's will, He was succoring her in her loneliness, giving her the beloved disciple to be her son, saying: *Mulier, ecce filius tuus* "Woman, behold thy son;" and to the disciple, "Behold thy Mother," *Ecce Mater tua.* (7) Henceforth, St. John remained bound to the service of the Queen of heaven, honoring her as his Mother and serving her as his Lady, esteeming the service to her as the greatest favor that he could receive in this world from his loving Master.



All sinners have a share in this grace of St. John, for he represented all human beings at the foot of the Cross and our Saviour beheld them all in him; so in speaking to him He was addressing all men in general and each soul in particular, saying, *Ecce Mater tua*---~'Behold thy Mother." I give you my Mother to be yours, and I give you to her as her children. What a precious gift! What an inestimable treasure! What an incomparable grace! What an obligation we have to our Saviour in His unspeakable goodness! What thanks we should render Him! He has given His Divine Father to be our Father; and  
(7). John, 19, 26-27.

20 -

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

He gives us His most holy Mother to be our Mother, so that we shall have with Him but one and the same Father and Mother. We are not worthy to be the slaves of this great Queen, and lo! He makes us her children! What reverence and humility we must have for such a Mother! What zeal and affection in her service! What pains we must take to imitate her holy virtues, so that there will be some resemblance between Mother and children!

This gentle Mother received great consolation when she heard the voice of her Dear Son. At the hour of death any word whatsoever from one's child or dear friend lends great comfort and peculiar consolation. Since those two Sacred Hearts, the Hearts of such a Son and of such a Mother so well understood each other, the Blessed Virgin. accepted most readily St. John as her son, and in him all sinners in general, knowing well that that was the intention of her dying Son. He was shedding His blood for sinners, and their sins were the cause of His death. He desired in that last hour to remove from them any possible mistrust of Him, when they saw the great sufferings that they had caused Him by their sins. To that end He gave them His most valued treasure, a treasure most capable of influencing Him, His most holy Mother, so that by her mediation and protection they might have the confident assurance of being received and welcomed by His divine majesty. One cannot doubt, therefore, the inestimable love of the Mother of goodness for sinners, since, in that spiritual begetting at the foot of the Cross, she suffered unspeakable pain which was absent from the Virgin birth of her Son and her God.

All these things clearly show that the sorrows of the Mother and the sufferings of the Son culminate in immense graces, blessings, and favors for sinners. What an obligation we have, therefore, to honor, to love and to praise those two most lovable Hearts of Jesus and Mary; to employ our whole life in serving and glorifying them; and to endeavor to imprint on our hearts a perfect image of their most eminent virtues! It is impossible to please them if we follow any other path except the one they trod upon earth.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE OF LOVE FOR THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT, MILITANT AND SUFFERING

IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE that this adorable Heart is a burning furnace of divine love, radiating its fire and game in all directions, in heaven, on earth, and even in hell: in heaven in the Church Triumphant, on earth in the Church Militant, and in purgatory in the Church Suffering, and to some degree even in the hell of the damned.

If we lift our eyes and hearts to heaven, to the Church Triumphant, what shall we see? We shall behold an innumerable army of saints, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins. What are all these saints? They are so many flames from the immense furnace of the divine Heart of Jesus. Is it not the love of that kind Heart which brought them into the world, enlightened them with the light of faith, and gave them strength to conquer the devil, the world and the flesh? Is it not the goodness of that amiable Heart which adorned them with all virtues, sanctified them in this world and glorified them in the other; which kindled in their hearts the love they bear to God, inspired their lips with His divine praises, which is the source of all that is great and holy and admirable in them? If then one celebrates during the course of the year so many feasts in honor of these same saints, what a solemnity is due to this divine Heart which is the principle of everything that is glorious and noble in all the saints!

Let us come down to earth and see what is most worthy and great in the Church Militant. It is the holy Sacraments—the Sacrament of Baptism by which we are made children of God; Confirmation,

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

which gives us the Holy Spirit; Penance, which washes away our sins and restores us to God's favor; the Blessed Eucharist, which feeds our souls with the flesh and blood of the Son of God, making us live by His life; Matrimony, which forms children for God, to serve and honor Him on earth and to love and praise Him forever in heaven; Holy Orders, which gives to the Church priests who shall continue the functions of the great High Priest and thus cooperate with Him in the great work of the salvation of the world, so that they bear the name and the character of saviours in Holy Scripture: Ascendent salvatores in montem Sion; (1) and Extreme Unction, which at our departure from this world fortifies us against the enemies of our salvation, who at that last hour make their final endeavor to ruin us.

The seven Sacraments are so many inexhaustible fountains of grace and holiness, which have their source in the immense ocean of the Sacred Heart of our Saviour; they are so many flames of a divine furnace from which proceed all spiritual blessings. But the brightest of those flames is the most Holy Eucharist. It is true that this great Sacrament is a compendium of all the wonders of the power, wisdom and goodness of God, but it is also true that it is one of the fruits of the incomparable Heart of Jesus and one of the flames of that wondrous furnace.

Since a solemn feast is celebrated by Holy Church in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, what a solemnity should also be kept in honor of His most Sacred Heart, which is the source of all that is great and rare and precious in this august Sacrament?

Let us, as it were, descend in spirit to purgatory, to the Church Suffering. What is

purgatory? It is the awe-inspiring throne of divine justice, which metes out in this place punishments so terrible that St. Thomas says: *Minima poena purgatorii excedit omnes poenas huius mundi*. "The slightest pain suffered there surpasses all the sufferings of this world." (2) St. Augustine says the same thing as the Angelic Doctor (3). Nevertheless, the terrible justice of God does not hold such

(1). Abd. 1, 21.

(2). *Summa* 111a, q. 46, a. 6, ad 3.

(3). "Gravior est ille ignis, quam quidquid potest homo pati in hac vita." Super *Psalms*. 37. "Ille purgatorius ignis durior erit, quam quidquid potest in hoc saeculo poenarum videri, aut cogitari, aut sentiri." *Sam. 4 pro defunctis*.

## LOVE FOR THE CHURCH

23 -

sway in purgatory that mercy has no part there. Mercy with justice has constituted purgatory, to open paradise, which would remain closed to the majority of men if purgatory did not exist, because it is a truth of our faith that nothing contaminated shall enter heaven: *Nihil coinquinatum intrabit in regnum caelorum*. (4) Thus a soul, even though it had but one venial sin on quitting the body, would never enter paradise unless the merciful Saviour had established purgatory to purify it. And so purgatory is a result of the goodness and charity of the most benign Heart of our Redeemer.

Let us descend still lower. Let us go in spirit into hell, since St. Chrysostom declares that not one of those who thus go there during this life to inspire themselves to the work of their salvation with fear and trembling shall descend there after death.

What is hell? It is a place of torment, according to the Holy Gospel: *Locus tormentorum*; (5) it is gehenna ignis; (6) *supplicium aeternum*; (7) "the pain of fire, an eternal punishment"; in short, it is the place of the vengeance and anger of God. But the infinite mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is manifested there in three ways.

First, His goodness provides that the damned are not punished as much as they deserve; for sin deserves infinite punishment, seeing that it is an offense committed against a God who infinitely deserves to be served and obeyed, and against a God to whom we have infinite obligations. Sin deserves infinite punishment not only as to extent and duration, but also intensively as to the degree and quality of the punishment. Now, although the pains of the reprobate are infinite as to extent and duration, they are limited as to intensiveness and degree, seeing that Our Lord could increase them ever more and more. This He does not do because of the ineffable goodness of His most tender Heart.

Secondly, His justice has established a hell to punish the wicked who die in their sins, but His mercy too has fashioned it, says St. Chrysostom, to inspire the fear of God in the hearts of the good and

(4). Apoc. 21, 27

(5). Luke 16, 28,

(6). Matt. 18, 9.

(7). Matt. 25. 46.

24 -

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

to lead them to work out their salvation *cum timore et tremore*, (8) with fear and trembling.

Thirdly, the unparalleled goodness of our Saviour employs the fires of hell to enkindle in our hearts the fire of divine love. In what way? In this manner. If you had deserved punishment by fire,

what an obligation you would have to love the person who delivered you from such a heavy penalty! How few persons there are on earth who have never committed a mortal sin! There are very few indeed. And what was the just desert of all those who offended God mortally even but once in their whole life? They have merited hell, but on them alone does it depend to be freed therefrom. To whom do they owe this obligation? To the immense charity of the most kind Heart of our Redeemer, which gives them infinite obligations to serve and to love Him. Acknowledge that the loving kindnesses of the amiable Heart of this divine Saviour are exceedingly admirable; that He uses even the fires of hell to draw us to love Him and hence to belong to the number of those who shall possess Him eternally.

And so this divine furnace, the adorable Heart of Jesus, diffuses everywhere its fiery flames, in heaven, on earth, and even in hell. O ineffable goodness! O wondrous love! O God of my heart, would that I possessed all the hearts that have ever been, are, and shall be, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, to employ them in loving, praising and glorifying Thee unceasingly! O Jesus, only Son of God, only Son of Mary, I offer Thee the most loving Heart of Thy divine Mother which is more precious and pleasing to Thee than all hearts. O Mary, Mother of Jesus, I offer Thee the most adorable Heart of Thy Well-beloved Son, who is the life and love and joy of thy Heart.

(8) Eph. 6, 5.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE OF LOVE FOR EACH ONE OF US

To APPRECIATE this truth, let us consider the wondrous effects of the inconceivable goodness and the unspeakable love of the Sacred Heart towards us. Two of these effects which embody many more are here given.

The first is that of having delivered us from the abyss of evils into which sin had plunged us. By sin we were made enemies of God, the object of His wrath and curse, excommunicated from the Most Holy Trinity, anathematized by the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, separated from the company of angels, banished from the home of our Heavenly Father; by sin we were driven from paradise, cast into hell, plunged into the devouring flames of eternal fire, subjected to the terrible tyranny of Satan, enslaved by demons, given over to their rage and fury, condemned to the rightful punishments of hell, and without hope of succor or relief.

Exceedingly terrible as are those evils there is yet one which exceeds them all. What is that but sin, which is the evil of evils and the sole cause of all the others on earth and in hell. What an evil is sin! To understand something of its malice, imagine all men who have lived, are now living, and will live upon earth; imagine that each of them possesses the holiness of a St. John the Baptist; imagine also all the angels of heaven as having taken mortal flesh and being joined to the multitude of men. Even if all these men and angels were to shed their blood to the last drop and suffer all the torments of hell for eternity, they would not be able to deliver us from the tiniest venial sin; they would not be able to render perfect and worthy satisfaction

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

to God for the offense done Him, nor consequently to free us from the slightest evil we should have merited by that sin, nor give us that drop of water which the rich man craved so long ago.

If one venial sin is so great an evil, what of mortal sin? What is it to be the slave of that infernal monster, which is more hideous and terrible than all the monsters and dragons of earth and hell?

Such is the pit of evils into which we had been plunged, from which there was no hope of escape, since all human powers and all the forces of heaven and earth were powerless to deliver us. Yet it has transpired, by a boon which we cannot comprehend, that we were liberated! To whom do we owe this? To the most loving Heart of our adorable Redeemer. We were delivered from so many evils by the immeasurable goodness, the infinite mercy, and the matchless love of that divine Heart. What had we done, what service rendered, to constrain Him thereto? Nothing whatever. It was out of purest love that He honored us with such a favor. What did He do to obtain for us so great a blessing? He did and suffered all. The cost to Him was dear, His blood, His life, a thousand torments, and a most cruel and shameful death. What obligations we have to honor, praise, and love that most benign Heart in return for all these benefits!

Suppose a man is a bandit-gunman. He has robbed a wealthy merchant by violence. He is caught, imprisoned, tried, condemned to death, and there he is in the hands of the hangman who is putting the rope around his neck. The merchant arrives at that very moment. By dint of money, the entreaties of friends, and even by the offer of his own life for the culprit, he obtains a pardon for the

criminal and sets him free. How great is the bandit's debt to his rescued

For our crimes we were condemned to the pains of hell. The only begotten Son of God, out of the inconceivably abundant goodness of His divine Heart, suffered a most atrocious and shameful death in order to deliver us. Try to estimate how indebted we are to that adorable Heart. An elephant will give itself entirely for the rest of its life to serve a man who had released it from a pit. What shall I give in return to Thee, my Saviour, and what shall I do for Thy love of me? Thou hast snatched me out of the frightful jaws of hell as often as ever I have fallen into them by sinning, or would have fallen if

LOVE FOR EACH ONE OF US

27 -

the charity of Thy dear Heart had not held me back. Does it take a dumb animal to teach me the lesson of gratitude which I owe Thee for Thy unspeakable mercies?

Such is the first effect, or rather the effect without number or measure of the tremendous love which the Sacred Heart of our Redeemer has manifested in delivering us from immeasurable evils. But it is not enough for him to have freed us from all those punishments; He would likewise shower us with inconceivable gifts. What a favor and fortune it is, not only to be snatched from hell but to be raised to heaven, to be made a citizen of paradise where there is a general exemption from all sorts of evils and where one possesses fully, entirely, unchangeably, eternally all sorts of boons! What a favor and a fortune to be associated with the angels, to be their companion, to be seated beside their throne, to live the angelic life, to be clothed with their glory, to enjoy their felicity, in short, to resemble the angels: *Erunt aequales angelis Dei!* ( 1 )

What extraordinary fortune to be ranked with the children of God, the heirs of the great God, the co-heirs of the Son of God: *Videte qualem caritatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei nominemur et Simus!*(2) What a remarkable privilege to be kings of an everlasting kingdom and to possess the same kingdom that the Father of Jesus has given to His Son: *Sicut disposuit mihi Pater, et ego dispono vobis regnum!* (3) What a blessed invitation to eat at the table of the King of heaven: *Ut edatis et bibatis super mensam meam.* (4) What a great joy to be clothed in the glorious royal robe of the King of kings: *Caritatem quam dedisti mihi, dedi eis!* ( 5 ) What a supreme favor to share the throne of the Sovereign Monarch of the universe: *Qui vicerit, dabo ei sedere mecum in throno meo!* ( 6 ) What an incomparable blessing to dwell quietly with our Saviour in the bosom and in the adorable Heart of His Divine Father: *Pater, quos dedisti mihi,*

(1). Luke 20, 36.

(2). John 3, 1

(3). Luke 22, 29.

(4). Ibid. 30

(5). John 17, 22.

(6). APOC. 3, 21

28 -

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

*volo ut ubi sum ego, et illi sint mecum.*<sup>7</sup> "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me." Where art Thou, my Saviour? *In sinu Patris*, "in the bosom of the Father," says St. John. (8)

What a fortune, moreover, to share all the good things that God possessed He who has God shall enjoy all the manifold glory, happiness and wealth of God: *Amen dico vobis, super omnia bona sua constituet eum.* (9) What a blessing to be wholly transformed into God, to be clothed, filled, penetrated with all the perfections of God, more perfectly than the iron in the midst of the furnace is

penetrated by the qualities of the fire! Finally, what a blessing to be united to God: *Sicut tu Pater in me, et ego in te, ita et ipsi in nobis unum sunt: divinae consortes naturae.* "(10). What a privilege to be by grace and by participation what God is by nature and by essence!

What created mind can understand these surpassing gifts? Could all the tongues of men and angels express the least part of them? Is it not true what St. Paul says, that all those blessings are so great that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him:" *Nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit, nec in car hominis ascendit quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se.* ( 1 1 )

Now, to whom do we owe all those blessings? To the boundless generosity and infinite love of the most kind Heart of our lovable Saviour. Hence, what honor, what praise, what thanksgiving we must render Him, and with what devotion we must celebrate the solemnity of that most august Heart! Suppose that the aforesaid merchant who was robbed not only delivered the gunman from the hands of the executioner and from the shameful death he was ready to suffer, but also gave him half of his goods. How would that criminal ever be able to repay such goodness?

Our divine Saviour has done more for us. Not only has He delivered us from eternal death and all the tortures accompanying it,

(7). John 17, 24.

(8). Ibid. 1, 18.

(9). *Matt.* 24, 47

(10). John 17, 21.

(11). I Cor. 2, 9.

## LOVE FOR EACH ONE OF US

29 -

but He has also heaped upon us a superabundance of unspeakable blessings. Indeed, He has given us all His blessings without reserve.

What shall we give Him in return? *Quid retribuam Domino, pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?* (12) If we had the hearts of as many Seraphim as there are stars in the sky, atoms in the air, blades of grass on the earth, grains of sand and drops of water in the sea, and if we devoted them solely to love and glorify Him, it would be as nothing compared with the love He has for us and the obligations we have of consecrating our hearts to Him.

Yet what are we and the great majority of men doing? Is it not true that we treat this adorable Redeemer as ungratefully as if we had never received any boon from Him? Is it not true that we treat Him as if He had done us all the evil in the world? But is it not true that He has neglected nothing, that if it came even to all His glory and His own safety, He would not have been able to do more than He has done for love of us? *Quid potui facere et non feci?* "(13) If it were possible, He says to St. Bridget, that I should suffer all the torments of My Passion as many times as there are souls in hell, I would most gladly suffer them, for charity is as much aflame in my Heart now as it was then.

Even so, is it not still true that the majority of men on earth treat that loving Saviour as if He were their enemy? What insults, what crimes, what cruelty and abuse could they practise against Him that they do not already practise? In short, what more despicable thing could they do than to crucify Him every day? Yes, crucify Him; for anyone who mortally offends Him crucifies Him, *rursus Christum crucifigentes*, (14) and commits a greater crime than did the Jews, for they did not know Him.

Let us detest and recoil from such ingratitude and such abominable wickedness. Let us open our ears to the voice, or rather the voices of our Saviour. I say "voices," for all the evils from which He has delivered us and all the blessings without number that He has given

(12). PS. I 15, 12.

(13). Isa. 5, 4.

(14). Heb. 6, 6.

30-

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

us are so many voices crying out to us: *Sic Deus dilexit nos.*(15 )"God so loved us." Therefore let us love Him who so loves us. If a man of no account, the weakest and lowest of all men, should manifest some kindness towards us, we could not help loving him. Nay, if even a dumb animal, a mongrel, for instance, attaches itself to us and does us some slight service, we love it. Why then should we not love God who is our creator, our preserver, our ruler, our king, our most faithful friend, our most loving father, our treasure, our glory, our supreme good, our life, our heart, our all? He is all heart and soul and love for us.

"O my Saviour, I know not if I have yet begun to love Thee as I ought. *Dixi,~ nunc coepi.*" (16) I now mean to love Thee with all my heart with all my soul, and with all my strength. I renounce forever all that is contrary to Thy *holy* love. Let me die a thousand deaths rather than ever offend Thee. I give Thee my heart; take full and absolute possession of it; destroy in it everything not pleasing to Thee, and rather destroy it itself than to allow it not to love Thee: *aut amare Jesum meum, aut mori*. But am I giving Thee anything in giving Thee my empty heart? O my Lord, if I had the hearts of as many Seraphim as Thy omnipotence could create, with what joy would I consecrate them all to Thee! I offer Thee the precious heart of Thy most worthy Mother, who has more love for Thee than all hearts that have been, are, or shall be. O Mother of Jesus, love Thy Adorable Son for me. O good Jesus, love Thy sweet Mother for me. O all ye citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, love Jesus and Mary for me, and unite me with your great love, now and eternally.'

(15 ). John 4, 2 1

(16). Ps. 76, it.



## CHAPTER 7

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE  
OF LOVE FOR US IN THE BLESSED  
SACRAMENT**

ST. BERNARD appropriately refers to the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist as "the Love of loves," *Amor amorum*. If we use the eyes of faith to contemplate the marvelous effects of our Saviour's ineffable goodness to us in this adorable mystery, we shall see eight flames of love issuing continually from this wondrous furnace.

The first flame is the inconceivable love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which impelled Him to imprison Himself in this Sacrament and has constrained Him to abide there continuously night and day, for nearly two thousand years, to be always with us, so as to fulfil the promise of these words: *Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem saeculi*. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (1) He is the Good Shepherd who wishes always to be with His flock. He is the divine Physician who wishes always to be at the bedside of His patients. He is the Father full of affection who never leaves His children. He is the Friend most loyal and tender, whose delight it is to be with His friends: *Deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum*. (2)

The second flame of this fiery furnace is the love of our Saviour's adorable Heart vibrating in great and significant actions on our behalf in this Sacrament. He is there adoring, praising and glorifying His Father unceasingly for us, to satisfy to the full our infinite obligations of adoring, praising and glorifying. He is there continually

(1). Matt. 28, 20.

(2). Prov. 8, 31.

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

ally giving thanks to the Father for all the corporal and spiritual blessings, natural and supernatural, temporal and eternal, which He has ever given to us, which He gives at each moment, and plans to give us, provided we interpose no obstacle. He is there loving His Father for us, paying to the full our debts and obligations of loving Him. He is there offering His merits to satisfy His Father's justice and to pay Him on our behalf what we owe Him by reason of our sins. He is there continually praying to His Father for all our spiritual and temporal needs. *Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis*. (3)

The third flame of this furnace is the infinite love of our dear Redeemer, who exercises His omnipotence so as to perform in this adorable Sacrament many stupendous miracles, changing bread into His body and wine into His blood, and performing several other wonders incomparably surpassing all those of Moses, of the prophets, and of the apostles, and even of our Saviour during His sojourn on earth. All those miracles were performed only in Judea, while these take place throughout the universe. The visible miracles were transitory and of short duration; the invisible have been continuous for more than nineteen hundred years and they will endure till the end of time. The former were effected on bodies separated from their souls and then restored to life, on sick persons who were healed, on water changed to wine, but the latter are effected on the adorable body of God, on His Precious Blood, and even on the glory and grandeur of His divinity, which is hidden in this Sacrament.

The fourth flame is indicated in the inspired words of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles:

*Mixit Deus Filium suum benedicientem, vobis.* "God hath sent his Son to bless you:" (4) This Adorable Son has come filled with love for you and with a most ardent desire to pour out His blessings upon those who honor Him and love Him as their Father. It is chiefly in this divine Sacrament that He showers His blessings upon those who open the way to His grace.

The fifth flame is His immense love which constrains Him to give to us all the treasures of grace and holiness which He acquired

(3). Heb- 7, 25.

(4). Act. 3, 26.

#### LOVE FOR US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

33 -

on earth. To us He does give them, indeed, in the Blessed Eucharist~ boons immeasurable and infinite, graces most abundant and special, provided we have the dispositions required for receiving them.

The sixth flame is that burning love always impelling Him to enrich us with the gifts and graces which He acquired by His Precious Blood, and to give Himself to us without reserve in Holy Communion. He gives us His divinity, His humanity, His divine person, His adorable body, His Precious Blood, His holy soul, in short, all that He has and all that He is, as God and as man. Consequently, He will give us His Eternal Father and His Holy Spirit which are inseparable from Him, just as He will inspire us with devotion to His most holy Mother, who everywhere follows her divine Lamb, much more than do the holy virgins of whom it is said: *Sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit.* (5)

The seventh flame is the incredible love of the Blessed Saviour in immolating Himself continually for us, a love that surpasses in every way the charity by which He was immolated on the altar of the Cross. There He sacrificed Himself on Calvary only; here He sacrifices Himself all over the world by means of the Blessed Eucharist. There He immolated Himself once only; here He sacrifices Himself thousands of times daily. It is true that the Sacrifice of the Cross was accomplished in a sea of sorrows and that it is accomplished here in an ocean of joy and felicity, but the Heart of our Redeemer is still, in our day, as flaming with love for us as it was then. Jesus is ready, if it were possible and necessary for our salvation, to undergo the same sufferings that He bore in His immolation on Calvary, as many times as He sacrifices Himself on the altars throughout the world because of His infinite love for us.

The eighth flame of this wonderful furnace of love consists of the love that our most benign Redeemer manifests to us when He gives men continual evidence of His goodness at a time when He receives from them nothing but the most furious hatred imaginable. At what moment does He thus manifest such love? At the time of the institution of this divine Sacrament, the last day of His life, the flight before His death. At that very moment men are not less

5 Apoc. 14, 4

34 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

moved with rage and fury against Him than the devils themselves; for what does He say? *Haec est hora vestra, et potestas tenebrarum.* (6)

"O my Saviour, on that first Holy Thursday evening, Thy thoughts were only of peace, charity, and good will for men, whereas the Jews thought only of malice and cruelty. Thou didst seek only to save them; they sought only to do away with Thee. Thy whole Heart and Thy whole mind were bent on breaking the chains that held them bound as the slaves of demons; and they would sell Thee, betray

Thee and deliver Thee into the hands of Thy cruel enemies. Thou wast preoccupied with establishing an adorable Sacrament whereby always to abide with them, but they were striving to drive Thee from the world, to banish Thee from off the earth, and even to destroy Thee if they could but do so. Thou didst prepare for them on earth boundless graces and in heaven thrones magnificent and glorious crowns, if they were willing to render themselves worthy of them, but they were preparing for Thee ropes, lashes, thorns, nails, lances, crosses, spittle, revilings, blasphemies and all sorts of shameful outrageous cruelties. Thou didst set before them a most delectable feast of Thy own flesh and blood, and they gave Thee gall and vinegar to drink. Thou didst give them Thy holy and immaculate body and they bruised it by blows, they cut it with their lashes, they pierced it in a thousand places with thorns and nails, they covered it with wounds from head to foot, they dismembered it on the Cross, causing it to suffer the most atrocious tortures. Finally, my Saviour, Thou didst love them more than Thy own life and blood since Thou didst sacrifice them for Thy enemies. In return, they rent Thy soul from Thy body by violence.

"What goodness! what charity! what love flowing from Thy adorable Heart, O my Saviour! What ingratitude! what wickedness! what cruelty stemming from the heart of man!

"What happened then still happens today. Thy most loving Heart, O Jesus, dwells in this Sacrament, burning with love for us. It is there continually performing thousands of good deeds towards us. How do we repay Thee, O Lord? We repay Thee with ingratitude and injuries a thousandfold, in thought, word and deed, trampling  
(6). LUKE 22, 53.

#### LOVE FOR US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

35 -

under foot Thy divine commandments and those of the Church. Ungrateful wretches, our most gracious Saviour so loved us that, while He was on earth, He would have died a thousand deaths for love of us if He had not miraculously preserved His life. He is still ready to die a hundred thousand times for us if it were possible and necessary for our salvation. Let us then die, die of sorrow in beholding our sins; let us die of shame that we have so little love for Him; let us die a thousand deaths rather than ever offend Him again. O my Saviour, grant us this favor, we implore Thee! O Mother of Jesus, obtain for us this grace from thy Well-beloved Son!"

## CHAPTER 8

### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A FURNACE BURNING WITH LOVE FOR US IN HIS SACRED PASSION

THE ENTIRE EARTHLY LIFE Of our adorable Saviour was a continual exercise of charity and goodness towards us. But it was at the time of His Passion that He gave us the most remarkable proofs of His love. Then it was that out of the abundance of his charity, He suffered frightful torments to deliver us from the terrible punishments of hell and to win for us the everlasting joys of heaven. It was then that His adorable body was covered with wounds and bathed in His blood. His sacred head was pierced with sharp thorns, His hands and feet were transfixed with huge nails, His ears filled with blasphemies and curses, His lips moistened with gall and vinegar, and his soul forcibly and painfully wrenched from His body by the cruel Jews. At that time particularly His divine Heart was rent by countless painful, bleeding wounds. Indeed, one can count the wounds in the adorable Heart of Jesus. There are two kinds of wounds, resulting from two different causes.

The first cause of those most painful wounds in the Sacred Heart of our Redeemer is our sins. We read in the life of St. Catherine of Genoa that one day God let her see the horror of one tiny venial sin. She assures us that, although this vision lasted but a moment, she saw nevertheless an object so frightening that the blood froze in her veins and she swooned away in an agony that would have killed her if God had not preserved her to relate to others what she had seen. Wherefore she declared that if she were in the very depths of a sea of flaming fire and it were in her power to be set free, on con

#### LOVE FOR US IN HIS SACRED PASSION

37 -

dition that she should once more behold such a spectacle, she would choose to remain rather than to escape. If the sight of the smallest venial sin brought this saint to such a pass, what must we think of the state to which our Saviour was reduced by seeing all the sins of the universe? He had them continually before His eyes, and His vision being infinitely more powerful than that of St. Catherine, He could behold infinitely more horror.

He saw the immeasurable insult and dishonor caused His Father by all sins; He saw the damnation of a countless number of souls resulting from those sins. As He had infinite love for His Father and His creatures, the sight of all those sins rent His Heart with countless wounds, such that if we were able to count all the sins of men, which are more numerous than the drops of water in the sea, we would then be able to count the wounds of the loving Heart of Jesus.

The second cause of His wounds is the infinite love of His Sacred Heart for all His children, and his constant vision of all the afflictions and sufferings that are to happen to them, especially all the torments that His holy martyrs are to suffer. When a mother watches her beloved child suffering, she feels the pain more keenly than the child. Our Saviour's love for us is so tremendous that if all the love of all parents were centered in a single heart, it would not represent even a spark of the love for us that burns in His Heart. Our pains and sorrows, ever present to His vision and seen most clearly and distinctly, were so many wounds bleeding in His paternal Heart: Vere nostros ipse tulit, et aegrotationes nostras portavit.(1) These wounds were so painful and deep that they would have caused His death a thousand times over, even immediately after His birth, if he had not miraculously preserved Himself, because during His whole earthly life His Sacred Heart was continually pierced by many mortal wounds of love.

Therefore we have the greatest obligations to honor the gracious Heart that sustained so many wounds for love of us. We have potent reasons to fear new sins, thus giving him occasion to lament over us: Super dolorem vulnerum meorum. "They have added to the

(1). Isa 53, 4; Matt 8, 17

38 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

grief of my wounds." (2). We ought to fear lest we be of the number of those of whom St. Paul says that they crucify Him afresh: *Rursus Christum crucifigentes!* (3). With what affection should we embrace, and endure all our afflictions, out of love for Jesus, our Saviour, since He first bore them for love of us! Should they not be most sweet to us, since they have already passed through His most gentle and loving Heart? What a horror we should have of our sins that have caused so many wounds and such intense grief to the divine Heart of our Redeemed

We read in the life of St. Francis Borgia, of the Society of Jesus, that one day the saint was speaking in front of a crucifix to a great sinner whom he was exhorting to be converted, but could not soften the hard sinful heart. Suddenly the crucifix, or rather the Crucified Saviour, out of His wondrous and abundant goodness, spoke to the sinner and urged him to follow the advice of His servant. At the same time there issued blood from all His wounds. This was a sign that our Blessed Saviour was ready once again to shed His blood and to die for his salvation if need be. But in spite of such miraculous goodness, as the wretched man still remained adamant, there issued a stream of blood from the wound at His side, which gushed over him and Struck him dead on the spot. O God, what a fearful sight!

Let us learn from the foregoing example that it is not our Redeemer's fault if we are lost. There are hearts so hard that, even if Jesus Himself were to come down from heaven to preach to them and they were to see Him covered with wounds and bathed in His blood, they would still not be converted. O my God, let us not be one of them, but give us the grace to open our ears to the voice of all the sacred wounds of Thy body and Thy heart, which are so many mouths through which Thou dost call to us unceasingly: *Redite, praevaricatores, ad cor*. "Return, ye transgressors, to the heart," (4). which means to My heart that is all yours, since I have given it entirely to you. Return to that most loving Heart of your Father, which is full of love and mercy for you, which will receive you and

(2). Ps. 68, 27

(3). Heb. 6, 6.

(4). Isa 46, 8.

#### LOVE FOR US IN HIS SACRED PASSION

39 -

welcome you home, heaping upon you all blessings. But *redite*, return without delay, completely, with all your affections. Leave sin, renounce hell, flee from all occasions of wickedness and embrace the practice of all virtues. Blessed are they who yield to that voice; cursed they who close their ears and harden their hearts like that unfortunate man just mentioned. *Cor durum male habebit in novissimo*: "A hard heart shall fear evil at the last." (5) Evil shall be the lot of the hard heart; it shall perish everlastingly; it shall abide in wrath forever, and shall suffer inconceivable and incomprehensible tortures eternally.

O my Saviour, I give Thee my heart; preserve it from this evil. O Mother of mercy, I give thee also my loving heart; do thou give it to thy Son, begging Him to rank it with the holy hearts that shall love the Son and the Mother forever!

(5). Eccl. 3, 27

## CHAPTER 9

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS ONE WITH THE  
HEART OF THE FATHER AND THE HOLY  
GHOST; THE ADORABLE HEART OF  
BLESSED TRINITY IS A FURNACE  
OF BURNING LOVE FOR US**

*CHRISTIAN FAITH TEACHES* that there are three Persons in the adorable mystery of the Holy Trinity; three Persons who have but one and the same divinity, one and the same power, wisdom, goodness, one and the same mind, will, and even one and the same heart. Thence it is that our Saviour, as God, has but one and the same Heart with the Father and the Holy Ghost; and as man, His humanly divine and divinely human Heart is but one also with the Heart of the Father and the Holy Ghost, by a unity of mind, love and will. Therefore to adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus is to adore the Heart of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; to adore a Heart that is a burning furnace of love towards us. Into that furnace we must plunge so as to burn there forever. Unhappy they who shall be cast into the terrible furnace of eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels, but blessed are they who shall be thrown into the eternal fire of divine love which enkindles the adorable Heart of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost for our sake. That we may stir ourselves to plunge in wholeheartedly, let us picture what that fire and that love are.

If you desire to learn the exact nature of the love of the paternal Heart of the divine Father of Jesus, listen to St. Paul: *Proprio Filio non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.* "He that spared

THE BLESSED TRINITY

41 -

not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." (1) The Father sent His Only-begotten Son into this world to testify to us His love in a wondrous way. Before sending the Redeemer He knew full well how we would treat Him. He knew that, as Jesus must be born on earth to raise men up to heaven, His divine Mother would seek shelter for His birth and would find no place to lay His infant head. *Non erat locus in diversorio.* (2) He knew that, as soon as He was born, men would seek to slay Him, and that He would be compelled to flee and hide away in a foreign country. He knew that when He began to teach and preach the word of His Father they would regard Him as a mad man, they would repeatedly take up rocks to stone Him, and would lead Him into a high mountain to attempt to dash Him to destruction. He foresaw that they would bind and shackle Him like a thief, drag Him through the streets of Jerusalem like a criminal, subject Him to endless insults and torments and condemn Him to die the cruellest and most infamous death. After He had risen, they would endeavor to stifle any growing belief in His Resurrection. After He had established the Church and Sacraments to apply to souls the fruits of His Passion and death, even the majority of Christians would misuse these Sacraments, profane them and make them serve to their greater condemnation. Finally, He knew that in spite of His labor, sufferings, and death, too many souls would condemn His Precious Blood, making void and useless all that He accomplished for their salvation, because they would perish miserably. "Thou seest all these things, O adorable Father, and yet Thou dost not hesitate to send us Thy Well-beloved Son. Who hath constrained Thee to do this? It is the utterly incomprehensible love of Thy fatherly Heart for us. O Father of mercies, it seems almost as if Thou dost love us more than Thyself and Thy Son (Thy Son being but one with Thee). Seemingly, for love of us, Thou hatest Thy Son, hence Thyself (Thou being but one with Him). O exceeding, inconceivable goodness! O wondrous love! There is some thing of that infinite love of the loving Heart of the Eternal Father for us."

(1). Rom. 8, 32.

(2). Luke 2, 7.

Would you now behold the incomprehensible love of the divine Heart of the Son of God? Hear Him speak: *Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos.* "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you." (3) My Father so loves you that for love of you He hath surrendered me to death, the death of the Cross; and I so love you that for love of you I abandoned myself to the powers of darkness and to the wrath of my mortal enemies, the Jews: *Haec est hora vestra et polestar tenebrarum.* (4) O my Saviour, well may I say to Thee, with Thy faithful servant, St. Bonaventure, that Thou so lovest me that seemingly Thou dost hate Thyself for me: *Domine, in tantum dilexisti me, ut te pro me odisse videaris.* (5)

Let us come now to the love of the Holy Ghost, who is the Heart of the Father and the Son. When this divine Spirit formed the God-Man in the sacred womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary to give Him to us, did He know what we were to do? Did He know all the outrages and cruel deeds that men were to perpetrate against Him? Did He know that men would bend all their energies to destroy His wonderful masterpiece, the God-Man? Yes, He knew it well. Yet He did not hesitate to form Him in Mary's womb, to let Him be born for us, to appear in the form of a dove above His head during His Baptism in the waters of the Jordan, to make us recognize Him. He did not hesitate to lead His Son into the desert to do penance for our sins, to urge Him to preach the Holy Gospel and to proclaim to us the truths of heaven: *Spiritus Domini super me; propter quod unxit me, evangelizare pauperibus misit me.* (6) He did not hesitate to sacrifice Him on the Cross for our redemption: *Per Spiritum sanctum semetipsum obtulit.* (7) O love that hath no equal! O spirit of love and charity, bear with me when I say that seemingly Thou hast more love for man as sinner and culprit than for the God-Man who is the Holy of holies; for a slave of Satan than for the Only-begotten Son of God; for a firebrand of hell than for the King of heaven.

(3). John 15, 9.

(4). Luke 22, 53

(5) In stimulo amoris, part 1a Cf. Officium D. Cordis, 7th day within the Octave, lesson 4.

(6). Luke 4, 18.

(7). Heb. 9, 14.

## THE BLESSED TRINITY

43 -

O wonder without parallel! Who has thus bound Thee in a spell? Pardon me, O adorable Spirit, if I speak thus, but is it not true that the exceeding great love Thou hast for us seems to have cast a spell over Thee as well as over the Divine Father and His Only Son? How true is the saying, *Amare et sapere vix Deo conceditur!*

Even so do the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost love us: *Sic Deus dilexit mundum;* (8) even thus their divine Heart is a burning furnace of love for us.

What then shall we do to acknowledge such goodness? What dost Thou ask of us, O God? Do we not hear His voice calling to us, calling, calling, for so long? *Fili, praebe cor tuum mihi:* "My son, give me thy heart." (9)

An eminent prelate, John Zumarraga, first Archbishop of Mexico, in the Indies of America (New Spain), wrote to the Chapter of his Order, assembled at Toulouse in 1532. According to the report of Drexelius of the Society of Jesus, the Archbishop narrated that before the inhabitants of the city of Mexico were converted, they worshipped the devil through idols. He exercised such a cruel tyranny that he obliged them to slaughter each year twenty thousand little children, boys as well as girls, and to cut out the heart of each child to be sacrificed to Satan on a fire of red-hot coals as

incense. If in Mexico City alone the hearts of more than twenty thousand young children were immolated to Satan, you can imagine how many were sacrificed to him every year throughout the whole kingdom of Mexico.

We worship a God who does not ask of us things so strange. True, He asks for our heart, but He has no desire that it be cut from our body. He is satisfied if we give Him our affections, especially love and hate: our love to love Him above all things, with all our strength; our hate to hate only sin. What is sweeter than to love infinite goodness from which we have received every kind of blessing? What is easier than to hate the most horrible thing in the world and the sole cause of all our evils? Surely, if we refuse to give our heart to the divine Saviour, who asks us constantly for

(8). John 3, 16.

(9). Prov. 23, 26.

44 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

it in a way so gentle and engaging, a heart moreover which belongs to Him for countless reasons, all those pagans who sacrificed to the devil the hearts of their dear children will rise up and condemn us on the day of judgment. We shall be utterly cast into confusion when the lawful King of our hearts points to the poor idol-worshippers and says to us: "Behold these people who have torn out their children's hearts of living flesh to offer them to Satan, and you have refused me the love of your hearts." We must not draw this reproach upon ourselves. Let us give our hearts wholly and irrevocably to Him who created them, who redeemed them, and has given to us His own Sacred Heart so many times.

One of the fathers of the Society of Jesus, in his history of the Crusades for the deliverance of the Holy Land, reports the following incident. In the year 1098, Geoffrey de la Tour, a nobleman from Limoges and one of the most valiant of the Christian knights, one day heard the roar of a lion, which sounded like a cry of pain.

Immediately he entered a near-by wood and ran to the spot from which the roaring came. There he saw a horrible sight. A huge serpent had wound its coils around the lion's body and legs, so that it was powerless to defend itself. The serpent was darting its venomous tongue, trying to strike the lion in a vital spot.

Geoffrey rushed forward with his sword and killed the snake without wounding the lion. The poor beast, finding itself freed and recognizing his deliverer, came to thank the knight, by fawning and licking his feet. From then on, the lion attached itself to the man who had saved its life. It followed him everywhere like a faithful dog, never harming anyone, but ready to turn on a man who might attack its master. But what is more wonderful is the sequel. When Geoffrey sailed to return to France after the Crusade, the captain of the ship would not allow the lion to come aboard, so the faithful beast, plunging into the sea, kept on swimming in the wake of the ship until its strength failed and it sank, thus showing that it preferred to drown rather than to be parted from its benefactor.

It should make us ashamed to have to learn the lesson of true gratitude from a wild animal. Must we Christians be taught by dumb beasts what we owe to God, our Sovereign Benefactor? O my

#### THE BLESSED TRINITY

45 -

Saviour, Thou has freed me from the coils of the infernal serpent. Thou hast given Thy life to deliver me from the eternal death of hell, and enable me to enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven. Let me be all Thine; let me live only for Thee; let me follow Thee everywhere. May all the faculties of my soul be linked inviolably to Thy divine will. Let me have no thoughts but Thine; let me have no hate except for sin, no love but for Thee. Let me die many deaths rather than ever be separated from Thee.



## CHAPTER 10

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR  
TREASURE HOUSE

THE ADORABLE HEART of our Saviour has been considered as a flaming furnace of love for us. We shall now *see, first* of all, that this heart is a vast *treasure house* containing infinite riches; secondly, that this wealth is ours; thirdly, the sacred use that we should make of it.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is *indeed an* incalculable treasure, containing in itself all the marvelous riches of heaven and earth, in nature, grace and glory, in all the angels and saints, in the *Blessed Virgin Mary*, in the Godhead, in the Most Holy Trinity, and in all the divine *perfections*. *St. Chrysostom* says that the Blessed Virgin is an infathomable abyss of the boundless perfections of the Godhead: *Abyssus immensarum Dei perfectionum*. (1) How much more is this true of the adorable Heart of Jesus?

*Moreover, His Heart* is a most precious treasure house containing all the merits of His life, all the fruits of His divine mysteries, all the graces merited by His toils and sufferings, all His infinitely perfect virtues, all the gifts of the Holy Ghost wherewith He was endowed: *Requiescet super eum Spiritus Domini, Spiritus sapientiae et intellectus*. (2) In short, everything great, rich, precious and admirable in Creator and creatures, is stored in that incomparable *treasure*.

To whom does this marvelous *treasure belong*? It belongs to all of us and to each one in particular, since it depends only on us to take possession of it. By what titles and deeds does this *treasure belong* to us? By the title and deed of a gift. But who has given it to us? The Father of Jesus has given it to us in giving us His Son; and

(1). In *Hor. ani.*

(2). *Isa. 11,2*

## OUR TREASURE HOUSE

47 -

He gives Him to us unceasingly, for His gifts are not transitory. *Sine poenitentia sunt dona Dei*. (3) The Son of God has also given it to us, time and time again, in giving Himself to us, and He gives it to us ceaselessly in the Blessed Eucharist. The Holy Ghost imparts this treasure to us incessantly. The Blessed Virgin also gives it to us continually, since she has but one heart and one will with her Son, her will is bound up in every gift of His.

It is, therefore, a clear fact that the loving Heart of Jesus is wholly ours, our very own Heart. Each of us can say with *St. Bernard*: "The Heart of Jesus is my Heart. I speak this fearlessly. For if Jesus is my Head, then what belongs to the Head belongs to me. just as the eyes of my corporal head are truly my eyes, so the Heart of my spiritual Head is truly my Heart. What joy is mine! I am certain that my heart is one with Jesus." *Cor Jesu meum est, audacter dicam: si enim caput meum Christus est, quomodo quod capitis mei est non meum est? Sicut ergo oculi capitis mei corporalis mei oculi vere sunt, ita et spiritualis Cor, Cor meum est. Bene ergo mihi, ego vere cum Jesu Cor habeo*. (4)

What would be the use of possessing an object of great value if the owner let himself die of hunger, thirst and cold? Or suppose he went into bankruptcy while still keeping the treasure? Similarly, what shall this greatest of treasures, the Heart of Our Lord, be worth to us if we do not draw upon its resources? God has given us His Heart to be our riches and our wealth, to draw upon to

satisfy our obligations and to pay all our debts.

What are those debts? They are endless, for we are in debt to God and men, to the Creator and to all creatures. We owe the Creator five tremendous tributes: 1. adoration together with honor, glory and praise; 2. love; 3. thanksgiving for all the blessings that we continually receive; 4. reparation for our sins; 5. the gift of ourselves, seeing we belong to Him. Add to this, prayer, an obligation which is based on two principles: first, our infinite poverty and need, since we are nothing and have nothing of ourselves; secondly, the

(3). Rom. 11, 29.

(4). St. Bernard: Tract on the Passion of our Lord, Chap. 3. The treatise here mentioned by St. John Eudes is now attributed to St. Bonaventure.

48 -

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

fact that God is the supreme good and the source of all good, and that His infinite goodness inclines Him to pour out of His goodness upon us to an infinite degree. He wills, and justly so, that we ask Him for this in prayer.

Now, to pay all these debts, here is what must be done:

First, it is necessary to be in the state of grace. Secondly, when you celebrate Holy Mass (if you are a Priest) or when you assist at Mass (if a layman), but especially after Holy Communion, remember that you have the Sacred Heart there within your breast and the Three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Addressing yourself first to the Father, speak to Him, with all possible respect and humility:

"Holy Father, I owe Thee infinite honor, glory, love, adoration, praise, thanksgiving and satisfaction; I also owe to Thee myself for countless reasons. Of myself I have no means wherewith to pay all these debts, being nothing and having nothing. But here is the divine Heart of Thy Well-beloved Son that Thou hast given me, which I now offer to Thee to make satisfaction for my obligations to adore Thee, to honor, praise and glorify Thee, to love Thee, to give Thee thanks, to make amends for my sins, to give myself to Thee, and to implore Thee by this same Heart, to grant me all graces of which I stand in need. This is my treasure that Thou hast given me out of the excess of Thy goodness; be pleased to receive it, O Father of mercies, and graciously to reward Thyself by taking with Thine own hands from this sacred treasure the wherewithal fully to satisfy and pay all my debts."

After that make a similar offering to the Son of God, giving him that selfsame treasure, His own Heart as well as that of His most holy Mother, which is in a way but one with His, and which is more pleasing to Him than all the hearts of paradise.

Perform the same act with respect to the Holy Ghost.

Next, remember the infinite obligations that you have to the Mother of God, who gave you a Saviour with all the countless blessings that proceed from that marvelous gift and offer her the loving Heart of her Beloved Son, in thanksgiving for all the favors that you have received from that divine Mother. Offer her also that same

OUR TREASURE HOUSE

49 -

Heart in reparation, Over and above, for all your negligences, infidelities, and failures in gratitude towards her. This is but a direction which she herself gave to St. Mechtilde, who, being anxious about

her negligences in Our Lady's service, was counselled by the latter to offer her the most holy Heart of her Dearest Son. The Blessed Virgin assured the saint that this offering would be much more pleasing to her than any other pious devotions and practices.'

In addition, remember that you are still indebted to your Guardian Angel, to all the other angels, to your Patron Saint and to all the other saints, for their prayers and for the manifold helps they have given you. Consider, and offer to them all in general and to each one in particular your great treasure, as an act of thanksgiving, to satisfy for your shortcomings and to contribute to their accidental glory and joy.

Remember that you are also under obligations to your neighbor. You owe charity to all men, even your enemies; help to the poor, according to your ability; respect and obedience to your superiors, and the like. To satisfy all these obligations offer our Saviour His divine Heart to make up for the shortcomings of which you are guilty; ask Him to repay them for you and to give you all the graces necessary in the future to fulfil perfectly your obligations to your neighbor.

In the books of St. Mechtilde I find that when the saint was asked to implore Our Lord to grant a certain person a humble, pure and charitable heart, she acceded to his request and received this heavenly answer: "Let him seek in my Heart everything he desires and needs; and let him ask for them as a little child would confidently ask his father for anything he wants. When he desires purity of heart, let him have recourse to my innocence; when he desires humility, let him draw up from the deep well of my most humble Heart; there too let him drink in my love together with my holy converse, confidently taking to himself everything that is good and holy in that Heart, since I have given it wholly to my children." (6)

(5). Saint John Eudes does not mention where he obtained this fact. It was perhaps taken from a passage of the *Lime de la Grâce spéciale*, p. X, chap. 46.

(6). *Livre de la Grâce spéciale*, P. 4, Ch.2, P. 28.

50-

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

This is the boundless and inexhaustible treasure that our Most Gracious Jesus has given us, in which we may confidently find everything that we need, so long as we possess that divine treasure in its richness. If we should lose it through sin, what a dreadful loss it would be! I am certain that if we fully understood it, we would realize that we would never sufficiently deplore such a great misfortune even though we were to live until the Day of Judgment and spend our time in weeping floods of tears and blood. If all the angels and saints were to descend from heaven to console us, they could never wipe away our tears. *Heu! quid perdidit, qui Deum amisit*, exclaims St. Augustine. "Alas! what hath he lost who hath lost God?" *Heu! quid perdidit, qui Cor Jesu amisit*: Alas! what hath he lost who hath lost the Heart of Christ, his Saviour? Who can understand the magnitude of that loss? Who can express it? Who can worthily deplore it?

Yet, after losing that infinite treasure, so many many times, you, O foolish man, are little affected by the deprivation. What sorrow should be yours! What tears of blood you should shed! How horrified you should be at your sins that have caused so dreadful a disaster! What fear of backsliding! How necessary to seek all the means possible to keep yourself from it! What would one not lose rather than to lose the loving Heart of our Redeemer! That gone, all is gone. Let us prefer to lose everything, our earthly goods, our friends, our health, even our life, rather than to lose the Heart of Jésus! O my Saviour, grant us that grace! Mother of Jesus~ obtain it from thy Dear Soul

## CHAPTER II

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS LOVES US AS HIS  
FATHER LOVES HIM. WHAT WE SHOULD  
DO IN ORDER TO LOVE HIM**

WE HAVE OUTLINED in the foregoing chapters numerous wonderful effects of the burning love of the Sacred Heart of our Saviour for mankind. But there is one effect of love that excels all the rest. It is expressed in the marvelous words rising from His divine Heart and spoken by His adorable lips: *Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos*: "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you." (1)

Let us pause here a moment; let us weigh these words well: "I love you." How sweet are these words falling from the lips of the sovereign Lord of the universe! How encouraging, how helpful, how consoling! "I love you," our divine Saviour says to us. If an earthly ruler were to pay a visit to the house of the lowliest of his subjects and say to him: "I have come here expressly to assure you that I love you and that I shall let you feel the effects of love," what joy it would be for that poor man! Suppose an angel from heaven or a saint or the Queen of saints were to appear in a church thronged with Christians and were to proclaim in a voice that all could hear, to one member of the congregation "I love you; my Heart belongs to you." What transports of delight would thrill that privileged soul! Would he not die of joy? But here is much more than that. Here is the King of kings, the Holy of holies, the Only Son of God, the only Son of Mary, who has purposely come down here below from heaven to say to us: *Ego dilexi vos*. *Ego*, I who am the Creator of all things, I who rule the whole universe, I who possess all the treasures  
(1). John 15, 9.

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

of heaven and earth, I who do whatsoever I will and I whose will none can resist, I love you. O my Saviour, what a rapturous word is this! Would it not be favor enough if Thou didst say to us: "I sometimes think of you; I look down upon you once a year; I have certain beneficial plans made for you?" But this is not sufficient for Thee. Thou dost wish to assure us of Thy love and affection for us, who are naught; for us, mere worms; for us, miserable sinners, who have so often offended Thee; for us who have so many times deserved hell: *Ego dilexi vos*.

But how does this adorable Saviour love us? Listen again to His sacred words: *Sicut dilexit me Pater*. I love you "as my Father hath loved me." I love you with the same Heart and the same love as that wherewith I am loved by my Father. Now what is that love wherewith the Divine Father loves His Son? It is a love possessing four great qualities, which are found in the love of the Heart of Jesus for us.

First of all, the love of the Father for His Son is infinite, that is, without bounds, limits, or measure; a love incomprehensible and inexplicable; a love as great as the very nature of the Eternal Father. Measure, if you can, the extent and the magnitude of that divine nature, and then you will measure the magnitude of that adorable Father's love for His Son; at the same time you will measure the greatness and the extent of the love of the Son of God for us, since He loves us with the same love as that wherewith His Father loves Him.

Secondly, the Father's love for His Son is an everlasting love filling all the spaces of eternity. the Eternal Father has never been without that love for His Son; He loves Him continuously, without intermission, and He will love Him eternally. O my Saviour, how it fills me with joy to see Thee

loved as Thou dost deserve! The perfidious us Jews, the devils and the damned hate Thee, but Thou art no less lovable, and the Adorable Father loves Thee more in a single moment than all those wretches could hate Thee in a thousand eternities, if that were possible.

Now, as the Father loves His Only-begotten Son with an everlasting love, the Son of God also loves us with an everlasting love. This means that all the spaces of eternity before and after are filled

#### OUR LOVE FOR HIM

53 -

with the love that He has for us. Hence, is it not true that if we had existed from all eternity, we should have been bound to love that gracious Saviour from all eternity? If we had a thousand years, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, yes, even an eternity to live on earth, should we not be bound to spend them in loving Him who loves us with an everlasting love? Actually, we have at most a few decades to exist on this earth, yet we waste them loving the world, the degradation and the trifles of earth. Ah, how guilty we are to have such ingratitude!

As our third reflection, we must remember that the love of the Divine Father for His Son is a tremendous love filling heaven and earth and even hell; in heaven, the Father loves this Son with the hearts of all the angels and all the saints; on earth their mutual love embraces all the hearts that belong to Him on earth; in hell, the Eternal Father loves His Cherished Son who, with the other Divine Persons, is present there, manifesting the same omnipotence as in heaven.

Similarly, our Saviour loves us with an immense love filling heaven, earth and hell; heaven, for He inspires all its citizens to love us as themselves; He makes them sharers in the love He bears us, and He loves us through them. He loves the earth in three ways: 1. He loves us wherever He has being on earth; 2. He creates, preserves and rules all things in the universe for love of us. This thought prompted St. Augustine to utter these beautiful words: *Coelum et terra, et omnia quae in eis sunt, non cessant mihi dicere ut amem Deum meum*: "Heaven and earth and all things on earth and in heaven cease not to bid me love my God." 3. He prohibits all dwellers on earth, under pain of eternal damnation, to do harm, either to our goods, our reputation, our person or anything belonging to us; and He commands them to love us as themselves.

The boundless love of our Redeemer fills heaven and earth, and likewise hell; for He kindled the devouring fires of hell to inflame our hearts with divine love. We are impelled to love Him, when we consider that by our sins we deserved eternal torments if our Saviour had not delivered us by His death on the Cross. O my God, Thou dost love us everywhere, and we, ingrates, everywhere offend Thee.

54 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Let it be so no more, but make us love and bless Thee everywhere: *In omni loco dominationis ejus benedic anima mea Domino.* (2)

In the fourth place, I could demonstrate to you further that, as the love of the Eternal Father for His Eternal Son is love in its essence, since He loves Him with His whole being, so also the love of the Son of God for us is love in its essence, since He is all heart and all love towards us and loves us with all His being. In other words, everything in Jesus, His divinity, His humanity, His soul, His body, His blood, all His thoughts, words, actions, privations, humiliations, sufferings, in short, everything that He is, has, and all His potentiality is bound up in loving us.

Here, I must mention one effect of His love that surpasses all the others. Louis Bail, a doctor

of sacred theology, presents this fact in his learned and devotional work, *Affective Theology*(3) and states that he found it in four passages of St. Bridget's writings approved by three Popes and two General Councils. Our divine Lord and His holy Mother revealed to St. Bridget that, while on the Cross, He suffered such keen, piercing, violent and terrible pains that His adorable Heart was rent, broken, and shattered: *Cor meum crepuit prae violentia passionis*. "My heart," says the adorable Saviour to the saint, "was utterly filled with pain, all the more because 'it was of a most fine and delicate nature; the pain went from my Heart into my nerves, from my nerves back to my Heart: it kept on increasing so that my death-agony was prolonged while I was thus immersed in suffering, I opened my eyes and saw my dearest Mother overcome by a sea of anguish and tears, which pained me more than my own sufferings; I also saw my friends overwhelmed with sorrow. With this torture my Heart was actually rent by the force and fury of the pain; and then it was that my soul went forth from my body." (4)

Those are the words of our Saviour to St. Bridget. In a later revelation He said: "There are few persons who can imagine with what pain I remained fastened to the wood of the Cross, my Heart being (2). Ps. 102, 22.  
(3). Part. 3, Meditation 45.  
(4). Revel. extrav. Chap. 51.

#### OUR LOVE FOR HIM

55 -

broken and shattered by its violence: quando Cor meum crepuit."(5) Let us now listen to the Blessed Virgin who revealed on two occasions to the same saint that, as the death of her Son drew near, His Sacred Heart was rent by the violence of the pain: *Cum Cor prae violentia dolorum rumperetur.*' (6)

I also find a similar reference in the tenth exercise of the *Intimations of Divine Holiness* of St. Gertrude, where she thus addresses our Redeemer: *Deificatum Cor tuum in morte pro me rupit amor*. "Thy divine Heart was rent and broken in Thy dying, by the excess of Thy love for me. This made Thee suffer such violent tortures for love of me that Thy adorable Heart was broken by the force of the pain; so that I may say that Thou didst die of pain and love for me. This can be repeated by each one of us with equal truth."(7)

O Almighty God, who hath ever heard Of such a death? O sinful man. wilt thou not open thy eyes to behold the love Thy Saviour has for thee? O heart of man, wilt thou not be touched by such burning love? Wilt thou not surrender? not be converted? Wilt thou not love one who hath such love for thee? *Filii hominum usquequo gravi corde?* (8)

How long will thy heart remain buried in the mud and slime of earth, in the mists and vanities of this world? Wouldst thou not love Him who is wholehearted in His love for thee and who, if thou wouldst but love Him, promises to give thee an eternal realm? That is all He demands of thee; for after saying, "I love you as my Father hath loved me," He adds: *Manete in dilectione mea*: "Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love: as I also have kept my Father's commandments and do abide in his love."(9) Then He again says to us: *Haec locutus sum vobis, ut gaudium meum in vobis sit, et gaudium vestrum impleatur*. (10) "These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled."

(5). Ibid. chap. 106.

(6). Ibid. book 1, chap. 10; also chap. 26.

(7). 1<sup>n</sup> Exercitio laudis et gratiarum actionis.

(8). Ps. 4, 3.

(9). John 15, 9-10.

(10) Ibid. 11.

Wouldst thou, therefore, give great joy to thy Saviour and so act that thy heart may be always joyful and glad, thus beginning thy paradise on earth? Then love thy precious Saviour above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself. That is all that thou hast to do. O Jesus, I give Thee my whole heart. O Mother of Jesus, to thee also I give it entire, with all the hearts of my brothers and sisters in Christ; offer them, I beg, to thy Son, praying Him to take full, entire and eternal possession of them.

O Creator, I owe Thee my body and soul, because Thou hast given me Thy body and soul, Thy life and Thy very self. What do I owe Thee, and what shall I give Thee in return for all those priceless gifts? If I had millions of lives and gave them to Thee a million times over, each hour, that would be as nothing. Since I am so indebted to Thee that I cannot ever requite Thee, come Thyself as executor of my estate and take all that I have. I offer Thee all the faculties of my soul, all the feelings of my body, all my members, my whole heart, sacrificing myself entirely to Thy adorable will. I ask not for eyes except to contemplate what Thou dost will me to contemplate, nor for ears except to hear Thy divine words and to obey Thee. Let my tongue be torn from my mouth if I use it but to bless Thee; let my heart burst asunder rather than fail to love Thee. May I lose my memory, if it be not to remember Thee; and may my mind fail in all things, if it be not to know and to admire Thee. May my hands be cut off, if I use them not in Thy service. I ask not for feet except to seek and follow Thee. I will always exercise my will as Thou wouldst have me. Thy good pleasure is my sole desire. Do with me what Thou wilt, since for my sake Thou hast done with Thyself more than I would have dared to wish or to desire. I surrender myself entirely into the hands of God, my Eternal Father, who dost desire my welfare more than I do myself, who alone knows what is best for me and alone can obtain it for me.

## CHAPTER 12

**BEAUTIFUL WORDS ON THE LOVE OF THE SACRED  
HEART OF JESUS, TAKEN FROM THE THIRTY  
SIXTH CHAPTER OF CHRISTIAN  
WELFARE(1)**

"THOSE WHO HAVE WRITTEN on the devotion to Jesus Incarnate, living and dying for the salvation of all men, esteem it above all others, and assuredly with good reason. No matter what has already been said and might be said to demonstrate the excellence and the holiness of such devotion, it will never be praised according to its merits. Therefore, if you desire to be completely washed of your sins, delivered from all your vices and filled with virtue, cultivate a constant devotion to the person of your adorable Saviour. Lift up your heart and mind as often as possible, and plunge them into the loving Heart of Jesus, into that truly divine Heart, since, according to the Apostle, «in him dwelleth all the fulness. of the Godhead corporeally,»(2) and we are all able through this same Heart to have access to the Heavenly Father.

"Acquire the habit of recollecting your spirit within you, to draw it at the same time into the Heart of Him who has said: 'Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.'"(3)

"In fact, in the Heart of Jesus are to be found all virtues in their highest perfection. You will find there mercy, justice, peace, grace,

(1). St. John Eudes attributes the authorship of this work to Lanspergius, the saintly Carthusian Of Cologne. the book was written by Dom Dominic, a Carthusian of Treves. The passages quoted by St. John Eudes were borrowed from a French translation of *Christian Warfare* published in 1671 - Cf. Bainvel in Etudes, June 5, 1911, p. 606.

(2). Col. 2, 9.

(3). Man. 11, 28.

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

eternal salvation, the source of life, perfect consolation, and that true light which lighteneth every man, particularly him who, in his needs and sorrows, comes there seeking help.

"Finally, you may draw from the Sacred Heart all that your soul desires and you will never win salvation or grace except from that source. It is a furnace of divine love, intensely burning with the fire of the Holy Ghost, which purifies, inflames and transforms into itself all those desiring to be united with this most loving Heart. It is in the adorable Heart that are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (4) Therefore cling to it in such a manner that neither place nor company nor circumstance can prevent you from running to it as to a place of refuge where you will find only love and faithfulness, with the certainty that when all the hearts of men deceive and forsake you, and even though they fail in their response to you, the precious Heart of Jesus will never deceive nor abandon you. It is too faithful to commit an act of cowardice; it has too much love for you not to remember you; and the sufferings it endured for you will not permit it to overlook anything to achieve your salvation.

"If you wish to walk with safety in the heavenly Way and enter by the true door, seek none other than this loving Saviour. Rest assured that you will never ascend to the knowledge of His divinity except by way of His sacred humanity, using His Cross as a prop to uphold your steps and



sustain your weakness.

"If you wish to acquire even greater spiritual possessions, without much effort on your part, surrender yourself entirely to Him and He will surrender Himself to you. Offer Him all your good works in union with His excellence. Enter into partnership with Him in loving trust. He will be pleased with the exchange. In uniting your merits to His, you will have everything in common, and He will share with you His immense treasures. O profitable exchange! O unparalleled interchange! What man would not willingly give a small piece of copper for a large mass of gold? Who would not exchange a pebble for a precious stone? You will be able to effect this spiritual exchange if you join all your words, all your actions, all your thoughts

(4). COL 2, 3

WORDS FROM "CHRISTIAN WELFARE"

59 -

and all your sufferings to those of Jesus. Thus, for instance, you will be able to say to Him: 'O my God and my Saviour, I offer Thee the slumber that I am about to take in union with that which Thou didst take while upon earth.' Or, when you receive some insult, say: 'O my adorable Saviour, I offer Thee this injury which I have just received, and I join it willingly to all the insults which Thou hast suffered on my behalf.'

"In this manner, your merits, although very small in themselves, joined to the infinite merits of your Redeemer, will be made more noble and will be absorbed in His, and, as it were, changed into them, as a drop of water is transformed when it falls into wine."

60 -

## **CHAPTER 13**

### **THOUGHTS OF THE SERAPHIC SAINT BONAVENTURE ON THE LOVE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

THE SERAPHIC Doctor, St. Bonaventure, aflame with the love of Our Lord, says that the divine Heart is the gate of paradise, the joy of the elect, the beatitude of the angels, the treasure of divine knowledge and of eternal charity. The excessive love of that beloved Redeemer urged Him to open His divine side to give us His Heart and to make us dwell in its august sanctuary. Therefore the saint declares that he wishes to make his dwelling place in the Sacred Heart, to find there his repose and his delight. Whereupon he exclaims: (1) "Certainly, my Lord Jesus, even if Thou shouldst hate me, I should still have to love Thee, because Thou art my God. How much more must I do so, seeing that Thou dost love me so and dost pursue me to heap upon me Thy benefits? Thou hast such love for me that it would seem that Thou dost hate Thyself out of consideration for me.

"Didst Thou not consent, Thou Judge of the universe, to be judged and to suffer a most infamous and cruel death for love of me? O my God, what more couldst Thou have done for me? Certainly, Thou dost wish me to be surrendered unto Thee, since Thou hast given Thyself up to me. What constrained Thee to this sacrifice, O my God? Only Thy very great goodness and Thy immense charity, in order to enkindle us with Thy divine love. O sole desire of my heart! O sweetness and serenity of my mind! O flame in this brazier of my breast! O light and brightness of my eyes! O my soul! O my

(1). Stimul. amor., Part 1, chap. 1, and Part 11, chap. 2.

life! O inmost recesses of my heart! O my joy and jubilation! Why am I not wholly transformed into love? Why is there anything in me but love? Thy love, O my Saviour, surrounds me on all sides, and yet I know not what love means.

"O Most Sweet Jesus, how wonderful is Thy love for men which will not suffer Thee to be separated from them! Is it not that love which, before Thou didst ascend into heaven, gave us the power to retain Thee, so long as We would, on our altars? Thou gavest us that power before going to meet death so that we might not fear losing Thee. Why didst Thou wish so to do, since Thou hadst the intent of sending us Thy Holy Spirit? Why didst Thou wish to abide always with man? Thou didst desire it to incorporate us in Thee, and to nourish us with Thy Precious Blood, so that being inebriated with Thy love we should have but one heart and one soul with Thee.

"O, wondrous and inestimable power of love! It causes God to come down to earth and raises man to heaven. It unites God and man so closely that it makes God man and man God. The temporal becomes eternal, the immortal becomes mortal, and the mortal is made immortal. It causes the enemy of God to become His friend, and His slave to be adopted as His son.

"O love, what shall I render unto Thee who hast made me all divine? I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. O love, Thy virtue is indescribable, Thou who transformest slime into God! What is more powerful than Thou? What is more gentle? what more pleasing? what more noble? O excellent love, that changest earth into heaven and makest me to form but one with my beloved! O desirable love, that dost intoxicate celestial lovers with sovereign delights! O my soul, if the voice of thy beloved makes thee melt into love for Him, why art thou not utterly inflamed and consumed when thou dost enter by the sacred wound of His side into the burning furnace of His loving Heart?"

62 -

## CHAPTER 14

### SEVERAL WONDERFUL THINGS ABOUT THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, RELATED IN THE LIFE OF SISTER MARGARET OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, A CARMELITE NUN OF BEAUNE(1)

"The *SON OF GOD* teaches that His members dwell in Him and He in them, that He is the true Aaron who bears the name of His people engraved in precious stones upon His breast, and carries them in the depths of His Heart out of His abundant love for them. We must not be surprised that He revealed to Sister Margaret of Beaune that He had placed her in the sanctuary where He universally receives all His chosen ones. When He chose to elevate her more and more in His grace, He drew her into His Sacred Heart where all those who love Him are to dwell everlastingly. He is a Father to whom all His children are dearer than the apple of His eye and He covers them under the shadow of His wings. His infinite charity for souls is pictured in countless ways, such as the beloved disciple resting against His Heart at the Last Supper, and the repose of the blessed in Abraham's bosom. He is a Shepherd, says the Prophet, who carries His lambs in His arms, holding them close to His breast. Hence the favor shown to Sister Margaret when, wishing to make her share in His heavenly delights, He lifted her into ecstasy and took her into His Heart.

"We have seen that God granted her holy conversation with the saints and angels and then raised her up to His throne in heaven.

(1). The author of the life, which appeared in 1655, is Father Amelotte, a priest of the Oratory.

Then He brought her still higher and, uniting her even more closely to Himself, He opened His own Heart and hid her in its Holy of holies.

"Thus He revealed His Heart as a vast and boundless furnace of love in which He enclosed her for days and nights. There were transfused so many graces at their source that her progress in perfection seemed greater in a single day than it had ever been for whole years at a stretch. That divine Heart, searing like a hot fire, consumed her imperfections. She was plunged into the abyss of charity so ardent that the heat issued forth and was felt outside of her body. The love of Jesus carried her away with such impetuosity that she was seen raised above the earth, fair and shining as a Seraph. At times she was bathed with love as in a fountain of sanctity. At other times she appeared to be tinged with innocence itself, and was fragrant with purity.

"She noted the twofold movement of dilation and compression of the Heart of Jesus, experienced by other Saints,(2) and understood that the Sacred Heart contracted as if to encompass the Holy Spirit, to love its Divine Father in His own name, to offer itself to Him as sacrifice, to humble itself before His majesty, to enter into His divine life, to unite itself to His adorable perfections, and to render Him all due homage. She understood that the Sacred Heart expanded to shed abroad its Spirit in all His members and to communicate to His Mystical Body, the Church, all the power of its vital warmth.

"She sensed in that loving Heart an endless, shoreless ocean of love for God His Father, a possession and an enjoyment of His divine goodness, a repose in His infinite bliss, a calm and peace passing all understanding, an incomprehensible treasure of all the virtues, which shone forth in a beauty, a nobleness, an expanse, and a splendor so great and inexplicable that there was enough to fill an infinite number of worlds thousands and thousands of times more vast than our planet.

(2) On the heart-beats of the Heart of Jesus, cf. St. Gertrudes *Herald of Divine Love*, Book 111, chap. 51; Book IV, chaps. 4 and 24. Also St. Mechtilde's *Le Livre de la Grâce spéciale*, Part 1, chaps. 5 and 20; Part V, ch. 32.

"Nevertheless, amid so much wealth and happiness, she saw that that divine Heart had been submerged, as it were, in the very depths of pain and bitterness. It had been stricken down, heavy with sadness, on account of the sins of men whose gall and venom it had been obliged to taste. Unless it had been sustained by the Uncreated Word, it would have succumbed under the weight of our crimes.

"Despite the throbbings and the swoons occasioned by the constant horror of our sins, with all the struggles it had endured against the pains of death, she recognized in that most gracious Heart an unutterable transport of love for those who had caused it so many evils. As He fought against the apprehension of death, the strength and generosity of His love repulsed the spirits and the humors(3) which had drawn towards the center of His body, and caused it to break out in a sweat of blood(4).

"She saw that wondrous Heart as a sacred palace where were born and nourished all the affections of the Saviour, His desires, His loyalties, His joys, and His sorrows. But among all those inexhaustible treasures of virtue and holiness, it was chiefly in the love, purity of heart, and innocence that she was allowed to share.

"Her lower faculties had been so consumed by the possession that God was assuming over her

daily more and more, that she took little nourishment. She found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus a supernatural substitute which sustained her without eating and restored her strength more nobly than vital forces would have done. Sometimes it seemed to her that there flowed from that Heart through her

(3). The humors in old physiology are the four fluids: blood, phlegm, choler (yellow bile) and melancholy (black bile) conceived as entering into the constitution of the body and determining, by their relative proportion, a person's health and temperament, [Eng. Tr.]

(4). It is interesting to compare this passage on the sweat of blood with another taken from *ancient Devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by Carthusian Monks of the XIV-XVII Centuries*, Ref. London, 1926, P. 97: "In time of great suffering, the blood is concentrated in the heart in order to strengthen the principal member-hence the exterior parts of the body become pale-but in this exceptional case (Our Lord's), strength of mind so forcibly overcame natural weakness that it refused this aid, and sent back the blood to the outside as a sign of its readiness to be spilt without waiting for the hand of the executioner to shed it by force." [Eng. Tr.]

#### THOUGHTS OF SISTER MARGARET

65 -

whole body a sacred liquid, now in the form of very sweet oil, now like purest milk, now like a balm filled with celestial fragrance, now like a pleasant manna fortifying not only body but producing marvelous effects in her soul as well.

"Worldly-minded people are far from understanding how a girl dwelling on earth could be hidden in the Heart of the Saviour. But the children of light, who feed on the life of the spirit, will readily conceive that it was not a transport of the body but only of the soul, and that her access to His Heart was a loving plan to associate her more closely with His innocence and His other virtues.

"Although the Son of God does not grant such special graces to every soul, it is conceivable nevertheless that there are many who, in the dark night of faith, enter as truly into His Heart and His affections as several saints who have been granted the luminous entrance perceptible to the intellect. Each of us has to raise himself humbly by the ordinary way of the Church, *which is* the way of faith. *When we* seek to love or adore God, to acquire a real sorrow for our sins, to sacrifice ourselves to the Eternal Father, we have no better way than to enter in spirit into the Heart of the Son of God. We must clothe ourselves with His holy dispositions, loving God in Him and with Him, detesting sin as He detests it, and uniting ourselves by faith with His perpetual sacrifice."

The author of the life of Sister Margaret of Beaune reports all the above details and enlarges on other points *which I* omit, because I wish to set forth only those that chiefly concern the adorable Heart of our Saviour. To Him be infinite honor, praise and glory, for all the graces, favors and blessings *which His* most benign and most generous Heart has dispensed and will dispense on earth and in heaven, in all hearts that love and shall love Him forever!

## CHAPTER 15

**A PIOUS AND LOVING EXERCISE ON THE SORROWS  
OF THE HEART OF JESUS AND OF THE HOLY  
HEART OF HIS BLESSED MOTHER**

*O GOOD JESUS*, Lamb without spot, who didst suffer so many torments on Thy Cross, while beholding the virgin Heart of Thy dearest Mother plunged into an ocean of sorrows, teach me, I beg Thee, to accompany Thee in Thy sufferings and to feel Thy afflictions.

What a sorrowful sight to see those two Hearts of Jesus and Mary, two Hearts so holy, so innocent, so full of graces and perfections, so enkindled with divine love, so closely united to each other, and so compassionate towards each other! The holy Heart of the Mother of Jesus feels most keenly the terrible torments of her Son; the Only Son of Mary is wholly convulsed by the incomparable sufferings of His Mother. Jesus, the innocent Lamb, and Mary, His immaculate Mother, call to each other; the one weeps for the other, receiving no consolation; and the purer and more ardent their mutual love is, the more their sorrows penetrate and pierce.

O heart of stone! why dost thou not melt with sorrow and tears seeing that thou art the cause of the unutterable sorrows of that spotless Mother and that most gentle Lamb of God? What have they done to suffer so many afflictions? O wretched sinner, it is you and your abominable sins that are the executioners of those most holy and innocent Hearts. O Hearts most kind, pardon me and exercise upon me the vengeance which I *deserve*. *Since* creatures obey you, command them all to punish me as I deserve. Send me your sorrows and sufferings, so that, as I have been the cause of them, I may succor you in your weeping and pain. O Jesus, love of my heart,

A PIOUS AND LOVING EXERCISE      67 -

O Mary, consolation of my soul, perfect image of Thy Son, stamp upon my heart a great aversion to the pleasures of this life, which thou hast spent in suffering. I am thine, belonging to thy house and thy service, although I am unworthy. Let me take no pleasure in this world except where thou dost find it. Grant that I may always bear thy sorrows in my soul, putting my glory and delight in being crucified with Jesus and Mary.

O most holy Virgin, how are all thy joys changed into sorrows? If they had been like those of the world, it would have been fitting that they should have suffered these changes. But, O Queen of angels, thou hast never taken pleasure except in divine things. God alone possessed thy Heart and nothing was able to satisfy thee but what proceeded from Him and led to Him. Thou hast had the joy of seeing thyself a Mother, the Mother of God; of bearing Him in thy sacred womb; of seeing Him resting on thy sacred bosom; of waiting on Him with thy most pure hands; of offering Him in the temple to His Eternal Father; and of seeing Him recognized and adored by Simeon the Just and holy Anna the Prophetess. All thy satisfactions, throughout the thirty years of thy life with Him, were divine, inward and spiritual. They were the jubilant, spiritual and interior delights with which thy most holy soul, enkindled with love for Jesus, thy Son and thy God, was raised and transported into His divine majesty. Thy holy heart, transformed and united to Him, *received therefrom* favors greater than all the ranks of heaven, since thy love exceeded that of all the Seraphim. O Lady and *Queen of* angels, what can one find in satisfactions so pure and holy, in joys so spiritual and heavenly, that could turn into sorrows? Can it be that the wretchedness and the servitude of the poor children of Eve *exiled and* banished from paradise, in whose sin thou hast never had part, have reached even to thee? Hath that exile, then, not yet ceased to be for thee a land of sorrows and a Vale of tears?

O poor sinner, who would persuade yourself to find pleasure in this life which has only false and deceitful pleasures. Behold the sufferings of the King and Queen of heaven, and perish with Confusion at the sight of your own disordered life and your aversion for crosses. The whole life of Jesus, who is innocence itself, is one

68 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

continual suffering; the whole life of Mary, who is all holy and immaculate, is a perpetual Cross; and you, wretched sinner, deserving hell a thousand times over, you seek pleasure and comfort

O Queen of angels, in all the years of the hidden life with thy Son Jesus, thou didst await the sorrows which were prophesied by holy Simeon, sorrows without parallel, since the magnitude of thy love was the measure of thy sorrow. When the time of the Passion of that loving Saviour had come, He took leave of thee to go forth to suffer, letting thee know that it was the will of His Father that thou shouldst accompany Him to the foot of the Cross and that thy Heart should be pierced with the sword of sorrow. St. John gave thee the warning, when he saw the time come for the divine Lamb to be sacrificed. Thou didst leave thy house to bathe Jerusalem's streets with thy tears. Thou didst find thy Son in the midst of an innumerable pack of human wolves and lions, howling and roaring at Him, shouting like madmen: *Tolle, tolle, crucifige, crucifige*(1) Thou didst see Him, now no longer adored by kings, but held up to the people as a false king, blasphemed, dishonored, condemned to death, shouldering His Cross, led to Calvary, whither thou didst follow Him, bathed in thy tears and overwhelmed with sorrow.

Thou didst hear the blows of the hammer as He was being fastened to the Cross: they pierced thy Heart. Thou didst suffer unspeakable tortures, awaiting that dire hour of the Crucifixion. Thou didst see Him lifted up, while so many shouts and blasphemies were hurled at Him by the evil tongues of the Jews that thy blood congealed in thy veins. Thou didst spend these sad hours at the foot of the Cross, hearing the awful insults heaped by these wretches upon thy Lamb and seeing the frightful tortures which they made Him suffer, until at last thou didst see Him expire under such obloquy and suffering.

Whereupon they restored Him to thy loving arms, that thou mightest wrap His body in a shroud and bury Him and, just as thou hadst given Him at birth the first attentions, thou mightest now perform for Him the last rites; but with sorrows so heavy and anguish so sharp and desolation so penetrating to thy Mother's Heart that, if  
(1). John 19, 15.

#### A PIOUS AND LOVING EXERCISE

69 -

we are to comprehend anything of them, we should have first to comprehend the degree of thy well-nigh infinite love for thy Son. A thing distressed thee. Wherever thou didst turn thou didst see only reasons for sorrow and tears. Thy Mother's Heart was rent the more with wounds bleeding and innumerable because thy Dear Jesus was also being wounded in Heart and body. It is true that thy faith was not diminished and that thy obedience kept thy Heart perfectly resigned to the divine will, but thou didst not cease to suffer inconceivable pain, even as thy beloved Son, in spite of His most perfect submission to all the commands of His Divine Father. Lastly, no heart with a lesser love than thine will ever be able to comprehend what thou didst suffer at that time.

When thy faithful servants and thy true friends consider these things, they give way to tears and are filled up with sorrow at seeing thy divine consolations changed into such cruel sufferings, thy most holy innocence falling prey to such inhuman sorrows. If they could only be torn asunder and

consumed to console thee, most willingly would they suffer it. What a martyrdom of blood for the Heart of thy divine Lamb, the Only Son of God and thy Son, in seeing so clearly all the sorrows Penetrating thy Heart, the desolation in which thou art, the anguish necessarily caused by Thy absence, and the fact that thou canst neither speak to Him nor He to *thee*, *because* no words can be found capable of appeasing such great sorrows!

O Father of mercies and God of all consolation what are those two Hearts that Thou art keeping thus crucified? Why dost Thou not succor Thy Only Son and Thy loving daughter? Why dost Thou not break the law that Thou hast made that one shall not sacrifice in the same day on Thy altar the Lamb and its Mother? And yet here, in one and the same day, at the selfsame hour, on the same Cross and with the same nails, Thou dost keep fastened the Only Son of sorrowing Mary and the virgin Heart of His most innocent Mother. Can it be that Thou dost care for the dumb animals, unwilling that the mothers should be sacrificed on the day they suffer the loss of their lambs, more than Thou dost for this most pure Virgin, grieving over the sorrows and the death of her divine Lamb? Thou dost will that she should have no other executioner of her martyrdom

70 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

than her tender love for her Only Son. Nevertheless, in the midst of such cruel tortures, the sight of the sufferings of His most worthy Mother were known to her Beloved Son even as He filled the cup of her affliction and torture. Immortal praise and blessing, O my God, for the incomprehensible love that Thou hast for sinners! Thanksgiving, infinite and eternal, for all the works of that divine love!

O Jesus, Only Son of God, Only Son of Mary, divine light of my soul, I beseech Thee, for the infinite love Thou hast for me, to enlighten my mind with Thy holy truths, to drive from my heart the desire for the consolations of this life, and to instill into it the desire to suffer for love of Thee. Thy love was the cause of Thy torments. Thy love for Thy holy Mother and her love for Thee were for her the source of a torrent of tribulations. How great my blindness when I fancy I can please Thee by walking in any other way! How long, O love, shall I be thus blinded and deceived? How long shall this earthy man refuse to enter into Thy divine plans? Why do I want life if not to employ it for Thee, as did Thy most holy Mother, since Thou hast given Thy life for me on the Cross? What more vivid enlightenment do I desire or need? O divine wisdom, let Thy heavenly light everywhere be my guide; let the strength of Thy love possess me utterly and work in my soul the transformation it operates in hearts obedient to it. I surrender myself, I offer myself, I give myself all to Thee; may it be with a heart pure and entire, O Lord. Take from me the pleasure I find in earthly things, that I may find my pleasure only in loving Thee and suffering with Thee.

O God of my heart, I adore Thee and render Thee infinite thanks for turning to my advantage those sufferings which Thou endurest in being confronted with those of Thy holy Mother, giving her to me as Lady and Mother, and showing that Thou lovest me so much that Thou desirest her to love me as her son in place of Thee. As my heavenly Mother she will have compassion on me in my need and will succor me, help me, protect, keep and govern me as her child. Perhaps Thou hast not found, O my Redeemer, any greater consolation for Thy most holy Mother than to give her evil and sinful

A PIOUS AND LOVING EXERCISE

71 -

children to Thyself that she may use her power and charity to obtain their conversion and salvation. Blessed and praised be Thou forever that Thou hast willed that nothing should perish, but that all things should be used to cure my ills and to shower me with true blessings. Therefore, O good Physician, do not allow me, in the midst of such great remedies, to remain without relief. Receive me as Thine own and make me a worthy servant and a faithful child of this great Queen and kindly Mother.

O most holy Mother of God, remember that the pains which thou didst not suffer in the virgin birth of thy Only Son thou now dost suffer doubly at the foot of the Cross, in the spiritual birth whereby all sinners become thy children. I have cost thee so much, receive me as thy son. I am infinitely unworthy of it; perform for me, O most holy Virgin, the office of Mother, protecting me, succoring and guiding me in all things, and obtaining for me the grace of Thy Son, so that I, worthless and miserable child, may not be lost. O citizens of heaven, blessed and holy fruit of the spiritual maternity and the mother's Heart of this most pure Virgin, pray that she will always be a most kind Mother to me, and obtain for me from Jesus faithfully to serve and love the Son and the Mother in this world, and to be reckoned among those who shall bless and love them eternally in the other. Amen.

72 -

## CHAPTER 16

### **EXERCISES OF LOVE AND DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, FROM PHARETRA DIVINI AMORIS, "QUIVER OF DIVINE LOVE," BY LANSPERGIUS THE CARTHUSIAN**

"AROUSE AND STIMULATE in your soul the devotion to the most gentle Heart of Jesus, that Heart entirely filled with love and mercy for you. Seek out the divine Heart frequently, with deep fervor and devotion, embracing it in spirit with the kiss of reverence and affection, and making it your dwelling-place.

"Ask God Almighty, through the Sacred Heart, everything you seek to ask. Offer to the Divine Majesty all your devotional exercises, through the Sacred Heart which encloses all the graces and gifts of heaven. It is the door through which you must go to God and God will come to you. To encourage yourself in this practice, and to benefit by it in stirring up true love for God, you should set up in a prominent place in your house a picture or statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"Whenever you look at it, remember your exile, your misery and your sins. Whenever you pass it, raise your heart to God. Even though you may speak no words, let your soul cry out. If you find that words are helpful, say a prayer that your heart be purified and your will perfectly united to the divine Heart and the will of God. If it helps your devotion, take the picture and kiss it reverently, directing your homage to the real Heart. Earnestly desire to imprint the real image of His Heart upon your own, surrendering your own mind and letting your heart draw into itself the spirit, grace and holiness of the vast abyss of virtue and sanctity abounding in the Sacred

EXERCISES OF LANSPERGIUS

73 -

Heart. It is very pleasing to God for you to give special honor to the adorable Heart.

"Have recourse to the most kind Heart of Jesus in all your necessities, and you shall receive all the consolation and help you need. Even if all men should deceive and forsake you, do not be discouraged. Abide in peace, for the Sacred Heart, so good, so faithful, so loving, can never deceive you and will never forsake you.(1)

## PRAYER

"O most noble, most merciful, most gentle Heart of my faithful lover, of my God and Saviour,



Jesus Christ, I beseech Thee to draw me to Thyself, and absorb my heart, all my powers, to Thy greater glory and for the accomplishment of Thy most holy will.

"O Jesus, most merciful Lord, I commend myself to Thy divine Heart, I resign myself and abandon myself entirely into Thy hands. I beg Thee also, O Most Gracious God, to take away this wicked heart, this impious and thankless heart, and to give me Thy Sacred Heart. Let my heart be according to Thy Heart and according to Thy holy will!

"O my Lord God, my Saviour and my Redeemer, take away all my sins and destroy in me everything displeasing to Thee; pour from Thy Heart into mine whatever will please Thee most. Wholly convert me and take full possession of everything within me, to use it according to Thy good pleasure and for Thine own sake. Unite my heart with Thine, my will with Thy will, so that I may never will and may never be able to will anything or in any other way than Thou wilt and what Thou wilt. O Sweet Jesus, O my God, let me love Thee with all my heart, in all things and above all things." (2)

#### ANOTHER PRAYER

"O my Most Loving Jesus, dearest spouse of my soul, I conjure Thee by the Sacred Heart pierced by a lance and rent by love, pierce, wound, break, enkindle and inflame my heart from that great brazier of love burning in Thy Heart, so that I may love Thee with all my

(1). *Pharetra divini amoris*, liber 1, part 5.

(2) Lanspergius, loc. cit.

74 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

heart; that is, with the whole gamut of my desires and with a perfect will that shall consider only Thee, seek only Thee, and only aspire to Thee, loving Thee in all things and above all things."(3)

#### PRAYER TO THE SACRED WOUND IN THE SIDE OF JESUS, DRAWN FROM « THE ROSARY OF OUR LORD'S PASSION », BY LANSPERGIUS

"O my Most Loving and Gentle Jesus, I desire with all the affections of my heart, that all beings created and uncreated, should praise Thee, honor Thee and glorify Thee eternally for that sacred wound wherewith Thy divine side was rent. I deposit, enclose, conceal in that wound and in that opening to Thy Heart, my heart and all my feelings, thoughts, desires, intentions and all the faculties of my soul. I entreat Thee, by the precious blood and water that flowed from Thy most loving Heart, to take entire possession of me, that Thou mayest guide me in all things. Consume me in the burning fire of Thy holy love, so that I may be so absorbed and transformed into Thee that I may be no longer but one with Thee."(4)

#### ANOTHER PRAYER

"O Most Loving and Kind Father, in satisfaction for all my sins and for those of the whole world, and in reparation for my sloth, my tepidity, my neglect and my disordered love, I offer Thee that sacred wound in the Heart of Thy Son, the blood and the water which flowed therefrom, and the boundless love wherewith He didst love Thee. I beseech Thee that Thou wouldst pour from that sacred wound into my soul a love most pure, most intense, most perfect and eternal, wherewith I may love Thee with all my heart and bless Thee in all things and above all things. Grant that I may think of Thee only, that I may seek Thee only, that I be attached to Thee only, wish to please Thee only, and that I may wholly employ all the faculties of my body and soul to love Thee and glorify Thee."(5)

- (3). *ibid.*, liber 11, part 5.  
 (4). *Loc. cit.*  
 (5). *Ibid.*, liber1, part.5.

75 -

## CHAPTER 17

### ANOTHER EXERCISE TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, TAKEN FROM SAINT GERTRUDE'S EXERCISES ON PREPARING FOR DEATH

"O Love, thy flaming divine fire hath won me access to, the beneficent Heart of my Jesus. O Heart overflowing with sweetness! O Heart filled with piety! O Heart surging with charity! O Heart distilling sweetness itself! O Heart full of mercy! Let me die of love in return for Thy love! O Heart of Jesus, my beloved, bury my poor heart in Thy treasure house! O costly pearl of my heart, summon me to Thy life-giving banquet, and although I am most unworthy, let me drink of the wine of Thy consolation, so that Thy divine charity may fill up my deficiency, and the abundance of Thy love may compensate for my lukewarmness and sloth!

"O precious love, how ardently I desire Thee now to offer up for me that divine Heart, that delightful fragrance, that incense of sweet savor, that august sacrifice, on the golden altar where the mystery of the reconciliation of the human race was accomplished, offering it in satisfaction for all the days of my life which I have let slip by without doing what I ought to have done for Thy love.

"O love, plunge my mind deep into that Sacred Heart as into a river, burying all my negligences and all my sins in the flood of Thy divine mercies. Let me find, in the Heart of Jesus, my understanding clarified, my affections purified, and let me have a heart free, detached and empty of all imperfections, so that, when love shall separate my soul and body at the hour of death, I may return my heart stainless to the hands of God. O all-loving Heart, whom I love above all things, Thou art the one whom my heart entreats with all its

76-

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

affections. Be mindful of me, I beg Thee, and may the sweetness of Thy charity restore and strengthen the weaknesses of my heart.

"O Thou eternal sweetness of my soul, O Thou beloved of my heart, whose holy face is full of charm and grace, whose Heart is so filled with sweetness as to make Thee infinitely lovable, must my thoughts wander from Thee? O God of my heart, gather up into Thyself all the disorders of my mind. O my beloved, wash Thou and wipe away, by the purity and the holiness of Thy divine affection and by the burning love of Thy pierced Heart, all the stains of my guilty heart and all the disorders of my imagination, so that Thy most bitter Passion may serve me as a sheltering defense at the hour of my death and that gentle Heart, broken for love of me, may be my eternal abode, since I love Thee alone more than all creatures in the world.(1)

(I). Exercit. VII, Praepar. ad mortem.

## CHAPTER 18

**COLLOQUY OF A HOLY SOUL, IN SOLITUDE,  
WITH THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

O LORD, how delectable is the odor of Thy fragrance! It is my hope that henceforth its sweet delight will make me entirely forget the false pleasures and the vain delights of the world. May Thy sweetness draw me after Thee and in Thee so that, having abandoned all that binds me to earth, I shall follow Thee, run to Thee, flee to Thee and take up my abode in Thy loving Heart.

That divine Heart is a port of safety, where the soul is sheltered from the winds and storms of the sea of this world. In that adorable Heart there is a calm which fears neither thunder nor storm. Therein one tastes delight that knows no bitterness. One finds a peace that never brooks any trouble or discord. There one meets with a joy that knows no sadness. In that Heart one possesses perfect felicity, a gentle charm, an unclouded serenity and happiness unthinkable. That Heart is the first principle of all good, and the initial source of all the joys and delights of paradise.

Most Sweet Jesus, from Thy divine Heart, as from the inexhaustible source, all felicity, all sweetness, serenity, security, repose, peace, joy, contentment, charm and happiness flow into the hearts of the children of God. What good can there be, or how can there be any good thing, that does not proceed from Thee, my Jesus, who art essentially good, the real good, the sovereign good, the only good?

What a joy to drink from this divine spring! What happiness to be refreshed by the delicious waters of this fountain of holiness, which issues forth from itself like a torrent of delight and contentment! Ah, delightful a thousand times is the fragrant perfume of Thy

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

heavenly virtues, whose fragrance is so delectable as to entice all men to Thy loving Heart. It invites them, it strongly attracts them and leads them into the sanctuary of that divine Heart. It never disappoints their hopes. On the contrary, it so fortifies and confirms them that they will never again depart, having found in that most kindly Heart, as on a bed of repose, the end of all their toils.

O Thou God of love, let the sweet fragrance of Thy divine perfumes, which are the wonderful virtues of Thy holy Heart, flow abundantly into the depths of my heart! Let that fragrance penetrate all the faculties of my soul, O one and only source of all happiness, so that being enticed by the sweetness emanating from Thee, it may become detached from self and perfectly united to Thee, that it may make its abode in Thy loving Heart, there to die to itself and no longer to live but in Thee and for Thee!

## CHAPTER 19

### FORTY FLAMES OR ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE OFFERED TO THE LOVING HEART OF JESUS

1. O wondrous Heart of my Jesus, what joy it gives me to behold in Thee all the grandeur, all the riches and wonders of all beings created and uncreated!

11. O divine Heart, first object of the Eternal Father's love, as well as of Thine own, I give myself to Thee to be plunged deep into the abyss of that love forever.

111. O adorable Heart of the Only Son of Mary, my heart is filled with joy to see that Thou hast more love for that Blessed Virgin than for all created things, and that her love for Thee is greater than for all created things together. I give my whole heart to that mutual love of Son and Mother.

IV. O most loving Heart of my Saviour, I offer Thee all that love which rises to Thee like a flame from the hearts of the divine beloved, begging them to kindle my heart with theirs.

V. O Jesus, lawful King and Lord of all hearts, be Thou the King of my heart, and let me be naught but heart and love towards Thee as Thou art to me naught but a Heart of love.

VI. O Jesus most good, whither shall I flee from Thy justice unless Thou hide me in Thy Heart?

V11 O wonderful Heart, Thou source of my life, let me live only in Thee and by Thee!

VIII. O most loving Heart, how dearly have I cost Thee, seeing Thou hast bought me with the last drop of Thy blood! How my heart would rejoice to give Thee its last drop!

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

IX. O Heart most good, Thou hast laden me with graces and favors. Let all my heart-beats be so many acts of love and praise of Thee!

X. O most gentle Heart, Thou hast always loved me. Let my heart not have a breath of life except to love Thee!

X1. O most charitable Heart, who hast died to give me life, let me live with Thy life and die by Thy death for love of Thee!

X11. O Jesus, Thy Heart is aflame with most pure love for me; let me also love Thee, not for any temporal or eternal interest, but purely and solely for love of Thee!

XIII. O my Jesus, Thy Divine Father hath put all things in Thy hands, and Thy love holds them ever open to give me all. May all that I have and all that I am be also entirely Thine forever!

XIV. O God of my heart, may the love which caused Thee to die for me make me also die for Thee!

XV. O Heart so great, what is there greater than Thou? Who shall tell me that there is aught, either on earth or in heaven, than that to which I have given my heart?

XVI. O Heart of Jesus, it is Thou who hast given me Jesus to be my treasure, my glory, my life, my all; let me also be all to Him!

XVII. O Only Son of God, how is it possible, being the Son of so good a Father, that Thou didst will to have so wicked a brother as I, who have so grievously offended Thy Most Loving Father?

XVIII. O Heart, full of wisdom and light, thinking of me and all the infinitesimal things that concern me, let my mind and my heart be also equally attached to Thee, and let me serve Thee faithfully in the smallest as well as in the greatest things!

XIX. O Heart most mighty, employ Thy divine power to destroy in my heart all that offends Thee!

XX. O Heart so great, loving me everywhere in Thy omnipresence, let me also love Thee everywhere and in all things!

XXI. O Heart most faithful in Thy love, who lovest Thy friends in adversity more than in prosperity, make me love Thee more in times of affliction than of consolation!

XXII. O Heart of the King of the lowly, veritable abyss of hu-

FORTY FLAMES OF LOVE

81 -

mility, crush in me everything that is contrary to that holy virtue, and make it rule absolutely in my heart!

XXIII. O Heart most obedient, who hast preferred to lose Thy life rather than disobey, make me love obedience, for without it I cannot please Almighty God!

XXIV. O Heart infinitely purer than the hearts of angels, the source of all purity, imprint on my heart a very special love of purity and a vivid horror of all that is contrary to it!

XXV. O Heart and furnace of flaming charity, destroy and consume in us all that is opposed to divine charity, and make it rule in all the children of God!

XXVI. O divine Heart, who could fathom the infinite hatred Thou hast for sin? Imprint it upon our hearts and make us hate nothing in the world but that infernal monster, which is the sole object of Thy hate.

XXVII. O Father of Jesus, love Thy Son Jesus for me. Make me share in that love Thou bearest Him!

XXVIII. O Jesus, love Thy Divine Father for me, and enkindle my heart with the love Thou hast for Him!

XXIX. O adorable Spirit, who art all love and charity, do Thou love my Most Gracious Father and my Most Loving Jesus for me, and transform my whole heart into love for Them!

XXX. 0 Jesus, Only Son of God and Only Son of Mary, love Thy divine Mother for me, and enkindle my heart with Thy wondrous love for her.

XXXI. 0 Mother of love, do thou love Thy Jesus and my Jesus for me, and make me share in the love Thou hast for Him.

XXXII. 0 blessed St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, St. Joachim, St. Anne, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, St. Lazarus, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Martha, all ye holy apostles and disciples of Jesus, all ye holy martyrs, all ye holy priests and levites, all ye holy virgins and all ye other saints, especially ye beloved of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, do ye love Jesus and Mary for me, and pray them to model me after their example and to number me among the children of their Heart, and to associate me in your love for them forever and ever.

82 -

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

XXXIII. 0 my Jesus, since Thy Father hath given me all in giving me Thee, all the hearts of the universe belong to me; therefore I include them all in the desire to love Thee with all the love of which they were capable when Thou didst create them to love Thee.

XXXIV. 0 my Jesus, hast Thou not said that Thou didst come to cast fire upon the earth, and that Thou hast no greater desire than to kindle all hearts? How is it then that the whole earth is full of hearts like ice? Sin is the sole cause of man's frigid soul. 0 cursed sin, how gladly would I be reduced to nothingness that you might be annihilated in every soul!

XXXV. 0 Heart of my Jesus, great furnace of love, send Thy sacred flames into all hearts of the universe, to enlighten them with heavenly fire and enkindle them with Thy divine sparks!

XXXVI. 0 Good Jesus, who hast so loved the Cross for love of me, that Thy Holy Spirit calls the day of Thy great sufferings the day of Thy Hearts joy, make me love and embrace with my whole heart all the crosses that are in store for me out of love for my most precious Crucified!

XXXVII. 0 most loving Hearts of Jesus and Mary, who are but one Heart in the unity of mind, will and affection, make your most unworthy child have but one heart with you and with all hearts that are yours!

XXXVIII. 0 Heart of Jesus, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort hath given Thee to me and Thou art really my heart. Do Thou love for me everything that I should love and in the way that my God wills that I should love it.

XXXIX. 0 Heart of Jesus and Mary, inestimable treasure of manifold good, be my one treasure, my refuge and my protection! To you I have recourse in all my needs and necessities. When the hearts of all men deceive and abandon me, I have full confidence that the most precious and faithful Heart of my Loving Jesus and of His most sweet Mother will not deceive me and never will abandon me.

XL. Attend and hear, 0 vast furnace of love I It is but a tiny straw asking most humbly and earnestly to be immersed, absorbed, lost, swallowed up and consumed in Thy sacred flames for ever and ever!

LIVE JESUS AND MARY

83 -

## **MEDITATIONS**

85 -

### **Meditations**

#### **FOR THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

##### **FIRST MEDITATION**

###### **The Vigil of the Feast**

###### **Dispositions Required for the Worthy**

###### **Celebration of This Feast**

##### **FIRST POINT**

###### **THE FIRST DISPOSITION FOR THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A BURNING DESIRE To CELEBRATE IT DEVOUTLY**

CONSIDER that the adorable Heart of Jesus is the principle and source of His Incarnation, Birth, Circumcision, Presentation in the Temple, and of all the other mysteries and states of His life as well as of all His thoughts, words, deeds and sufferings for our salvation. His heart burning with love prompted Him to perform all these things for us. Thus it is that we owe honor and love to this most amiable Heart for countless reasons, and to show our affection we must celebrate this Feast with all possible devotion.

Let us offer our hearts to the Holy Ghost, and earnestly beg Him to enkindle us with a burning desire to celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart with as much devotion as though we were to celebrate it only once on earth. This great desire constitutes the first requisite in preparation for this solemn Feast.

86-

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

##### **SECOND POINT**

###### **THE SECOND DISPOSITION is HUMILITY**

The second disposition is one of deep humility. We must acknowledge our infinite unworthiness to take any part in the celebration of such a holy solemnity:

1. Because it belongs to heaven rather than to earth; and because the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a feast of the Seraphim rather than of sinful men.

2. Because, through our negligence, God's blessings have not borne the fruit they should have in our souls, although we have celebrated this Feast many times.

The divine Heart is the source of every grace that we have received from heaven throughout our lives; yet our ingratitude and faithlessness have rendered these precious gifts fruitless and ineffectual.

May these thoughts inspire us to profound humility. Let us enter again and again into a true spirit of penance, which will prompt us to detest our sins, to excite genuine contrition in our souls, and to make a good confession to purify our hearts so that we may become worthy recipients of the light and grace necessary for a holy celebration of this Feast.

### **THIRD POINT**

#### **THE THIRD DISPOSITION IS UNION WITH THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS OF THE BLESSED TRINITY, THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, AND THE ANGELS AND SAINTS**

As the third disposition we must offer ourselves to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to all the angels and saints, especially to our guardian angels and our patron saints. We must implore them to prepare our hearts and to invite the heavenly Court to celebrate this Feast with us. Let us ask them to make us

MEDITATIONS

87 -

their associates and sharers in their ardent love for the most adorable Heart of Jesus.

*Ejaculatory prayer:* Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus, for the ineffable gift of Thy Sacred Heart.  
*Gratias tibi, Domine Jesu, super inenarrabili dono Cordis tui.*

88 -

### **SECOND MEDITATION**

#### **The Day of the Feast**

#### **The Gift of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to Us**

### **FIRST POINT**

#### **JESUS HAS GIVEN Us His SACRED HEART**

ADORE and consider our most lovable Saviour in the excess of His goodness and in the generosity of His love towards us. Consider attentively His boundless beneficence. He has given us life and all the benefits that spring from the gift of life. He has given us His Eternal Father to be our True Father, His most holy Mother to be our dear Mother, His angels to be our protectors, and His saints to be our advocates and intercessors. He has given us His Church, our second Mother, together with all the sacraments of His Church for our salvation and sanctification. He has given us all His thoughts, words, actions and mysteries, all His sufferings, and His very life which He spent and sacrificed for us, even to the last drop of His Precious Blood.

Moreover, He has given us His most lovable Heart, the principle and source of all other gifts. The charity of His divine Heart impelled Him to emanate from the adorable bosom of His Father, and come upon earth so that He might give us all these priceless favors. This Heart, humanly divine and divinely human, merited these graces by His sufferings, endured for us on earth.



**SECOND POINT****WE SHOULD GIVE OUR HEARTS TO JESUS**

How shall we repay our loving Redeemer for so much love? We must render love for love. In return for the gift of His Sacred Heart we must give Him our hearts without reserve. To return Our Lord love for love, we must offer our love wholly and completely to Him. He has given us His Heart for all eternity; we must give Him ours forever. He has given us His Heart with infinite love; let us give Him ours in union with His infinite love. He is not satisfied with giving us His own Heart, He has also given us the Heart of His Eternal Father, the heart of His most holy Mother and the hearts of all His angels and saints. He even gives the hearts of all mankind who are commanded under pain of eternal damnation to love us as He has loved us: *Hoc est praeceptum meum ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos.* ( 1 )

Let us also offer Him in thanksgiving the Heart of His Eternal Father, the Heart of His holy Mother, the hearts of all the angels and saints and of all men; these are ours to give as though they belonged to us. St. Paul assures us that with the gift of His Son the Eternal Father has given us all things: *Omnis cum ipso nobis donavit,* ( 2 ) and that all things are ours: *Omnia vestra sunt.* ( 3 ) But above all let us offer Him His own Heart; He has given it to us; therefore it is ours and is the most acceptable offering we could make to Him. It is His own Heart and at the same time the Heart of His Eternal Father, one by unity of essence. It is also the heart of His most holy Mother, whose Heart is one with His by unity of will and affection.

*Ejaculatory prayer:* Let us give thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for his ineffable gifts.  
*Gratias infinitas super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.*

(1). John 15, 12.

(2). Rom. 8, 32.

(3). 1 COR- 3, 22

**THIRD MEDITATION****The Gift of This Feast Is a Great Favor from Our Lord****FIRST POINT****EXCELLENCE OF THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART**

LET US ADORE the incomprehensible goodness of our most loving Redeemer in giving us this holy Feast. It is, indeed, an extraordinary grace.

To understand it at all adequately, we must remember that the feasts celebrated by Holy Church during the course of the year are fountains of sanctification and blessings, but this Feast is a veritable sea of grace and holiness. The Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus constitutes an immense ocean of feasts, because it commemorates the principle of all the other feasts celebrated by Holy Church. It also is the festival of the prime source of everything that is great, holy and venerable in each of the other feasts.

It is our duty, then, to render infinite thanks to our Saviour for His goodness, and to invite the Blessed Virgin, all the angels and saints and all creatures to unite with us to praise, bless and glorify Him for this ineffable favor.

We should also dispose our souls to receive the graces He wills to communicate to us during the solemnity of this wonderful Feast. We must make a strong resolution to do everything in our power and to employ all our affections and every means possible to continue to celebrate it appropriately and devoutly during the Octave.

MEDITATIONS

91 -

## SECOND POINT

### Our Duties TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Why has the King of all hearts given us this Feast of His most lovable Heart? Solely that we may perform our duties to Him. We have four principal duties to fulfil.

The first duty is adoration. Let us adore the Heart of Jesus with all our heart and all our strength. It is infinitely worthy of adoration because it is the Heart of God, the Heart of the Only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father and of God made man. Let us adore this precious Heart, offering It all the adoration ever accorded to It in heaven and on earth. O my Saviour, may the whole universe unite in adoration of Thy divine Heart! I willingly consent to be reduced to nothingness now and forever, by means of Thy grace, so that the Sacred Heart of Jesus may be incessantly adored by the whole universe.

Our second duty is to praise, bless, glorify and thank His infinitely generous Heart for Its tremendous love for the Eternal Father, His most holy Mother, all the angels, all the saints, and all creatures, especially ourselves. Let us also thank Him for all the gifts, favors and blessings poured out from this immense sea of graces upon all things created, particularly upon us. O most sublime Heart, I offer Thee all the praise, glory and thanksgiving rendered Thee in heaven and on earth, in time and eternity. May all hearts praise and bless Thee forever!

The third duty is to ask pardon of His kind Heart for all the sorrow and suffering endured for our sins, and to offer in reparation all the satisfaction and joys given to Our Lord by His Eternal Father, by His Blessed Mother and by all ardent and faithful hearts. Let us accept out of love for the Sacred Heart all the trials, sorrow and affliction which may come upon us.

The fourth duty is to love this divine Heart with all possible affection and fervor in the name of those who do not love It and to offer It the entire love of all hearts that belong to It. O Heart all-lovable and all-loving, when shall I begin to love Thee as I should?

92-

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

I am under countless obligations to love Thee; yet, alas, I realize that I have not even commenced. Grant me the grace to begin straightway to love Thee. Destroy in my heart whatever is displeasing to Thee and establish instead the reign of Thy holy love.

*Ejaculatory prayer:* God of my heart, my portion, Jesus forever.  
*Deus cordis mei, pars mea, Jesus in aeternum.*

**FOURTH MEDITATION**  
**The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is Our Refuge, Our Oracle, and**  
**Our Treasure**

**FIRST POINT**

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR REFUGE**

IN THE FEAST we are celebrating our most loving Saviour has given us His Heart, not only as the object of our homage and adoration, but also as our refuge and our shelter. Let us resort to this haven in all our undertakings and seek therein our consolation in our sorrows and afflictions. Let us place ourselves in the shadow of its protection against the malice of the world, against our own passions, and the snares of the devil; let us retire to this shelter of goodness and mercy to shield ourselves from all the perils and miseries of life. Let us seek refuge in the Sacred Heart, in the tower of strength, where we may escape the vengeance of divine justice for our sins which caused the death of the very Author of life. May this most benign and generous Heart be our shelter and our refuge in all our necessities!

**SECOND POINT**

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR ORACLE**

Our divine Lord has given us His Heart also to be our oracle. How much more valuable is this gift than the first oracle which was placed in the tabernacle of Moses and afterwards in the temple of

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

Solomon! The first oracle was confined to one place, but ours is to be found wherever our Saviour is present. The former was in existence but a few centuries; ours will last until the end of time. The oracle of Old Law spoke by the voice of an angel, but the oracle of the New Law is the very voice of Christ Himself. O Jesus, Thou dost speak heart to heart, teaching us Thy will, resolving our doubts, smoothing our difficulties when we have recourse to Thy Sacred Heart with faith, humility and confidence.

If we wish to know what God asks of us upon different occasions, if we have a difficult task to undertake, if we are in doubt or perplexity, let us have recourse to the Heart of Our Lord, celebrating Holy Mass in His honor or else receiving Holy Communion. Thus we shall experience the consoling effects of His goodness.

**THIRD POINT**

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR TREASURE**

Our most lovable Redeemer has also given us His most loving Heart to be our treasure. It is an immense and inexhaustible treasure which enriches heaven and earth with infinite blessings. Let us draw from this treasure whatever we need to pay our infinite debts to divine justice for our failings. Let us offer the most Sacred Heart in satisfaction for our numberless sins, offenses and negligences.

If we lack some virtue, we must draw upon the treasure house of all virtues, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. If we need humility, let us beg Him to impart to us a share in His profound humility. If we

need charity, let us implore Him by His most ardent charity to give us perfect charity. Likewise we may take each virtue in turn.

When we need a special grace to meet certain circumstances, let us ask Our Lord through His most benign Heart to grant it to us from our treasure house.

If we desire to help the souls in purgatory, let us offer God our precious treasure that He Himself may take from it the price due HIS justice.

## MEDITATIONS

95 -

When the poor beg for alms, we should ask the Sacred Heart the grace to respond to their appeal and give them a share in our heavenly treasure by saying this prayer: "O most benign and generous Heart of Jesus, have mercy upon all those who suffer."

When people ask to be remembered in our prayers, or make any request of us, we should lift up our hearts to Christ, our treasure, saying with true confidence and with deep humility: "O loving Saviour, arouse in me the feelings of Thy charitable Heart toward all who come to me for help."

The heart of every man is attached to whatever is his treasure. Let us so direct our life that all the affections of our heart may be concentrated on the greatest of all treasures, the most amiable Heart of Jesus.

*Ejaculatory prayer:* O God of my heart, my love, Jesus forever.  
*Deus cordis mei, amor meus, Jesus in aeternum.*

96 -

## FIFTH MEDITATION

### THE Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Perfect Model and Rule of Our Lives

#### FIRST POINT

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR PERFECT MODEL

WE SHALL never be able to understand adequately and esteem at its full value the inconceivable grace Our Lord has granted us in giving us His divine Heart. Let us picture a man who was such a favorite of the king that he could truthfully say: "The king's heart belongs to me." What happiness and joy to be so favored! But we have infinitely more than the heart of an earthly king. We have the Heart of the King of kings, who loves us so ardently that each one of us can truly say: "The Heart of Jesus belongs to me."

Yes, this admirable Heart is mine. It is mine because the Eternal Father has given it to me; it is mine because the Blessed Virgin has given it to me; it is mine because He Himself has given it to me, not only to be my refuge and shelter in my needs, to be my oracle and my treasure, but also to be the model and rule of my life and of my actions. I wish to study this rule constantly so as to follow it faithfully.

I must consider what the Heart of Jesus hates and what it loves, in order to hate only what it

hates and love only what it loves. The only thing it hates or ever shall hate is sin. Did His gentle Heart feel any hatred for the miserable Jews who persecuted Him so unjustly or for the executioners who treated Him so cruelly? No, He never experienced the emotion of hatred. On the contrary, He besought His

## MEDITATIONS

97 -

Eternal Father to pardon His executioners and even excused the Most Outrageous of all crimes.

I wish to follow the Divine Rule for love of Thee, my Saviour. I will hate nothing but sin; I will love all that Thou lovest, even my enemies. With the help of Thy grace I will do all the good I can to those who seek to harm me.

## SECOND POINT

### SENTIMENTS THAT SHOULD FILL OUR HEARTS IN IMITATION OF THE HEART OF JESUS

My rule tells me that I must have in my heart what is in the Heart of Our Lord: *Hoc sentite in cordibus vestris quod et in Christo Jesu.* ( 1 ) These sentiments are:

1. His affection for the person and will of His Eternal Father. He so loves His Father that He has sacrificed Himself and is still prepared to sacrifice Himself a hundred thousand times for His glory. His love for the divine will is so great that never once in the course of His life did He prefer His own will but found His entire satisfaction in doing His Father's will: *Meus cibus est ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me.* ( 2 )

2. Another sentiment of His Heart is horror of sin. He hates evil to such a degree that He delivered Himself to the wrath of His enemies and to the torments of the Cross to crush the infernal monster.

3. A third sentiment is His esteem for the Cross and for suffering which He loves so tenderly that the Holy Ghost speaking of His Passion called it the day of His Heart's joy: *In die laetitiae cordis ejus us.* ( 3 )

4. His love for His Mother is the fourth sentiment of His divine Heart. He loves her alone more than all His angels and saints together.

(1). Phil. 2, 5.

(2). John 4, 34

(3). Cant. 3. 11.

98-

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

5. There is also a sentiment of charity for us. He so devotedly loves us that "it seems," says St. Bonaventure, "that He hates Himself for us." *In tantum me diligis, ut te pro me odisse videaris.*

6. Lastly there is the sentiment of His Heart towards the world. He hates it as something accursed and outcast, openly declaring that it has no part in His prayers: *Non pro mundo rogo,*(4) and that His children are not of the world: *De mundo non sunt sicut et ego non sum de mundo.* ( 5 )

Such are the Divine Rules I wish to observe for love of Thee, my Saviour. I long to love God

with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength. I long also to find my satisfaction in following in all things and everywhere His most adorable will. I long so to abominate all kinds of sin, that by means of Thy holy grace I may rather die than ever consent to it. O my Jesus, make me love crosses and afflictions that I may seek all my joy in them for the love of Thee and that I may say with St. Paul: *Repletus sum consolatione; superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra.* (6) Make me a sharer in Thy very great love for Thy holy Mother that she after Thyself may be the center of my veneration and fervent devotion. Impress upon my heart the hatred Thou hast for the world. Make me detest it as a veritable antichrist which is always opposed to Thee and has crucified Thee so relentlessly. Grant, I beseech Thee, O God of my heart, the grace, that for the love of Thee I may always preserve in my soul an entire and perfect charity for my neighbor. This is the rule of rules: *Quicumque hanc regulam secuti fuerint, pax super illos.* ( 7 )

*Ejaculatory prayer:* O Sacred Heart of Jesus, law and rule of our heart.

*O Cor Jesu, lex et regula cordis nostri.*

(4). John 17, 9.

(5). John 17, 16.

(6). 2 Cor.

(7). 47 Gal. 6, 16.

99 -

## **SIXTH MEDITATION**

### **Jesus Has Given Us His Sacred Heart to Be Our Heart**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS is GIVEN TO US TO BE OUR HEART**

THE SUN OF GOD gives us His Heart not only to be the model and rule of our life, but also to be our heart, so that by the gift of this Heart, immense, infinite and eternal, we may fulfil all our duties to God in a manner worthy of His infinite perfections. We have three obligations in regard to God: 1. To adore His divine grandeur; 2. To render Him thanks for His unspeakable gifts; 3. To implore Him to grant through His divine generosity all the necessities of soul and body.

How are we able to discharge these duties in a manner worthy of God? We are utterly unable to do so. Even if we had the minds, the hearts and the strength of all angels and men, and if we were to use them to adore, thank, and love God and to satisfy His divine justice, we could accomplish absolutely nothing to discharge our obligations as creatures of God. We have, however, received from our Divine Saviour the gift of His adorable Heart which is the perfect means of fulfilling all these duties. We should employ the Sacred Heart as if it were our Own heart, to adore God fittingly, to love Him perfectly, and to satisfy all our obligations adequately so that our homage and love may be worthy of His supreme majesty. Eternal and infinite thanks be rendered Thee, O Good Jesus, for the infinitely precious gift of Thy divine Heart. May all the angels, saints, and all creatures bless Thee forever!

100 -

## **THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **How WE SHOULD MAKE USE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

What happiness and what wealth to possess the divine Heart of Jesus! What a treasure to have

at our disposal! How great is our obligation, O my Saviour, because of Thy incomprehensible goodness! Thou dost ask the Eternal Father to make us one with Him and with Thee, as Thou and He are but one. Consequently Thou dost wish to be one in heart with Thee and with Thy Adorable Father. Thou hast willed to be our Head, and hast willed us to be Thy members and to have but one heart. and one spirit with Thee. Thou hast made us children of Thy Heavenly Father; Thou hast given us Thy divine Heart, so that we may love the Father with Thy very own Heart. Thou hast assured us that the Adorable Father loves us even as He loves Thee. *Dilexisti eos sicut et me dilexisti.* ( 1 ) Thou dost love us with the same Heart with which the Father loves Thee: *Sicut dilexit me Pater et ego dilexi vos.* ( 2 ) Thus Thou dost give us Thy Heart that we may love the Father and Thyself with the same heart and with the same love with which Thou invest us. We should, therefore, employ Thy Sacred Heart to offer Thee our adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and all our other duties with a reverence and love worthy of Thy infinite greatness.

What must we do to employ the great Heart that God has given us? We must do two things. First, whenever we adore, praise, thank and love God, or practise some virtue, or accomplish some action for His service, we must renounce our own heart which is poisoned with the venom of sin and of self-love. Secondly, we must unite ourselves to the love, charity, humility and all the holy dispositions of His Sacred Heart, so that we may be worthy to adore, love, praise, serve and glorify God with the Heart of God.

O my Saviour, extend the power of Thy eternal arm to separate me from myself and unite me to Thee. Pluck out my miserable heart and

(1). John 17, 23

(2). John 15, 9.

## MEDITATIONS

101 -

replace it with Thine own, enabling me to say: *Confitebor tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo.* ( 3 ) I will praise Thee and love Thee, my Lord, with my whole heart-with the great Heart of Jesus, which is my own heart.

O Heart all lovable and all loving of my Saviour, be Thou the Heart of my heart, the soul of my soul, the spirit of my spirit, the life of my life and the sole principle of all my thoughts, words and actions, of all the faculties of my soul, and of all my senses, both interior and exterior.

*Ejaculatory prayer:* O Heart all mine, I possess all things in possessing Thee!

*O Cor meum, Cor unicum, in te mihi sunt omnia!*

(3). Ps. 9, 2.

102 -

## SEVENTH MEDITATION

### The Most Profound Humility of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

#### FIRST POINT

#### SELF-ABASEMENT OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

HUMILITY is a virtue including an infinity of degrees because there are innumerable sources of humiliation. There are, however, three principal ones. The first is our nothingness which is a bottomless abyss of abjection and humiliation. The second is the infinite grandeur of God, for all

greatness carries with it lowliness in those who are inferior to it, and the greater the elevation, the greater is the demand of humiliation on the part of the inferior. That is why the supreme greatness of the majesty of God should impress on created beings an abasement infinite in itself. The third principal humiliation is sin. The least of our sins is an infinite abyss of abasement, and God could justly annihilate us for our smaller faults.

Self-abasement is the first effect that humility should produce in our heart. It operated prodigiously in the Heart of our divine Saviour because Jesus, as man, understood very clearly that He Himself was nothing and of Himself had only nothingness.

Secondly, His very clear perception of the immense grandeur of God held Him continually in a state of incomprehensible lowliness.

Thirdly, He realized that He was a Son of Adam, and that original sin is an immense ocean of sin. It is the very fountainhead of all the sins past, present and future in the whole world, even if it should last for thousands of years more. Jesus understood that if He had been merely man and had been born of an ordinary earthly mother, and if He had not been preserved at the moment of His conception, He

#### MEDITATIONS

103 -

would have been as capable, as the other children of Adam, of committing all manner of crimes. This held Him in a state of profound humiliation. Beyond this He saw Himself charged with all the sins of the world as if they had been His own. *Peccata nostra sua esse voluit*, says St. Augustine, and He saw Himself obliged to bear before God the humiliation of a number of crimes as great as the drops of water and grains of sand in the sea.

O Jesus, who could understand all the humiliations Thou didst bear on earth to destroy my pride? How is it possible that after all this, my heart can tolerate for one single instant this frightful monster?

#### SECOND POINT

##### HATRED OF THE HEART OF JESUS FOR THE GLORY AND ESTEEM OF THE WORLD

To know the second effect of humility in the Heart of our Redeemer, let us see His continual hatred for the esteem and glory of this world during the whole course of His life here below. He is the Only Son of God and is God equal to His Father. He is the King of glory, the sovereign Monarch of heaven and earth, who merits the homage and adoration of all creatures. If He were to display the palest ray of His majesty, the whole universe would fall prostrate at His feet to adore Him. But He permits none of His grandeur to appear, either at His birth or in the course of His life, not even after the Resurrection nor in the most adorable Sacrament where He is glorious and immortal. He fled when the Jews wished to make Him king, and declared that His kingdom is not of this world, so much did He detest the glory and honors of the world.

O Jesus, impress these sentiments upon my heart and grant that I may learn ever to esteem the praises of the world as poison from hell.



**THIRD POINT****LOVE OF THE HEART OF JESUS FOR HUMILIATION**

Recall to your mind all the humiliations, all the confusion, contempt, abjection, opprobrium and ignominies that our most adorable Saviour bore in His Incarnation, in His Birth, in His Circumcision, in His Flight into Egypt, and in all the mysteries of His Passion. All these humiliations constitute a magnificent feast that His divine love has prepared and all the ignominies are as delicious viands, upon which He has feasted and satisfied His extreme hunger for abasement.

Whence did this insatiable hunger proceed, if not from His infinite love for His Heavenly Father and for us? This love gave Him the incredible desire to be humiliated and considered as nothing, to atone for the infinite injury and the inconceivable dishonor the sinner had shown to God. The sinner tears Him from His throne so that he may put himself in His Creator's place, preferring his own satisfactions to God's good pleasure, his own honor to that of God and his own will to the divine will. This injury only a God can perfectly repair by His own abasement.

That is why the incomprehensible love of the Son of God for His Father not only obliged Him to suffer so many humiliations, but also brought Him to the abyss of ignominies to seek his joys and delights, to repair more perfectly the dishonor shown to His Father. His love compelled Him also to deliver us from the eternal pains of hell, to acquire for us everlasting bliss in heaven, to destroy our pride, the source of all our sins, and to establish in our souls that humility which is the true foundation of all virtues.

Infinite thanks, O my Jesus, be to Thy holy humility. Everlasting praise to the Eternal Father who exalted Thee as highly as Thou hast been humiliated and has given Thee a name above all other names. May every knee in heaven, on earth and in hell bend to adore and glorify Jesus Christ and may every tongue confess my Saviour, rejoicing in the immense and eternal glory of His Father

*Ejaculatory prayer:* Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, have mercy on us.  
*Jesu, mitis ejus humilis corde, miserere nobis.*

**EIGHTH MEDITATION****The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the King of Martyrs****FIRST POINT****SUFFERINGS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS BECAUSE OF OUR SINS**

ALL THE SUFFERINGS of the holy martyrs pale into insignificance in comparison to the infinite sufferings of the adorable Heart of the King of martyrs. If you could number all the sins of the universe, you would count the myriad sharp arrows that pierced the divine Heart of our Saviour with so many wounds. These wounds caused the Sacred Heart to burn with love for His Eternal Father, whom He saw outraged and dishonored by innumerable crimes. O my Saviour, I hate all my sins, because they are the detestable executioners that brought Thy most gentle Heart to martyrdom.

Again, picture to yourselves a countless number of miserable souls for whom our Saviour had an incredible love. He foresaw that, notwithstanding all His sufferings for their salvation, they would by their own fault be lost forever. This vision of the damned inflicted unutterable sorrow on the most charitable Heart of Jesus. O unhappy souls, why have you not loved Him, who has loved you more than Himself, since He has given His very life and blood for your salvation? O Dearest Jesus, give me all the hearts of these unfortunate souls, that I may love and praise Thee for them eternally.

106-

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

## SECOND POINT

### SUFFERINGS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS BECAUSE OF THE TRIALS AND TORMENTS OF THE MARTYRS AND CHRISTIANS

Recall to your minds all the sufferings, the agony, the trials and the torments of so many millions of martyrs and of all true Christians. All these afflictions are so many bleeding wounds for the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. His most benign Heart could suffer more than the tenderest of hearts because it was filled with an infinite charity for His beloved children. He had before His eyes all their crosses and sufferings. In the hour of affliction each one sought consolation from His adorable Heart. No human mind can understand the agonizing martyrdom suffered by this all paternal Heart in union with His heroic martyrs. This is expressed most remarkably in the words of the Prophet Isaias: *Vere dolores nostros ipse tulit*, (1) and also in the words of Saint Matthew: *Ipse nostras infirmitates accepit, et aegrotationes nostras portavit*. (2) Truly we can call the Sacred Heart the King of martyrs and the Glory of the Cross! How consoling it is for the afflicted to know that all their pain and sorrow have already been suffered by the most benign Heart of Jesus! He has borne all sufferings first out of love for His martyrs! Let us give ourselves also to Him to bear all our afflictions in union with immeasurable love with which He first suffered them.

## THIRD POINT

### SUFFERINGS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

All the other sufferings of our Saviour seem to diminish when compared to those borne by His divine Heart on the Cross. The

(1). Is. 53, 4.

(2). Matt. 8, 17

MEDITATIONS

107 -

sufferings of Calvary were so excruciating that the perfect body of our Saviour was broken with pain and sorrow, and His soul He commended into the hands of His Father. O my Saviour, what made Thee suffer so many torments, if it was not Thy infinite love for Thy Father and for us? Indeed, we can say that Thou hast died of loving sorrow and that Thy Heart has been torn and broken by sorrowing love for the glory of Thy Father and for our redemption. O most adorable Heart of Jesus, how shall I thank Thee for the excess of Thy bounty? Oh, that I could possess all the hearts of heaven and earth to sacrifice them in the flames of Thy love!

O Most Holy Father, how canst Thou refuse what anyone asks of Thee through the amiable Heart of Thy Son, broken with sorrow for love of Thee and for love of us? No, it is impossible. Rather wouldst Thou allow heaven and earth to disappear. It is, then, through this divine Heart overcome by

love and sorrow for me that I implore Thee, O Adorable Father, to take full and entire possession of my heart and to establish there perfectly and forever the reign of the holy love of Jesus and Mary.

Ejaculatory prayer:

Hail! Victim of all woes enthroned  
Upon the Cross, the Martyrs' King!  
Make Thou the Cross a joy intoned,  
The crown and glory that we sing.

Ave, dolorum victima,  
Centrum crucis, Rex Martyrum,  
Fac nostra sit Crux gloria,  
Amor, corona, gaudium.

108 -

### **NINTH MEDITATION**

#### **The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Heart of Mary**

##### **FIRST POINT**

##### **MUTUAL LOVE OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY**

THE VIRGINAL HEART of the Blessed Mother of Jesus has more love for her Dear Son than all the angels and saints together; thus the Sacred Heart of the Only Son of Mary is so full of love for His most loving Mother that He is more to her than all created things together.

Let us offer to Jesus the Heart and love of His Blessed Mother in reparation for all our want of love and service towards Him. Let us offer to His most worthy Mother, who is also our Mother, the Heart and love of her Son in satisfaction for our ingratitude and infidelity towards her.

##### **SECOND POINT**

##### **THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS GAVE THE HEART OF JESUS TO MARY, AND THROUGH HER TO US**

Not only is the Blessed Virgin the first object, after God, of the ardent love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, but the Sacred Heart is really the Heart of Mary for five principal reasons. The first three reasons are: 1. because the Eternal Father has given her the Heart of His Only-begotten Son as a father gives the heart of a son to his mother; 2. because the Son has given His most loving Heart to the most admirable of mothers; 3. because the Holy Ghost has given

MEDITATIONS

109 -

Mary the very spirit of love which unites the Blessed Trinity in the Sacred Heart of her Son. These Three Divine Persons continually and eternally give Mary the adorable Heart of the God-Man, so that she may give us her most precious gift, the Sacred Heart of her Divine Son.

Incessant and everlasting praise be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost for this infinitely precious gift that They have given to our Blessed Mother and through her to us. O Most Holy

Trinity, I offer Thee the most adorable Heart of Jesus and the most loving Heart of His Mother in thanksgiving for Thy infinite goodness in my regard. I also offer Thee, in union with those two most amiable Hearts, my own unworthy heart, with the hearts of all my brethren, humbly beseeching Thee to take full possession of them forever.

### THIRD POINT

#### OTHER REASONS WHY THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

The fourth reason why the Sacred Heart is truly the Heart of Mary is that the Eternal Father, having considered the Blessed Virgin from the very instant of her conception as the one chosen to be the Mother of God, gave her from the first moment of her life a love similar to His love for His Divine Son. According to many theologians, Mary had more love for Jesus at that moment than all the Seraphim will ever have. Therefore, Mary's incomparable love for Jesus drew Him into her sacred womb and into her Heart to rest there eternally as the Heart of her Heart and as a Divine Sun that sheds its celestial light into her soul and inflames it with divine fire.

The fifth reason why the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the heart Of Mary is that, at the moment of the Incarnation, she cooperated with the Blessed Trinity to form the human Heart of Jesus, which was formed of her virginal blood. The blood Of her holy Heart passed into the Heart of Jesus and received the perfection that was needed

110-

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

to form the Heart of the God-Man. This divinely human and humanly divine Heart dwelt in the sacred womb of Mary as a furnace of divine love, a furnace which transformed the Heart of Mary into the Heart of Jesus and made these two Hearts but one and the same Heart in a unity of spirit, affection and will.

The holy Heart of Mary was, therefore, always closely united to the Sacred Heart of her Divine Son. She always willed what He willed and also consented to act and to suffer so that the work of our salvation might be accomplished. Hence, the Fathers of the Church plainly assert that the Mother of the Saviour cooperated with Him in a very special way in the redemption of mankind. That is why our holy Redeemer told St. Bridget of Sweden, whose revelations have been approved- by the Church, that He and His holy Mother worked in perfect harmony, *uno corde*, for our salvation.

Thus the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Heart of Mary. These two Hearts are but one Heart, which was given to us by the Blessed Trinity and by our Blessed Mother, so that we, the children of Jesus and Mary, might have but one Heart with our Heavenly Father and our holy Mother and that we might love and glorify God with the same Heart, a Heart worthy of the infinite grandeur of His divine majesty.

*Ejaculatory prayer:* O Heart of Jesus and Mary, my most loving Heart!

*O Car Jesu et Mariae, Cor meum amantissimum!*

## Eight Other Meditations

### ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

#### FIRST MEDITATION

#### The Blessed Trinity Lives and Reigns in the Sacred Heart of Jesus

##### FIRST POINT

#### THE ETERNAL FATHER LIVES IN THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

CONSIDER that the Eternal Father is in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, bringing to birth His Well-beloved Son and causing Him to live there the same all-holy and divine life that He lives in His own adorable bosom from all eternity. He imprints there a perfect image of His own divine Fatherhood, so that this humanly divine and divinely human Heart shall be Father to all the hearts of the children of God. Therefore, we should look upon Him, love and honor Him as our Loving Father, and endeavor to imprint upon our own hearts a perfect likeness of His life and virtues.

O Good Jesus, engrave the image of Thy most holy Heart upon our hearts and make us live only by love for Thy Heavenly Father. Would that we might die of love for Thee, as Thou didst die of love for Thy Eternal Father!

##### SECOND POINT

#### THE DIVINE WORD LIVES AND REIGNS IN THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Consider that the Eternal Word is in that royal Heart, united with it in the most intimate union imaginable, the hypostatic union, which causes that Heart to be worshipped with the adoration that is due to God. He is there with a life that is somehow more helpful, if one may so speak, than His life in the Heart and bosom of His Father. The Word lives but does not rule in the Heart and bosom of the Heavenly Father; whereas He lives and rules in the Heart of the God-Man, ruling over all human passions which are centered in the heart so absolutely that they do not stir except by His order.

O Jesus, King of my heart, live and rule over my passions, uniting them with Thine, never allowing them to be used except under Thy guidance and for Thy glory alone!

##### THIRD POINT

#### THE HOLY GHOST LIVES AND REIGNS IN THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Consider that the Holy Ghost lives and reigns ineffably in the Heart Of Jesus, where He conceals the infinite treasures of the knowledge and the wisdom of God. He fills the Sacred Heart with all His gifts to a pre-eminent degree, according to His divine words: *Et requiescet super eum Spiritus Domini, Spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, Spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, Spiritus scientiae et pietatis, et replebit eum Spiritus timoris Domini.* (1)

Consider, finally, that these Three Divine Persons live and reign in the Heart of the Saviour, as if they were seated on the most high  
(I). Isa. 11, 2-3

MEDITATIONS

113-

throne of their love, in the primal heaven of their glory, in the paradise of their dearest delights. They there shed abroad, with inexplicable abundance and profusion, wonderful lights, and the burning fires and flames of their eternal love.

O Most Holy Trinity, infinite praise be to Thee forever for all the wonders of love that Thou dost work in the Heart of my Jesus! I offer Thee my heart, with the hearts of all my brethren, begging Thee most humbly to take entire possession of them, to destroy in them everything displeasing to Thee, and to establish there the sovereign rule of Thy divine love.

Ejaculatory Prayer: O Most Holy Trinity, eternal life of Hearts, reign in all hearts forever.  
O sacrosancta Trinitas, aeterna vita cordium, in corde regnes omnium!

114-

## **SECOND MEDITATION**

### **The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Sanctuary and the Image of the Divine Perfections**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS SUBSIST AND REIGN IN THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

LET US ADORE and contemplate all the perfections of the divine nature, subsisting and reigning in the Sacred Heart of Jesus: that is to say, the eternity of God, the infinity of God, His love, charity, justice, mercy, power, immortality, wisdom, goodness, glory, felicity, patience, holiness and all other perfections.

Let us adore these divine perfections in all the wonderful effects they produce in the divine Heart of the Son of God. Let us give wholehearted thanks for these manifestations, and offer them all th~ worship, glory and love which have been and shall be rendered to them eternally by that same Heart.

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS STAMP THEIR ETERNAL IMPRESS ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

Let us consider that those adorable perfections imprint their image and likeness on the divine Heart of Our Lord, in a manner infinitely more excellent than all human and angelic minds can conceive or express. The adorable Heart of Jesus bears within itself the image

MEDITATIONS

115-

of eternity by its perfect detachment forever from things fleeting and temporal and by its exceeding

great affection for things divine and eternal. It bears the image of immortality by Its infinite love for the Heavenly Father and for us, a love whose immensity reaches everywhere, in heaven, on earth and under the earth. If we consider the nature of that incomparable Heart, we shall see without difficulty that it bears within itself a living likeness of all the other perfections of the Godhead.

O wonderful Heart of Jesus, we offer Thee our hearts; impress upon them, we beseech Thee, some reflection of that divine likeness, so that in us may be accomplished the commandment of our divine Master: *Estote perfecti, sicut Pater vester caelestis perfectus est.* (1)

### THIRD POINT

#### THE DIVINE MERCY SHOULD BE THE OBJECT OF OUR VERY SPECIAL DEVOTION

Of all the divine perfections mirrored in the Sacred Heart of our Saviour we should have a very special devotion to divine mercy and we should endeavor to engrave its image on our heart. To this end three things must be done. The first is to pardon with all our heart and promptly forget the offenses done us by our neighbor. The second is to have compassion on his bodily sufferings, and to relieve and succor him. The third is to compassionate the spiritual misfortunes of our brethren, which are much more deserving of commiseration than the corporal ills. For this reason we ought to have great pity on the numbers of wretched souls who have no pity on themselves, using our prayers, our example and our teaching to safeguard them from the eternal torments of hell.

O most gracious and merciful Heart of Jesus, imprint on our hearts a perfect image of Thy great perfections, so that we may fulfil

(1). Matt. 5, 48.

116-

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

fulfil the commandment Thou hast given us: *Estote misericordes, sicut Pater vester caelestis misericors est.* (2)

Ejaculatory Prayer: O Holy God, O Strong God, O Immortal God, have mercy on us. Sanctus Deus, sanctus fortis, sanctus immortalis, miserere nobis!  
(2) Luke 6, 36.

117-

### THIRD MEDITATION

#### The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Temple, the Altar and the Censer of Divine Love

### FIRST POINT

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE TEMPLE OF DIVINE LOVE

THE HOLY GHOST, love uncreated and eternal, built this magnificent temple and fashioned it of the virginal blood of the Mother of love. It is dedicated to eternal love. It is infinitely more sacred, more noble and more venerable than all the temples material and spiritual in heaven and on earth. In this temple God receives worship, praise, and glory worthy of His infinite greatness. In this temple the

supreme Preacher continually teaches us most eloquently. It is an everlasting temple that shall have no end. It is the center of all holiness, incapable of any profanation. It is adorned with all the Christian virtues in the highest degree, and with all the perfections of the divine nature, as with so many living images of the Eternal Godhead.

Let us rejoice in the vision of all the splendors of this wonderful temple and all the glories there tendered to the divine majesty.

## **SECOND POINT**

### **THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS AN ALTAR OF DIVINE LOVE**

The Heart of Jesus is not only the temple, but it is also the altar of divine love. On that altar the sacred flame of omnipotent love burns night and day. On that altar the great High Priest Jesus continually

118-

#### **THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

offers to the Most Holy Trinity manifold sacrifices and supreme oblation.

First, He offers Himself as a sacrifice and victim of love, the most holy and precious victim that ever was or can be. He sacrifices utterly and entirely His body, His blood, His soul, His whole life, all His thoughts, all His words, all His actions and all that He suffered on earth. Moreover, He makes that sacrifice perpetually, with a love that is boundless and infinite.

Secondly, He sacrifices everything the Heavenly Father has given Him, namely, all rational and irrational creatures, animate and inanimate beings, which he immolates as so many victims in praise of His Father; but, above all, He sacrifices human beings, the good and the wicked, the blessed and the reprobate. The good He offers as victims of love to His divine goodness. The evil He immolates as victims of the wrath of God, to His awful justice: *Omnis victima salietur.*(1) Thus the great High Priest sacrifices all things to the glory of His Father on the altar of His Heart. Therefore, He alone may rightly say: *Laetus obtuli universa.* (2)

Let us offer ourselves to Him and beg Him to rank us with the victims of His love, to consume us as holocausts in the divine flames burning incessantly on the altar of His Sacred Heart.

## **THIRD POINT**

### **THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS A CENSER OF DIVINE LOVE**

The Sacred Heart Of Jesus is not only the temple and the altar, but also the censer of divine love. It is the golden thurible described in the eighth chapter of the Apocalypse, which St. Augustine interprets as the loving Heart of Jesus. In that precious censer all the worship, praise, prayers, desires and affections of all the saints are

(1). Mark 9, 48.

(2). 1 Para. 29, 17.

MEDITATIONS

119 -

placed, like so many grains of incense to be offered to God in the Heart of His Well-beloved Son,



ascending as a most pleasing odor to His divine majesty. There we also must place all our prayers, all our desires, all our devotions, and all the pious affections of our hearts, yes, our very hearts themselves, with all that we do and all that we are, beseeching the King of all hearts to purify and sanctify all these things and to offer them to His Father as a heavenly incense of sweet fragrance.

Thus the Sacred Heart of our Jesus is the temple, the altar, the censer, the priest, the victim of divine love, all for our sake, performing on our behalf the functions of those divine offices. O love so abundant! O my Saviour, how wonderful are Thy loving kindnesses! Ah!, what reverence and praise I should give to Thy loving Heart in return! O most blessed Heart of my Jesus, let me be naught but heart and love towards Thee and let all hearts on heaven and earth be immolated to Thy praise and glory!

Ejaculatory Prayer:

Hail, priest of hearts and victim, hail!  
Alone Thou equal art to God.  
Most worthy Temple; Holy Grail,  
And Altar, holiest to laud.

Ave, Sacerdos cordium,  
Ave, Deo par Victima,  
Templum Deo dignissimum,  
Et Ara sacratissima.

120 -

#### **FOURTH MEDITATION**

**The Sacred Heart of Jesus Loves Us with an Everlasting and a Boundless Love**

##### **FIRST POINT**

**THE SACRED HEART OF Jesus Loves Us WITH AN EVERLASTING Love**

THE DIVINE HEART of our Saviour is filled with eternal love for us. To realize this truth one should understand two things about eternity: first, that it has neither beginning nor end; secondly, that it comprises in itself all ages, past, present and future, all the years, months, weeks, days, hours and moments of the past, present and future, and that it comprises them in a fixed and permanent manner, holding all those things united and joined together in one indivisible point. That is how eternity differs from time. Time runs on incessantly; as one moment arrives, another elapses and is left behind, and so one never sees two moments of time together. But in eternity everything is permanent; whatever is eternal always remains of the same extension.

That is why the eternal love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for us comprises two elements. First, this incomparable Heart has loved us from all eternity, before we were and could have known and loved it, even in spite of the vision and knowledge that it had of all our offenses which were present to its vision as they are now. Secondly, the amiable Heart of Jesus loves us at every moment with all the love wherewith it has ever loved us and shall love us throughout all eternity. Thus we can see the difference between God's love and ours. Our love is a passing act; the love of God is constant. The love that

God has exercised towards us for a hundred thousand years remains in His Heart together with that which He will dispense a hundred thousand years from now. Eternity implies that in God there is nothing past nor future, but all is present, so that God loves us now with all the love wherewith He has loved us from all eternity and wherewith He will love us forever.

O eternity of love! O eternal love! If I had existed from all eternity, I should have been bound to love Thee from all eternity; and yet, my God, I have not begun to love Thee as I should. But at least let me begin now, O my Saviour, to love Thee as Thou wouldst be loved. O God of my heart, I give myself to Thee to be united to Thy ceaseless love for me from all eternity. I surrender myself to Thee to be united to the love wherewith Thou lovest Thy Father before all centuries, so as to love the Father and the Son with an eternal love.

## SECOND POINT

### THE SACRED HEART OF Jesus Loves Us WITH A BOUNDLESS LOVE

The loving Heart of Jesus loves us with a boundless love. The divine and uncreated love which possesses that adorable Heart, is nothing else but God Himself. Now, since God is unlimited, His love is also unlimited. Since God is everywhere, His love is everywhere, in all places and in all things. Therefore, the Sacred Heart of Jesus loves us not only in heaven, but He also loves us on earth. He loves us in the sun, in the stars and in all created things. He loves us in the hearts of all the denizens of heaven and in the hearts of all persons that have some measure of charity for us on earth. All love for ourselves existing in the hearts in heaven and on earth is a participation in the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Moreover, He loves us even in the hearts of our enemies despite the hatred they bear us. I even make bold to say that He loves us in hell, in the hearts of the devils and the damned, in spite of all their wrath and

122-

### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

hatred, since the divine love is everywhere, filling heaven and earth like the presence of God.

O boundless love, I plunge myself into thy fires and flames that fill all created beings, in order to love my God and my Saviour in all places and in all things. O Jesus, I offer Thee all the boundless love of Thy Heart, of the adorable Heart of Thy Divine Father, the lovable heart of Thy holy Mother, and of all the hearts that love Thee in heaven and on earth. I ardently desire that all creatures of the universe be transformed into flaming fires of love towards Thee.

#### *Ejaculatory Prayer:*

How late have I loved Thee, O goodness so ancient and yet so new, how late have I loved Thee.

*Sero te amavi, bonitas tam antiqua et tam nova, sero te amavi.*

**FIFTH MEDITATION**

**The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Source of the Life of the God-Man,  
of the Mother of God, and of the Children of God**

**FIRST POINT**

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF THE  
LIFE OF THE GOD-MAN**

THE ADORABLE HEART of our Saviour is the source of the life of the God-Man, and consequently is the source of all the thoughts and feelings of the Son of God on earth, of all the words He pronounced, of all the actions He performed, of all the sufferings He endured, and of the incomprehensible love wherewith He did and suffered all things for our salvation. Therefore, it is to Thy loving Heart, O my Jesus, that our obligation is due. What shall we do to thank Thee? We can do nothing more pleasing to Thee than to offer Thee thy most divine Heart. I offer it then to Thee, my Saviour, in union with the infinite love wherewith it hath accomplished so many wonderful things for our Redemption.

**SECOND POINT**

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF THE LIFE  
OF THE MOTHER OF GOD**

The Sacred Heart Of Jesus is the source of the life of Mary, the Mother of God. When that admirable Mother was carrying her Be

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

loved Son in her blessed womb, her virginal Heart was the source of the natural bodily life of her divine Child, but the Heart of that adorable Child was, at the same time, the source of the spiritual and supernatural life of His most worthy Mother. Hence the divine Heart of the Only Son of Mary was the source of all the pious thoughts and feelings of His Blessed Mother, of all the sacred words she spoke, of all the good deeds she performed, of all the virtues she practised, and of all the pains and sorrows she suffered in order to cooperate with her Beloved Son in the work of our Salvation.

Praise eternal, O my Jesus, to Thy divine Heart! O my Redeemer, in thanksgiving for the great wonders of grace that Thy filial Heart hath wrought in Thy glorious Mother, I offer her maternal Heart flaming with love for Thee.

**THIRD POINT**

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE OF THE  
CHILDREN OF GOD**

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the source of life of all the children of God. Since it is the source of the life of the Head, it is also the source of life of the members; and since it is the source of life of the Father and the Mother, it is the source of life of the children. That is why we should regard and honor that benign Heart as the source and origin of all the good thoughts in the minds of all Christians, of all the holy words that have issued from their lips, of all the virtues that they have practised and of all the toil they have borne for their sanctification as Christians.

O my Saviour, may all these things be transmuted into immortal praise to Thy most Sacred Heart O Jesus, since Thou hast given me that very Heart to be the source of my life, let it be, I beseech Thee, the sole source of all my feelings and affections, of all the faculties and functions of my soul, and of all the use I make of my interior

MEDITATIONS

125 -

and exterior senses! In fine, let it be the soul of my soul, the spirit of my spirit, and the Heart of my heart

Ejaculatory Prayer: O Heart of Jesus, principle of all good, to Thee be praise and glory for ever.

O Cor Jesu, Principium omnium bonorum, tibi laus, tibi gloria in aeternum!

126 -

### SIXTH MEDITATION

#### The Three Hearts of Jesus Which Are But One Heart

#### FIRST POINT

#### THE DIVINE HEART OF JESUS

WE HAVE THREE, HEARTS to adore in our Saviour which, nevertheless, are but one single Heart by virtue of the hypostatic union.

The first is His divine Heart existing from all eternity in the bosom of His Adorable Father, which is but One Heart and one love with the love and Heart of His Father, and which, with the Heart and love of His Father, is the source of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when He gave us His Heart, He also gave us the Heart of His Father and of His Adorable Spirit; hence His marvelous words: *Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos*. "I love you with the same Heart and the same love wherewith I love my Father." (1) My Father loves me with an eternal, boundless and infinite love; I love you also with a love that is eternal, boundless and infinite. My Father causes Me to be what I am, Godlike to Himself and Only Son of God; and I make you to be by grace and participation ~what I am by nature and essence, that is to say, Gods and children of God, seeing that you have but One and the Same Father as I, a Father who loves you with the same Heart and the same love wherewith He loves me: *Dilexisti eos sicut et me dilexisti*. (2) My Eternal Father has constituted Me universal heir of all His goods: *Constituit haeredem universorum*; (3) and I make you My co-heirs: *Haeredes Dei et cohae* (1). John 15, 9.  
(2). John 17, 23  
(3). Heb. x, 2.

MEDITATIONS

127 -

*redes Christi*; (4) I promise to give you possession of all My treasures: *Super omnia bona sua constituet eum*. (5). My Father finds all His pleasure and delight in Me; and I take My delight and pleasure in you: *Deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum*. (6)

O goodness! O love! O God of love, how is it possible for the hearts of men to be so hard and cold towards Thee who art all aflame with the fire of love towards them? Oh, let all my joy and delight be in thinking of Thee, in speaking of Thee, in serving and loving Thee! O my All, let me be wholly

Thine, and do Thou alone possess all that is in me.

## SECOND POINT

### THE SPIRITUAL HEART OF JESUS

The second Heart of Jesus is His spiritual Heart, which is the will of His holy soul, a purely spiritual faculty, whose function is to love what is lovable and to hate what is hateful. But the divine Saviour so perfectly sacrificed His human will to His Divine Father that He never exercised it while on earth and will never exercise it even in heaven, but He sought uniquely and solely His Father's will, according to those words of His: "I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." (7) "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent me." 8 Now, it is out of love for us that Our Lord renounced His own will, in order to perform the work of our salvation solely by the will of His Father, in particular when He prayed to Him in the Garden of Olives: *Pater, non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat*, "Father, not my will but thine be done!" (9)

(4). Rom. 8, 17

(5). Matt. 24, 47.

(6). Prov. 8, 31.

(7). John 5, 30.

(8). John 6, 38.

(9). Luke 22, 42.

128-

### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

O God of my heart, if for love of me Thou didst sacrifice Thy utterly holy and divine will, how much more should I renounce my own will for love of Thee, wholly depraved and corrupted as it is by sin! Ah, let me renounce it with all my heart forever, imploring Thee most humbly, O my adorable Redeemer, to crush it like a serpent full of venom and to establish in its place the rule of Thy divine will.

## THIRD POINT

### THE CORPOREAL HEART OF JESUS

The third Heart of Jesus is the Sacred Heart of His deified body, a furnace of love divine and of incomparable love-for us. Since the corporeal Heart is hypostatically united to the Person of the Word, It is enkindled with flames of infinite love for us. Its love is so intense that it constrains the Son of God to bear us continually in His Heart; to fix His eyes ever upon us; to take such a great interest in the smallest things concerning us that He verily numbers all the hairs of our head, allowing not one of them to perish; to ask His Father that we might make our eternal abode within His bosom: *Pater, quos dedisti mihi, volo ut ubi sum ego; et illi sint mecum*; (10) and to assure us that, if we vanquish the enemies of His glory and of our salvation, He will make us sit with Him on His own throne, and will let us enter into possession of the same kingdom and the same glory that His Eternal Father has given Him.

Oh, how abundant and rapturous is the love of Jesus for such faithless and ungrateful men as we! O Jesus, my love, either take away my life or let me live only to love Thee, to praise and glorify Thee unceasingly. Let me die a thousand deaths rather than willingly do anything to grieve Thee! Thou hast three Hearts which are but one and the same Heart, a Heart wholly devoted to loving me continually. Would that I possessed all the hearts in the universe that I might consume them in Thy holy love!

(10). John 17, 24.

MEDITATIONS

129 -

Ejaculatory Prayer: I love Thee, O Most Loving Jesus, I love Thee, O infinite goodness, I love Thee with my whole heart and I wish to love Thee more and more.

*Amo te, amantissime Jesu, amo te, bonitas infinita, amo, te ex toto corde meo, et magis atque magis amare volo.*

130 -

**SEVENTH MEDITATION**  
**The Miracles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

**FIRST POINT**

**MIRACLES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IN THE  
REALM OF NATURE**

SET BEFORE YOUR EYES the realm of nature, the great universe comprising so many wonderful things, namely, the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars and comets, the four elements, of which the air is peopled by such a great variety of birds; the earth, replete with its marvelous abundance of animals, trees, plants, flowers, fruits, metals, stones; the sea, filled with such a prodigious multitude of fishes. Add to that the creatures of reason, men and angels; consider them in the natural state of their creation. What a miracle to have made this amazing universe out of nothing! It is not a miracle, it is a world of miracles without number. Count all the creatures made by God and you will count so many miracles that God has performed in drawing them from the abyss of nothingness. Number all the moments that have elapsed since the creation of the world and you will number so many miracles, since preservation is a continuous creation. There is also an infinite number of other wonders perpetually wrought in the governance of this universe. Now, who is the author of those innumerable miracles? It is the inconceivable goodness and the incomprehensible love of the divine Heart of that adorable Word, mentioned by St. John the Evangelist in the first words of his Gospel: *Omnia per ipsum facta sunt*. It is because of His love for us that He has made all things, even though He had always before His eyes the ingratitude, the offenses and the crimes

MEDITATIONS

131 -

without limit which He was obliged to suffer and still endures every day from us.

That is why all those things which He created are so many tongues and voices preaching to us unceasingly the ineffable charity of His most gracious Heart and exhorting us to adore Him, to love Him and to glorify Him in every possible manner.

Heaven and earth, says St. Augustine, and all things contained therein, cease not to tell me that I should love my God: *Caelum et terra et omnia quae in eis sunt, non cessant mihi dicere ut amem Deum meum*.

**SECOND POINT**

**MIRACLES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IN THE  
REALM OF GRACE**

Picture the realm of grace, which comprises an infinitude of wonders incomparably surpassing those of the world of nature. It contains all the miracles of sanctity that have been wrought on the earth by the Holy of holies; all the wonders that transpired in the Mother of grace; the entire Church Militant; all the Sacraments, with all the marvelous effects which they produce; all the wonderful things that divine grace has effected and will effect in the lives of all the saints that have been and that shall be in this world. What is the source of all those wonders? Is it not the inconceivable charity of the blessed Heart of our Redeemer, who has established and constantly preserves this amazing world of grace on earth, for love of us?

O my Jesus, let all these wonders of Thy most loving Heart and all the powers of Thy divinity and Thy humanity be employed to bless Thee and praise Thee unceasingly and eternally: *Benedicite omnes virtutes Domini Domino*(1).

(1). Dan3, 61.

132-

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

### THIRD POINT

#### MIRACLES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IN THE REALM OF GLORY

Raise your mind and your heart to heaven, to contemplate the realm of glory, the fair, great and glorious city of Heaven, of which all the citizens are forever freed from all kinds of tribulations and showered with countless blessings. Behold that innumerable army of the blessed, *quam nemo dinumerari poterat* (2) who are more dazzling than the sun, who possess incalculable riches, joys unspeakable, and glories indescribable. Consider the inconceivable happiness which awaits you in that heavenly Jerusalem, since the Holy Ghost declares that never has eye seen, nor ear heard, nor human heart understood nor can ever understand the infinite treasures that God has prepared there for them that love Him. Now, what has made heaven and who is the author of all the miracles contained therein? It is the intense love of the Sacred Heart of the Son of God, who has merited it by His blood, who has filled it with an ocean of unutterable delights, to give us the full and perfect possession of it eternally.

O my Saviour, graciously let me offer Thee, I beg Thee, as an act of thanksgiving, all the glories and wonders of paradise! If I were possessed of a hundred thousand paradises, how gladly would I, by the help of Thy grace, divest myself of them so as to sacrifice them to Thy eternal praise!

*Ejaculatory Prayer:* Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him: and his wonderful works to the children of man.

*Confiteantur Domino misericordiae ejus, et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.*

(2). Apoc. 7. 9.

133-

### EIGHTH MEDITATION

#### The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is a Furnace of Love, Purifying, Illuminating, Sanctifying, Transforming and Deifying

### FIRST POINT

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS A FURNACE OF LOVE FOR US

THE MOST LOVING HEART of our benign Saviour is a burning furnace of most pure love for us; a furnace of purifying love, of illuminating love, of sanctifying love, of transforming love, and of deifying love. His love is a purifying love, in which the hearts of holy souls are purified more perfectly than gold in the furnace; an illuminating love, which scatters the darkness of hell with which the earth is covered and lets us into the wonderful brilliance of heaven; *de tenebris vos vocavit in admirabile lumen suum* (1) a sanctifying love, which destroys sin in our souls in order to establish there the kingdom of grace; a transforming love, which transforms serpents into doves, wolves into lambs, beasts into angels, children of the devil into children of God, children of wrath and malediction into children of grace and blessing; a deifying love, which makes gods of men, *ego dixi dii estis*, letting them share in the holiness of God, His mercy, His patience, His goodness, His love, His charity and His other divine perfections: *Divinae consortes naturae*. (2)

O divine love of my Jesus, I give myself wholly to Thee; purify me, enlighten me, sanctify me, transform me into Thee, that I may be naught but love for my God.

(1). 1 Pet. 2, 9.

(2). 2 Pet. 1, 4.

134-

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

## SECOND POINT

### THE FURNACE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS RADIATES LOVE TO ALL BEINGS

The august Heart of Jesus is a furnace of love which spreads its fiery flames in all directions, in heaven, on earth, and throughout the whole universe. Its fiery flames would have consumed the hearts of the Seraphim and would have enkindled all the hearts of earth, if the terrible chill of sin had not set in. Those divine fires transform all the hearts of heavenly lovers into so many furnaces of love for Him who is all love for them.

All creatures on earth, even those which are senseless, inanimate and irrational, feel the effects of the incredible goodness of that magnificent Heart, since He loves all things that are and hates nothing that He has made, sin being the only thing that He did not make, the only object of His hatred: *Diligis omnia quae sunt, et nihil odisti eorum quae fecisti*. (3)

Jesus has an extraordinary love for men, as well for the good as the wicked, for His friends as for His enemies, for whom He has such intense charity that even the overwhelming torrents and floods of their innumerable sins are not able to extinguish it: *Aquae multae non potuerunt extinguere charitatem*. (4) Not a moment elapses that He does not grant them manifold natural and supernatural favors, corporal and spiritual, even while they are offending Him and dishonoring Him by their misdeeds.

The divine fires of the precious Heart of the Son of God reach even into hell, to the devils and the damned, preserving their being, life, and the natural perfections which He gave them at creation and not punishing them as much as they have deserved for their sins, for which His divine justice might very justly chastise them much more severely than it does: *Non est qui se abscondat a calore ejus*. (5)

(3). Wisdom 11, 25.

(4). Cant. 8, 7.

(5). Ps. 138, 7



O sacred fires and flames of the Heart of my Saviour, rush in upon my heart and the hearts of all my brethren, and kindle them into as many furnaces of love for my Most Loving Jesus!

### THIRD POINT

#### INTENSITY OF THE LOVE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Imagine all the charity, all the affections, all the tender and intimate feelings of all the hearts that the omnipotent hand of God might fashion as being collected and united in one heart large enough to contain them. Would they not all be capable of forming one unimaginable furnace of love? But realize that all the fires and flames of such a furnace would not make one tiny spark of the immense love with which the infinitely loving Heart of Jesus is inflamed towards you, O Christian soul.

O furnace infinitely to be desired! Who will grant me to be plunged into that burning fire? O Mother of Jesus, O all ye angels, O all ye holy saints of Jesus, I give myself to you all and to each in particular, and I give you also all my brothers and sisters in Christ, and all the inhabitants of earth, that you may cast us all into the abyss of that sacred furnace! Attend and hear, O vast furnace of love! A tiny straw asks most humbly and earnestly to be plunged, buried, lost, devoured and consumed wholly in thy sacred flames and thy holy fires forever and ever!

*Ejaculatory Prayer:* O fire which ever burnest and is never extinguished. O love which is ever fervent and never grows tepid, inflame me wholly that I may love Thee wholly.

*O ignis qui semper ardes et nunquam extingueris. O amor qui semper ferves et nunquam tepescis, accende me totum, ut totus diligam te!*

**MASS  
AND OFFICE OF  
THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

On July 29, 1672, St. John Eudes addressed a circular letter to his spiritual children, the Priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, enjoining them to celebrate a solemn feast in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on October 20. He sent them for this occasion a special Office and Mass, which he had composed two years before. Both these liturgical documents had been previously approved by the Archbishop of Rouen and by the Bishops of Rennes, Evreux, Bayeux and Lisieux. The Saint was authorized to celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart in the houses of his Orders as a double of the first class with octave. The use of the Office and Mass was also permitted on the first Thursday of the month, unless it was hindered by an office of nine lessons.

The Office of the Sacred Heart is a complete office with lessons for the eight days of the octave. Invitatory, hymns, antiphons, versicles, lessons, responsaries and collect-everything is proper in this office as in that of the great feasts of the Church. Only the Office of the Feast Day with its English translation is included in this edition. The Latin hymns were composed by St. John Eudes and the other parts were borrowed from Sacred Scripture and from the Fathers of the Church. By combining and adapting them to the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the Saint was able to endow his office with a definite personal character and make it at once highly original and most unified. The dominant thought is that which Our Lord develops in the discourse after the Last Supper, when He reminds His Apostles of the love He has never ceased to show them and exhorts them to abide in His love.

**MASS**

137 -

The Mass brings out the same thought as the Office. The Sequence, an imitation of the *Lauda Sion*, is noteworthy. The author here celebrates, with transports of joy and love, the glories of the Sacred Heart. The depth of thought, the exuberance of feeling, and the perfection of form make it a real masterpiece. Writers who have dealt with both the Office and the Mass are unanimous in their praise.

"These offices," said Cardinal Satolli in speaking of the two Offices of the Sacred Hearts composed by St. John Eudes, "are marked by such sweet and intense piety that only the heart of a saint can devise such forms." (1)

In his book on *La Mère de Saumaise*, Father de Curley, S.J., examines the Mass of St. John Eudes. "If we had to give a name to this Mass," he says, "we shall call it the *Mass of Fire*. It is eternal love breaking forth in notes of affectionate supplication." (2)

After studying this Office and Mass, Father Bainvel writes: "In them we have, indeed, an original work that in parts, by the harmonious blending of its wealth of profound thought, of poetic rapture, of unction and solid piety, all inspired by the Scriptures and the Fathers, recalls the admirable Office of the Blessed Sacrament. With regard to the general sentiments, these breathe the most perfect spirit of devotion to the Sacred Heart, especially the spirit of love, the love of man who would respond to the love of God.... The Mass is wholly a Mass of love, wholly filled with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with His love for God and for us, with our love for Him. It is indeed a sublime and beautiful liturgical work, by means of which Fr. Eudes' influence was extended to the societies most deeply imbued with the spirit of the devotion of Paray, and will continue to be felt therein." (3)

After the establishment of the Feast of the Sacred Heart in the Eudistic Orders in 1672, it was

adopted by other religious Congregations, notably the Benedictine Nuns of Montmartre, the Benedictine Nuns of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Religious of Our Lady of Corbeil. The Office and Mass used by these communities were those

(1). Quoted by Rev. A. LeDoré in his Circular, January 6, 1909, p. 6.

(2). Quoted by Lebrun in *Le B. Jean Eudes et le Culte du Coeur de Jésus* (Paris, 1917), P. 39

(3). Bainvel, *Devotion to the Sacred Heart* (London, 1924), P. 269-277.

138 -

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

of St. John Eudes. Even in many convents of the Visitation Order, after the miraculous apparitions of Paray-le-Monial, the liturgical works of St. John Eudes were in use until 1750.(4)

The Eudist Fathers and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge and of the Good Shepherd continue to our day to celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart on October 20, with the Office and Mass of their Founder. Only when, in consequence of the vigorous liturgical campaign of Dom Guéranger, it was declared that the Bishops had no right to authorize new feasts and offices in their dioceses and that the authorizations granted by them were null and void, did the Eudist Orders have recourse to the Holy See for a special approval. On December 12, 1861, the Congregation of Rites authorized them to preserve the Feasts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Holy Heart of Mary established by their Founder, and to celebrate them with the Mass and Office composed by him.

(4). LeBrun, op. cit., p. 142 et seq.

# MASS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

October 20

## Introit

Gaudeamus omnes in Domino diem festum celebrantes in honorem Cordis amantissimi Redemptoris nostri Jesu Christi, cujus amorem adorant Seraphim psallentes in unum: Ecce cujus imperium manet in aeternum. Ps. 110. Confitebor tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo in consilio justorum et congregatione, Gloria Patri. Gaudeamus.

## Oratio

Pater misericordiarum, et Deus totius consolationis, qui propter nimiam charitatem qua dilexisti nos, dilectissimi Filii tui Cor amantissimum nobis ineffabili bonitate donasti, ut te uno corde cum ipso perfecte diligamus; praesta, quaesumus, ut cordibus nostris inter se et cum Corde Jesu in unum consummatis, omnia nostra in humilitate et caritate ejus fiunt, atque, ipso interveniente, justa cordis nostri desideria compleantur. Per eundem Dominum.

## Lectio Ezechielis Prophetæ (c- 36)

Haec dicit Dominus Deus: Sanctificavi nomen meum magnum, ut  
140 - THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

sciant gentes quia ego Dominus, ait Dominus exercituum, cum sanctificatus fuero in vobis coram eis. Tollam quippe vos de gentibus et congregabo vos de universis terris et adducam vos in terram vestram. Et effundam super vos aquam mundam, et mundabimini ab omnibus inquinamentis vestris et ab universis idolis vestris mundabo vos. Cor novum et spiritum novum ponam

## Introit

Let us rejoice in the Lord, while celebrating this Festival in honor of the Most Loving Heart of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, whose love the Seraphim adore with one harmonious chant. Lo! His Kingdom is established forever. Ps. 110. I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; in the council of the just, and in the congregation. Glory.

## Collect

O Father of mercies and God of all consolation, who by the exceeding love with which Thou hast loved us, hast given us with ineffable goodness, the Heart of Thy Beloved Son, so that having but one heart with Him, we may love Thee perfectly; grant, we beseech Thee, that our hearts, being consumed in Unity among themselves and with the Heart of Jesus, we may perform all our works in His humility and charity and that by His mediation the just desires of our hearts may be accomplished through the same Lord.

## Lesson from the Prophet Ezechiel (c- 36)

Thus saith the Lord God: I will sanctify my great name that the

Gentiles may know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord of hosts, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the Gentiles and will gather you together out of all the countries and will bring you into your own land. And I will pour upon you clean water and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness; and I will cleanse you from all your

in medio vestri. Et auferam cor lapideum de carne vestra, et dabo vobis cor carneum; et Spiritum meum ponam in medio vestri.

**Graduale** (Gal. 4; Phil. 2; Eph. 5)  
Quoniam estis filii Dei, misit Deus Spiritum et Cor Filii sui in corda vestra clamantem: Abba Pater. Hoc sentite in cordibus vestris quod et in corde ipsius: et ambulate in dilectione, sicut et ipse dilexit nos.

V. (Joan. 15) Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos: et hoc est praeceptum meum, ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos. Manete ergo in dilectione mea.

Alleluia. V. (Ps. 56; 2 Mach.)

Paratum Cor meum, Deus Cordis mei, paratum Cor meum, ut quae placita sunt tibi faciam semper, corde magno et animo, volenti.

### **Sequentia**

Gaudeamus exultantes,  
Cordis Jesu personantes  
Divina praecordia.

idols. And I will give you a new heart and a new spirit within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in the midst of you.

**Gradual** (Gal. 5; Phil. 2; Eph. 5)  
And because you are sons of God, God hath Sent the Spirit and Heart of His Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Have in your hearts the sentiments of His Heart; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.

V. (John 15) As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: and this is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Abide in my love.

Alleluia (Ps- 56; 2. Mach.)

My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready to do all that thou willest, with a generous heart and resolute will.

### **Sequence**

Exultations joyfully upraising  
Songs the Heart of Jesus praising,  
In jubilant ecstasy.

MASS

141 -

Haec est dies veneranda,	This the festal day of beauty,
In qua Patris adoranda	Bring we to God's Heart our duty:
Laudamus praecordia.	Offerings and homage suited.
Cor amandum Salvatoris,	Heart of mercy and of love,
Mellis fortem et amoris,	Fount of sweetness from above,
Corda cuncta diligant.	Let all hearts to Thee be moved!
Cor beatum summi Regis,	Blessed Heart of Sovereign King,
Cor et vitam nova legis,	Who New Law and life dost bring:
Omnes Linguae concinant.	Let all tongues unite to sing!
Sit laus plena, sit immensa,	Let our praise be full and boundless,
Sit perennis, sit accensa,	Be immortal, skyless, groundless,
Ardoribus pectoris !	Kindled by the flames of love.
Laudet, canat orbis totus,	Let the world with praises ring,
Color, amet tota virtus	Let the powers of mankind sing,
Et cordis et corporis!	Soul and body now combine.
Ora, manus, sensus, vigor,	Strength and senses, voice and
Fides viva, purus amor,	hand,
Cor divinunt consonent!	Living faith, pure love, command
	All to laud this heart divine.
Flammis sacris inflammata	Kindled by His sacred fire

Corda voces atque facta,	Hearts and lips and deeds conspire
Cor amoris praedecent!	Love and praise abroad to spread.
Cor mirandum Redemptoris,	Heart of our Redeemer wondrous,
Coadunans terram coelis,	Linking earth to heaven splendrous,
Unitatis speculum.	Mirror fair of unity[
Digna sedes Trinitatis,	Worthy throne of Holy Trinity,
Plenitudo Deitatis,	Plenitude of the Divinity,
Amoris miraculum.	Miracle of love supreme.
Amoris Evangelium,	Loves evangel, conflagration
Puri cordis incendium,	Of the pure heart's pure elation;
Magna Dei gloria.	Deity's great glory.
Cxli nectar vivificans,	Nectar from the skies, vivific,
Cordis manna deificans;	Manna of the heart deific;
Amor et laetitia.	Charity and joyousness.
Cleri sacri praesidium,	Shield unto the sacred priesthood,
Rector benigne cordium,	Ruling hearts from best to least
Nostra rege pectora!	good,
	Us Thy children rule.

142 -

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Fons aeternae Pietatis,	Fount eternal, Source of piety,
Ardens fornax caritatis,	Flaming furnace, love's satiety,
Corda flammis devora!	With Thy fires our hearts consume!
Domus amoris aurea,	Golden house of glowing love,
Terris amantum flammea,	Tower flaming from above,
Caetus nostri lex ignea,	Law our hearts burn to embrace,
Fons perennis gratiae.	<i>Fountain of eternal grace.</i>
Cor, thesaurus sanctitatis,	Heart, of sanctity the treasure,
Abyssus humilitatis,	And humility's vast measure,
Thronus Dei voluntatis,	Throne where dwells God's holy
Et centrum clementiae.	pleasure,
	And center of mercy sweet.
Paradisus Beatorum,	Paradise of all the Blest,
Consolator afflictorum,	Comforter, affliction's rest,
Pax et salus peccatorum,	Peace that saves the <i>sinner's fall</i> ,
Cor omnibus omnia.	Loving heart all things to all.
O Jesu, raptor cordium,	O Jesus, ravisher of hearts,
Amore flagrans mentium,	Pierce us with Thy flaming darts,
Cor tuum trahat omnium	Draw our being all to Thee,
Mentes et praecordial	Minds and feelings utterly.
O Cor, summa benignitas,	O Heart with tenderness supreme,
Immensa liberalitas,	Boundless, generous, like 2 stream,
Incomprehensa caritas,	Charity unplumbed we deem.
Cordis vera felicitas,	Hearts in darkness the true beam,
Cor esto supplicibus!	Have to suppliants all a heart.
Fac nos, Jesu flammescere	Make us, Jesus, follow steadfast
Cordis tui caritatem,	Thy Heart's burning love in ear
Et divinam pietatem,	nest,
Summam quoque sanctitatem	Its most godlike piety
Sanctis sequi moribus!	And its holy sanctity.

0 beata Trinitas,	Let our lives but image Thee.
Cordis Jesu caritas,	0 Most Blessed Trinity,
Immensae clementiae	Heart of Jesus' Charity,
Immensae sint gratiae,	To Thy boundless mercy be
aeterna sit gloria.	Thanks returned in boundless fee.
Amen dicant omnia!	Let us all say: Amen, So be it!
Amen, Alleluia.	God be praised. Fiat.

MASS

143-

***Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem (c. 15)***

In illo tempore: dixit Jesus discipulis suis: Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos. Manete in dilectione mea. Si praecepta mea servaveritis, manebitis in dilectione mea, sicut et ego Patris mei praecepta servavi et maneo in ejus dilectione. Haec locutus sum vobis, ut gaudium meum in vobis sit, et gaudium vestrum impleatur. Hoc est praeceptum meum, ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos. Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis. Vos amici mei estis, si feceritis quae ego praecipio vobis. Jam non dicam vos servos: quia servos nescit quid faciat Dominus ejus. Vos autem dixi amicos, quia omnia quaecumque audivi a Patre meo nota feci vobis. Non vos me elegistis, sed ego eligi vos, et posui vos, ut eatis, et fructum afferatis, et fructus vester maneat; ut quodcumque petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, det vobis. Haec mando, vobis ut diligatis invicem,

***Credo***

***Offertorium (ps. 19)***

Memor sit Dominus omnis sacrificii tui, amantissime Jesu; et holocaustum tuum pingue fiat; tribuat

***Continuation of the holy Gospel according to St. John (c- 15)***

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love: as I also have kept my Father's commandments and do abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and your joy may be filled. This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do the things that I command you. I will not now call you servants for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends: because all things, whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you. You have not chosen me: but I have chosen you; and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit; and your fruit should remain; that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you. These things I command you that you love one another.

***Creed***

***Offertory (Ps. 19)***

May the Lord be mindful of all thy sacrifices: and may thy burnt offering be made fat. May He give

tibi secundum Cor tuum, et omne  
consilium tuum confirmet.

144 -

**Secreta**

Cordibus nostris, omnipotens  
Deus, Spiritum et Cor dilectissimi  
Filii tui Jesu benignus infunde: ut  
nos, uno spiritu et uno corde cum  
ipso, unam eandemque hostiam  
offerentes, tibi etiam nosmetipsos,  
atque omnia nostra immolare me-  
reamur. Per eundem Dominum.

**Praefatio Nativitatis**

**Communio.** Per Cor tuum, aman-  
tissime Jesu, amoris et doloris im-  
petu pro nobis in morte disruptum,  
exaudi clamantes ad te, et miserere  
nobis, et posside cor nostrum in  
aeternum.

**Postcommunio.** Exaudi, quaesu-  
mus, clementissime Pater, preces  
familiae tuae toto corde tibi pros-  
tratae, et praesta: ut amantissimi  
Cordis dilectissimi Filii tui arden-  
tissima caritas cordis nostri penetra-  
lia infundens, divinum nobis fervo-  
rem praebeat, nosque suiparticipes  
potenter efficiat: ut, eodem Corde  
sacratissimo interveniente, corda  
nostra in igne tui amoris, atque in  
flamma aeternae caritatis, tibi jugiter  
immolentur, et justa eorum deside-  
ria compleantur. Per eundem Domi-  
num.

thee according to thy own heart;  
and confirm all thy counsels.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

**Secret**

Almighty God, bestow upon our  
hearts the spirit of the Heart of  
Jesus, Thy beloved Son, so that we  
who offer in the same spirit and  
heart with Him, one and the same  
sacrifice, may merit to be immo-  
lated in Thy honor with all that  
belongs to us. Through Our Lord.

**Preface of the Nativity**

**Communio.** O most loving Je-  
sus, by Thy Heart, which was  
broken for us at the hour of Thy  
death, by the violence of Thy suf-  
fering and love, hear our cries to  
me, have mercy on us and possess  
our hearts forever.

**Postcommunio.** Hear, we be-  
seech Thee, O most merciful  
Father, the prayers of Thy servant  
prostrate before Thee, and grant  
that the burning charity of the  
most loving Heart of Jesus, Thy  
beloved Son, penetrating to the  
very depths of our heart, may en-  
kindle in us a heavenly ardor and  
make us share abundantly in His  
virtue that by the intercession of  
this same holy Heart our hearts  
may be continually immolated in  
the fire of Thy love and in the  
flame of eternal charity, and their  
just desires accomplished. Through  
the same Lord.



## OFFICE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

## FIRST VESPERS

*Psalm. de Dom., sed loco ultimi,      Psalms for Sunday. Last psalm.*

*Psalm. Laudate Dominum Omnes Laudate Dominum*

*genies Ant. z. Jesus coming into the*

*Ant. 1. Jesus, ingrediens mundum, dicit: In capite libri scriptum est de me, ut faciam voluntatem tuam: Deus meus volui, et legem tuam in medio Cordis mei, alleluia.*

*Ant. 2. Venite ad me, filioli: in caritate enim perpetua dilexi vos: ideo attraxi vos ad Cor meum, fontem omnium bonorum, alleluia.*

*Ant- 3. Ego diligentes me diligo, et deliciae mez esse cum filiis hominum, alleluia.*

*Ant- 4- Cor meum caritas est; qui manet in caritate, in Corde meo manet, et Cor meum manet in eo, alleluia.*

*Ant- 5. Qui vicerit, dabo ei sedere mecum in throno meo: et scribam super eum nomen meum, et cor unum mecum habebit in aeternum, alleluia.*

world said: In the head of the Book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will; I have willed it, O my God, and Thy law is in the midst of My Heart, alleluia.

*Ant. 2. Come to Me, My little children, for I have loved you with an eternal love; therefore, have I drawn you to my Heart, which is the source of all good, alleluia.*

*Ant. 3- I love those who love me and my delight is to be with the children of men, alleluia.*

*Ant 4- My Heart is charity itself; he who dwelleth in charity dwells in My Heart and My Heart dwelleth in him, alleluia.*

*Ant- 5. He who is victorious shall sit on my throne; I shall write my name upon him and he shall have but one heart with Me for all eternity, alleluia.*

## 146 - THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

*Capitulum (3 Regnum 9)*

Sanctificavi mihi donum hanc, ut ponerem nomen meum ibi in sempiternum, et erunt oculi mei et Cor meum ibi cunctis diebus.

*Hymnus*

Jesu, Paterni Pectoris  
Et Virginis Cor unicum,  
Cordis tui mirabilis  
Omnes canant praeconium.

I

O Cor, amator Numinis,  
Amore Patris igneum,  
Amore flagrans Virgims,  
Amore nostri saucium.

Nam sponsa, Corde saucia,

Chapter (3 Kings 9)

I have sanctified this house, to put my name there for ever; and my eyes and my Heart shall be there always.

*Hymn*

O Heart of Jesus, solely one,  
Of Father and of Virgin born,  
Receive the praises now begun:  
Let men with song Thy Heart adorn!  
Heart, lover of the Godhead here,  
The Father draws Thy flame above,  
Heart burning for the Virgin fair,  
And pierced for us with ardent love.

Thy Spouse, whose heart is torn

Te vulneratum vulnerat:  
Te dissecat mors impia,  
Et hasta dire perforat.

Ave, dolorum victima,  
Centrum Crucis, Rex Martyrum:  
Fac nostra sit Crux gloria,  
Amor, corona, gaudium.

O Cor, amore saucium,  
Amore corda saucia:  
Vitale nectar coelitum,  
Amore nos inebria.

Tu caritatis hostia,  
Mortalium salvatio,  
Aperta cunctis gratia,  
Et omnium redemptio.

OFFICE

Venite, gentes, currite  
Ad Cor Patris mitissimum:  
Comes amat, confidite,  
Amoris est incendium.

En cernitur patescere  
Fornax amoris flammea:  
Flammis volo me tradere,  
Me devoret mors ignea.  
Amor, Pater clementiae,  
Amor Redemptor omnium,  
Amor, Deus, fons gratiae,  
Regnes in omne saeculum. Amen.

V. Sic nos dilexit Jesus, ut daret  
nobis Cor suum.

R. Gratias ei super inenarrabili  
donis, eius.

*Ad Magnificat*

*Ant.* Gaude, Maria, Mater Re-  
demptoris: ecce vulnerasti et rapu-  
isti Cor ejus, et factum est Cor  
tuum: ipsumque nobis dedisti, ut  
cum Patre et Matre cor unum ha-  
beamus, alleluia.

with pain,  
Doth wound Thee in the wounds  
Thou hast.  
Then wicked death rends Thee in  
twain,  
The piercing lance strikes deep at  
last.  
Hail! Victim of all woes enthroned  
Upon the Cross, the Martyrs' King!  
Make Thou the Cross a joy en-  
throned,  
The crown and glory that we sing.  
O Heart, transfixed with wounds  
of love,  
Pierce every heart with love for  
Thee.  
Refresh our thirst from high above  
With nectar sweet and heavenly.  
The host of love divine art Thou,  
Salvation for all mortals here,  
The way of grace lies open now,  
For all redemption is brought near

Draw nigh, all peoples, hasten near,  
And in God's gentle heart confide.  
He loves each one with love so dear,  
It burns like flames spread far and  
wide.

Behold how to our yearning orbs  
Love's furnace opens glowing wide!  
We long to burn till it absorbs  
Our being in its flaming tide.  
O Love, of mercy sweet the Sire,  
O Love, Redeemer of all men,  
O Love, of God the grace and fire,  
Forever and forever reign! Amen.  
V. Jesus so loved us as to give us  
His Heart.

R. Let us give thanks for this  
ineffable gift.

*At the Magnificat*

*Ant.* Rejoice O Mary, Mother of  
the Redeemer. Behold Thou hast  
wounded and ravished His Heart,  
which has become thine, and thou  
hast given it to us, that we may  
have but one heart with our Father  
and our Mother. Alleluia.

147 -

*Oremus*

Pater misericordiarum, et Deus  
totius consolationis, qui, propter  
mimiam caritatem qua dilexisti nos,  
dilectissimi Filii tui Cor amantissi-  
mum nobis inegabili bonitate do-  
nasti, ut te uno corde cum ipso per-  
fecte diligamus: praesta, quaesumus;  
ut cordibus nostris inter se et cum  
Corde Jesu in unum consummatis,  
omnia nostra in humilitate et cari-  
tate ejus fiant, atque, ipso interve-  
148 - THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

niente, justa cordis nostri desideria  
compleantur. Per eundem Domi-  
num.

*Let us pray*

Father of mercy and God of all  
consolation, who by the exceeding  
love with which Thou hast loved  
us, hast given with ineffable good-  
ness, the Heart of Thy beloved Son,  
so that having but one heart with  
Him we may love Thee perfectly,  
grant, we beseech Thee, that our  
hearts, being consumed in unity  
among themselves and with the  
Heart of Jesus, we may perform

all our works in His humility and  
charity, and that by His mediation,  
the just desires of our hearts may  
be accomplished. Through the same  
Lord.

**MATINS**

Invit. Jesu Cor amantissimum, ve-  
nite, adoremus: Qui est amor et  
vita nostra.

Psalmus. Venite, exsultemus Dom-  
ino.

*Hymnas*

Verbum caro, rex cordium,  
Cordis tui miracula  
Linguis canantur omnium.  
Miraculorum maxima.

Ave, Patris mirabilis  
Et Unici Cor unicum;  
Origo sacri Flaminis,  
Terra: polique vinculum.  
Quam magna fers mysteria,  
Immensa gaza coelitus:  
Amoris arca regia,  
Ecclesiae sacrarium!

Pars nostra, spes et gaudium,  
Coetusque nostri gloria:  
Cor, flamma, dux, oraculum,  
Origo, finis, omnia.

Invit. Come, let us adore the most  
loving Heart of Jesus, our love  
and our life.

Psalm- 94- Come, let us praise the  
Lord.

*Hymn*

O Word made flesh, of hearts the  
King,  
Let all, who see the wonders great  
Of Thy vast Heart, with one voice  
sing;  
The grandeur of thy Heart relate.  
All hail, O Heart of wondrous line,  
Of Son and Father twain but one,  
O source of Holy Spirit, nine  
To bind together earth and sun.  
What mysteries great Thou dost en-  
fold,  
O boundless treasure from above  
O royal ark of love foretold  
the Church's holy place of love.  
Thou art our portion, hope and  
weal,  
Thy glory of our multitude;  
Our source and end, our heart and  
zeal,  
Our leader and our plenitude.

Quam mira Jesu gratia!  
 Nos Corde Into diligit;  
 Solvamus ut nos debita,  
 Nobis suum Cor tradidit.

O qualis haec dignatio!  
 Dat Cor Mariz Filius,  
 Dat Cor Mariae Filio,  
 Utrumque dant volentibus.  
 O te volo, Cor flamneum,  
 Tu semper intus ardeas:  
 Fons omnium charismatum  
 Totum per orbem diffluas.

O Cor meum, Cor unicum,  
 Virtus, salus, fiducia,  
 Thesauri, Sol, et jubulum,  
 In te mihi sunt omnia.

Amor, Pater clementiae,  
 Amor, Redemptor omnium,  
 Amor, Deus, fons gratiae,  
 Regnes in omne saeculum.  
 In Prima Nocturna

Ant. Christus Jesus, a sinu Patris  
 amore numo egressus, exsultavit ut  
 gigas ad currendam viam: nec est  
 qui se abscondat a calore dilec-  
 tionis Dei.

Psalmus 18 Coeli enarrant.

Ant. Memor sit Pater omnis sac-  
 rificii tui, O Rex amoris, et tribuat  
 tibi secundum Cor tuum.

150 -

*Psalmus 19. Exaudiat te.*

Ant. Desiderio desideravi meip-  
 sum et in victimam et in escam  
 dare vobis: et desiderium Cordis  
 mei tribuit mihi Pater.

*Psalmus 20. Domine, in virtute.*

V. Sic nos dilexit Jesus, ut claret

We marvel at His wondrous gr2cel  
 His Heart He gives with total love,  
 From bondage frees the human  
 race

And pays our debts to heaven above.

Oh, what a noble act is done!

The Son to Mary gives His Heart

And Mary hers unto the Son;

To all who will they both impart.

O Heart of flame, I long for Thee

To burn forevermore within;

That Thou the source of graces free

Should overwhelm the whole

world's sin.

O Thou my Heart, sole Heart,

unique,

Salvation, strength, and treasure,

all;

My sun and joy and trust to seek

In Thee, and finding Thee find all

O Love, of mercy sweet the Sire,

O Love, Redeemer of all men,

O Love, of God the grace and fire,

Forever and forever reign. Amen.

First Nocturn

Ant. Jesus Christ with exceeding  
 love, came forth from the bosom of  
 His Father, He rejoiced as a giant  
 to run His course, nor is there any  
 one who is hid from the heat of  
 His love.

Ant. May the Father be mind-  
 ful of all Thy Sacrifices and reward  
 Thee according to the desires of  
 thy Heart.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Ant. With desire I have desired  
 to give myself to you as Victim  
 and as Food; and the Father has  
 granted me the desire of My Heart.

V. Jesus so loved man as to give

nobis Cor suum.

R. Gratias ei super inenarrabili dono ejus.

*Lectio 1: De Ezcchiele Propheta*

(c- 36)

Sanctificabo nomen meum magnum ut sciant gentes quia ego Dominus, ait Dominus exercituum, cum sanctificatus fuero in vobis coram eis. Tollam quippe vos de gentibus, et congregabo vos de universis terris, et adducam vos in terram vestram. Et effundam super vos aquam mundam, et mundabimini ab omnibus inquinamentis vestris, et ab universis idolis vestris mundabo vos. Et dabo vobis cor novum, et spiritum novum ponam in medio vestri: et auferam cor lapideum de carne vestra, et dabo vobis cor carneum, et spiritum meum ponam in medio vestri.

R. Elegi et vocavi Filium meum Jesum, virum voluntatis in me, et secundum Cor meum. Quia placita sunt mihi facit semper corde magno et animo volenti.

V. Paratum Cor meum, Pater sancte, paratum Cor meum, ut faciam omnes voluntates tuas.-Quae.

OFFICE

*Lectia 11: De Canticis Cantorum*

(c. 3)

Ferculum fecit sibi rex Salomon de lignis Libani: columnas ejus fecit argentas, reclinatorium aureum, ascensum purpureum: media caritate contravit, propter filias Jerusalem. Egredimini et videte, filiae Sion, regem Salomonem in diademe quo coronavit illum mater sua in die desponsationis illius et in die lactitiae Cordis ejus.

us His Heart.

R. Thanks to Him for this ineffable gift.

Lesson 1: Ezechiel

(C- 36)

I will sanctify my great name that the Gentiles may know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord of hosts, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the Gentiles and will gather you together out of all the countries and will bring you into your own land. And I will pour upon you clean water and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness: and I will cleanse you from all your idols. And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in the midst of you.

R. I have chosen and have called my Son, Jesus, a man of my will and according to my own Heart, for He always does what is pleasing to Me with generous Heart and resolute will.

V. My Heart is ready, Holy Father, my Heart is ready to do all that Thou wilt.

151 -

*Lesson 11: Canticle of Canticles*

(c. 3)

King Solomon hath made him a litter of the wood of Libanus. The pillars thereof he made of silver, the seat of gold, the going up of purple: the midst he covered with charity for the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart.

R. Dabo volais spiritum et cor novum; Spiritum et Cor meum ponam in medio vestri: Ut diligatis Deum corde magno et animo volenti.

V. Quoniam estis filii Dei et membra Christi, posuit Deus Spiritum suum et Cor Filii sui in medio vestri; ut cum Patre et Capite vestro sit vobis Spiritus unus et cor unum.-Ut.

*Lxctio III: Ibid. (c- 4)*

Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni. Coronaberis de capite Amana, de vertice Sanir et Hermon, de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum. Vulnerasti Cor meum, soror mea sponsa, vulnerasti Cor meum, in uno oculorum tuorum, et in uno crine colli tui. Veni in hortem meum, soror mea sponsa: messui myrrham meam cum aromatibus meis: comedi favum cum melle meo, bibi vinum meum cum

152-

lacte meo: comedite, amici, et bibite, et inebriamini, carissimi.

R. Pater misericordiarum, et Deus totius consolationis, benedicant tibi omnes virtutes tuae. Quia sic nos dilexisti, ut Filium tuum unigenitum, et omnia cum ipso nobis donares.

V. Ut cum ipso Cor unum habentes, te uno corde diligamus, secundum magnitudinem bonitatis tuae.-Quia. Gloria Patri. Quia.

In Secundo Nocturno

Ant. Unam petii a Domino hanc requiram: ut in die malorum ab-

R. I will give you a new spirit and a new heart and will put my spirit and my heart in the midst of you that you may love God with a generous heart and resolute will.

V. For you are children of God and members of Christ. God has put His spirit and the Heart of His Son in the midst of you that you may be one in heart and spirit with your Father and head that you may love God with a generous Heart and resolute will.

*Lesson III: Ibid. (c- 4)*

Come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus, come; thou shalt be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Sanir and Hermon, from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of leopards. Thou hast wounded my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse; Thou hast wounded my Heart, with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of thy neck. Come into my garden, my Sister, my Spouse, I have gathered

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

my myrrh with aromatical spices. I have eaten the honeycomb with my honey. I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, my friends, drink and be inebriated, my dearly beloved.

R. Father of Mercies and God of all consolation, may all Thy powers bless Thee, for Thou hast so loved us to give us Thy only Begotten Son and all things together with Him.

V. That having but one heart with Him, we might love Thee with one heart, according to Thy infinite goodness. For Thou hast so loved us as to give us Thy only Begotten Son and all things together with Him. For Thou hast.-Glory be the Father.

Second Nocturn

Ant. One thing only have I asked of the Lord: this will I seek that

scondat et protegat me in abscondito Cordis sui.

PSALMUS 26. Dominus illuminatio mea.

Ant. In capite Libri scriptum est de me, ut faciam voluntatem tuam: Deus meus, volui, et legem tuam in medio Cordis mei.

Psalmus 39, Expectans expectavi Dominum.

Ant. paratum Cor meum, Pater sancte, paratum Cor meum: confitebor tibi in cithara Cordis mei in sempiternum.

OFFICE

153 -

Psalmus 56, Miserere mei, Deus, miserere mei.

\* Sicut dilexit me Pater et ego dilexi vos.

R. Et vos manete in dilectione mea.

Lectio IV: Sermo Sancti Bonaventurae Episcopi. Ex tractatu de Passione Dom. super istud Joan. "Ego sum vitis vera." (c- 3)

Foderunt Judaei et perfoderunt, non solum manus, sed et pedes, latus quoque; et sanctissimi Cordis intima furoris lancea perforaverunt, quod jamdudum amoris lancea fuerat vulneratum. Vulnerasti, inquit in Canticis amoris sponsus, Cor meum, soror mea, sponsa, vulnerasti Cor meum. Vulnerat Cor tuum, Domine Jesu, sponsa tua, amica tua, soror tua. Quid necessarium fuit illud ab inimicis tuis ultra vulnerari? Quid agitis, o inimici? Si vulneratum est Cor dulcis Jesu, quid secundum vulnus apponitis? An ignoratis quod uno vulnere tactum Cor emoritur, et fit insensibile? Mortuum est Cor Domini Jesu, quia vulneratum: possedit vulnus amoris; possedit mors amoris Domini Cor, sponsi Jesu: quomodo mors altera. introibit?

He may shelter me from evil and hide me in the very depths of His Heart.

Ant. In the Head of the Book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will; I have willed it and Thy law is in the midst of My Heart.

Ant. My heart is ready, Holy Father, my heart is ready. I shall sing Thy praises forever.

V. As the Father has loved me and I have loved you.

R. And you shall dwell in my love.

Lesson IV: Sermon of Saint Bonaventure Bishop. From the Treatise on the Passion of Our Lord. Commentary on Saint John's words: "I am the true vine." (c- 3)

The Jews dug and pierced not only His hands and feet, but also His side; they pierced to the very core with the lance of rage His most Holy Heart which had long since been wounded by the lance of love. Thou hast wounded my heart, says the spouse of love in the Canticles; my Sister, my Spouse, thou hast wounded my heart, O Lord Jesus, Thy Spouse, Thy beloved, Thy sister, wounds Thy heart; why was it necessary that it should be wounded by thine enemies? What are you doing, O ye enemies? Since the sweet Heart of Jesus has been wounded, why do you add a second wound? Do you not know that the heart dies from one wound and becomes insensible? The Heart of the Lord Jesus is dead, for it has been wounded. It has been

R. Omnia mihi tradita sunt a  
Patre men. Et sic Pater dilexit mun-  
dum, ut Filium suum unigenitum

154 -

daret; itaque omnia vestra mea  
sunt. \* Pracebete ergo mihi cor ves-  
trum, filioli, et dabo vobis Cor  
meum.

V. Cor nostrum in manu tua, O  
Domine Jesu, secundum magnitudi-  
nem brachii tui posside illud in  
aeternum. Praebete.

Lectio V

Vide quanta sit vis amoris do-  
mum Cordis obtinentis, et per vul-  
nus dulcissimum occidentis non so-  
lum in Domino Jesu, sed et in  
servis ipsius. Veniamus ad Mar-  
tyres: feriuntur, et gaudent; occi-  
duntur, et triumphant. Quare? Quia  
morte caritatis, intus in corde, jam-  
dudum mortui peccatis, mortui  
mundo, tanquam insensibiles facti,  
nec minas nec tormenta sentire  
potuerunt. Sed quia semel venimus  
ad Cor dulcissimum Jesu, et bonum  
est nos hic esse, ne sinamus nos fa-  
cile avelli ab eo, de quo scriptum  
est: Recedentes a te in terra scriben-  
tur. Accedamus ergo ad eum, et ex-  
sultabimus, et laetabimur in illo,  
memores Cordis ipsius.

R. Cor Jesu, verum altare holo-  
causti, in quo ignis divinus semper  
accenditur. \* Afferte, filii Dei, af-  
ferte corda vestra, ut in hoc altare  
Deo jugiter immolentur.

V. Dirumpe, Domine, vincula  
mea, et tibi sacrificabo hostium lau. I

wounded by love. ne Heart of  
the Lord Jesus has died of love for  
His Spouse. Why should another  
death enter in?

R. All things have been given  
to Me by My Father and as the  
Father so loved the world as to

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

give His only Begotten Son, so afl  
you have is mine and all I have is  
yours. Therefore, My children, give  
me your hearts and I will give you  
Mine.

V. Our Heart is in Thy hands, O  
Lord Jesus, according to the might  
of Thy arm; possess it forever.

Lesson V

Behold how great is the violence  
of His Heart's love, obtaining a  
dwelling and bringing death by  
means of this sweetest wound not  
only to the Lord Jesus, but also to  
His servants. Look at the Martyrs;  
they are tortured and they rejoice;  
they are slain and they triumph.  
Why? Because their hearts by the  
death of charity have long since  
been dead to sin, dead to the world;  
they had become insensible so that  
they could feel neither threats nor  
torments. But since we have once  
come to the Sweetest Heart of Jesus,  
and it is good for us to be there, let  
us not suffer ourselves to be easily  
drawn away from it, of whom it is  
written: "Withdrawing from Thee  
they will be written on the ground."  
Let us hasten to Him, therefore,  
and exult and rejoice in Him being  
mindful of His Heart.

R. The Heart of Jesus is a true  
sacrificial altar on which the Divine  
fire is ever burning. Children of  
God, bring your hearts that they  
may be constantly immolated to  
God on this altar.

V. O Lord, loose my bonds and  
shall offer Thee a sacrifice of



dis et amoris.-Afferte.

OFFICE

Lectio V1

O quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare in Corde Jesu! Bonus thesaurus, bona margarita Cor tuum, bone Jesu, quam fosso agro tui corporis invenimus. Quis hanc margaritam abjiciat? Quin potius dabo, omnia, comes cogitationes et affectus mentis commutabo, et comparabo illam mihi, jactans omnem cogitatum meum in Cor Domini Jesu, et sine fallacia illud me enutriet. Ad hoc templum, ad haec sancta sanctorum, ad hanc aram testamenti adorabo, et laudabo nomen Domini, dicens cum David: Inveni cor meum, inquit, ut orem Deum meum. Et ego inveni Cor regis, fratris et amici, benigni Jesu. Et numquid non adorabo? Orabo, utique; Cor enim, illius meum est. Audacter dicam, si enim caput meum Christus est quomodo quod capitis mei est, non meum est? Sicut ergo oculi capitis mei corporalis, mei oculi vere sunt; ita et spiritualis Cor, Cor meum est. Bene ergo mihi: ego vere cum Jesu cor unum habeo. Et quid mirum, cum multitudinis credentium fuerit cor Unum?

R. Fornax amoris Cor tuum, o amantissime Jesu.\* Afferte corda vestra in hanc fornacem, ut in igne divini amoris et in flamma aeternae caritatis consumantur.

V. Beati qui in ignem aeternum

156-

hujus fornacis mittuntur~Afferte.  
Gloria Patri.-Afferte.

praise and love.

155-

Lesson V1

Oh, how good and delightful it is to dwell in the Heart of Jesus! Thy Heart, O good Jesus, is a precious treasure, a precious pearl which we have found by digging the field of Thy Body. Who will cast aside this pearl? Nay, rather, I will give all I have, I will exchange all my thoughts and desires and purchase it. I will cast all my care on the Heart of the Lord Jesus and He will provide for me without fail. I will adore in this temple, this Holy of Holies, this Ark of the Testament, and I will praise the Name of the Lord, saying, with David, I have found my heart that I may pray to my God. And I have found the heart of my King, my Brother, my Friend, the benign Jesus, and why shall I not adore?" Assuredly I shall pray. For His Heart is mine. I will say it boldly, for if Christ is my Head, is not what belongs to my Head mine? Therefore, as the eyes of my corporal head are truly my eyes, so is my spiritual heart my heart. Therefore, it is well with me: truly I have but one Heart with Jesus and what wonder that there should be but one heart with the multitude of believers.

R. Thy Heart, O most loving Jesus, is a furnace of love. Bring your hearts to this furnace that they may be consumed in the fire of Divine Love and in the flames of eternal charity.

V. Blessed are they who are

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

placed in the eternal fire of this furnace. Glory be the Father.

In Tertio Nocturno

*Ant.* Accedamus ad Cor altissimum Jesu, ut per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso, exaltemus et diligamus Deum, secundum multitudinem magnitudinis ejus.

Psalmus 63. *Exaudi, Deus.*

*Ant.* Qui adhaeret Domino Jesu, unum cor et unus Spiritus est: et de immenso thesauro Cordis ejus accipiet immensa bona.

Psalmus 72. *Quam bonus Israel Deus.*

*Ant.* Turbatum et anxiatum est Cor meum: deficit in dolore vita mea, et anni mei in gemitibus, propter nimiam caritatem qua dilexi vos.

Psalmus 142. *Domine exaudi orationem meam.*

V. Vivat Cor Jesu, Rex cordium.

R. Et regnet super omnia corda in aeternum.

Lectio VII: Lectio Sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem (Cap. x5)

In illo tempore: Dixit Jesus discipulis suis: Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos; manete in dilectione mea. Et reliqua.

*Homilia sancti Ioannis Chrysostomi (In Joann. Homil. 76.)*

Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego dilexi vos. Hic jam magis secundum hominem loquitur. Nam qui mori

OFFICE

voluit; qui servos, inimicos, hostes, non tanto honore habere dignatus est, et in coelum adduxit, quomodo dilectionis mensuram ostendit? Si ergo vos diligo, confidite; sed ne inde negligentes faceret, vide quomodo eos rursus excitat: Manete, inquit, in dilectione mea. Hoc in vestra est potestate. Quomodo autem hoc erit? Si praecepta mea servaveritis, sicut ego praecepta Patris mei servavi. Considera autem quanta eos auctoritate alloquatur; non enim dixit: Manete in dilectione Patris, sed mea. Inde veto ne

Third Nocturn

*Ant.* Let us hasten to the most holy Heart of Jesus, that through Him, and with Him, and in Him, we may praise God according to the greatness of His Majesty.

*Ant.* He who follows Jesus, our Lord, is one with Him in heart and spirit and will receive great gifts from the vast treasury of His Heart.

*Ant.* My Heart is troubled and anxious, my life is spent in sorrow and my years in groaning on account of the exceeding love where with I have loved you.

V. Live, Heart of Jesus, King of Hearts.

R. And reign over all hearts for ever.

Lesson VII: The Gospel of St. John (C- 15)

At that time Jesus said to His disciples: "As the Father has loved me and I have loved you; Abide in my love.

*Homily of St. John Chrysostom*

As the Father has loved Me and I have loved you. Now here He speaks more after the manner of

man; for, in willing to die, in deigning to hold slaves and enemies in such honor and in bringing them to Heaven, He showed the measure of His love. If, therefore, I love you, have confidence; but lest He make them negligent, see how He again encourages them; abide, He says, in my love. This is in your power. But how shall this be? If you keep My commandments as I have kept the commandments of My Father. Consider with what authority He speaks to them, for He does not Say: dwell in the

dicerent: Quando nos omnibus inimicos reddidisti, tunc nos dimittis, tunc discedis; hoc negat; sed ita eis, modo velint, conglutinari dicit, ut palmes viti.

R. Thronus meus flamma ignis: fluvijs igneus rapidusque egreditur a facie mea. Et ego ignis consumens, ignem veni mittere terram. Et quid volo nisi ut accendatur.

V. O ignis qui semper ardes, et nunquam extingueris. O amor qui semper ferves, et nunquam extingueris! O amor qui semper ferves, et nunquam tepescis, accende me totum, ut totus diligam te!-Et.

#### Lectio Vill

In me, inquit, respicite. Diligit me Pater, et tamen mors acerbissima mihi subeunda proponitur. Non igitur vos nunc relinquo, quod non diligam. Nam si ego mo-

158 -

rior, nec tamen propterea a Patre non amari conjicio; sic neque vos, ob discessum meum, perturbari oportet. Si in dilectione mea manseritis, nihil vobis nocere poterit. Magnum namque et inseparabile quiddam est dilectio, quae non tantum verbis, sed re exhibenda est. Itaque cum ipse nos Deo reconciliaverit, in amore perstemus. Cum t diligit ipse inceperit, nos saltem prosequamur. Cum ipse non sui commodi gratia, nullius enim eget, nos saltem ad nostram, utilitatem diligamus. Cum ipse inimicos, nos saltem eum, qui amicus est, amore prosequamur.

R. O admirabilis Cordis Jesu caritas, qui pro crucificentibus se

love of My Father, but dwell in my love. Then lest they say with truth: first, Thou makest the world our enemy and then Thou dost cast us off and abandon us. This He denies; but He says that He is as closely united to them, provided they wish it, as the branches to the vine.

R. My throne is flaming fire; a fiery and swift flowing stream comes forth from My Face, and I consuming fire have come to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, but that it be enkindled.

V. O fire which ever burnest and is never extinguished, O Love which is ever fervent and never grows tepid, inflame me wholly that I may love Thee wholly.

#### Lesson VIII

Look upon me, He says. He Father loves Me, and yet it is de creed that I must suffer a most cruel death. Therefore, I am not leaving you because I do not love

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

you. For if I die I do not, therefore, consider that I am not loved by the Father; so neither should you be disturbed on account of my departure. If you abide in My love no harm can come to you. For love is mighty and close-clinging and has to be shown not only by the lips but from the very depths of the heart. So since He has reconciled us to God, let us at least continue. Since He loved us not for His own advantage, for He has need of no one, let us by all means love to our advantage. Since He loved His enemies let us love him who is our Friend.

R. O admirable charity of the Heart of Jesus, who didst pray for

Oravit, dicens; \* Pater, dimitte illis,  
non enim scium quid faciunt.

V. Filioli, ponite corda vestra in  
caritate Cordis mei, ut diligatis in-  
imicos vestros, et oretis pro perse-  
quentibus vos-Pater.-Gloria  
Patri.

#### Lectio 1X

Haec locutus sum vobis, ut gau-  
dium meum in vobis sit, et gau-  
dium vestrum impleatur; hoc est,  
ne discedatis a me, neve a cursu  
desistatis. Vos amici mei estis, si  
feceritis quae praecipio vobis. Jam  
non dico vos servos, quia servus  
nescit quid faciat Dominus ejus;  
vos autem dixi amicos, quia om-  
nia quae audivi a Patre meo, nota  
feci vobis. Nihil aliud his verbis  
innuit, quam maximi amoris indi-

#### OFFICE

cium, quod arcana Patris cum eis  
communicaverit. Cum autem omnia  
dicit, de his intelligendum quae eos  
audire conveniat. Ecce quot modis  
suam proponit dilectionem, cum et  
secreta Patris eis aperuerit, cum in  
amore praevenit, cum pro ipsis tot  
mala patitur, cumque perpetuo  
cum ipsis se permansurum ostendit.

Te Deum laudamus.  
AD LAUDES

*Ant. 0* altitudo divitiarum cari-  
tatis Jesu! quam incomprehensibilia  
sunt opera ejus, et amabiles viae  
ejus!  
Psalmi de Dominica.

*Ant. 0* amor admirabilis, tu Filium  
Dei pro nobis de sinu Patris egredi,  
in sinu Matris infantem fieri, cum  
hominibus in terris conversari, et  
mortem pati acerbissimum fecisti!

Thy executioners, saying Father,  
forgive them, for they know not  
what they do.

V. Children, place your hearts in  
the charity of My Heart, that you  
may love your enemies and pray  
for your persecutors. Father, for  
give them-Glory be to the  
Father.

#### Lesson IX

These things have I spoken to  
you, that My joy may be in you and  
that your joy may be full; depart  
not from me nor tire of the race.  
You are My friends if you do what  
I command you. I do not now call  
you servants, for the servant know-  
eth not what His Master doeth; but  
I have called you friends, for all  
things which I have heard from My  
Father I have revealed to you.  
These words are nothing else than

159 -

a proof of the greatest love in that  
He should communicate to them  
the secrets of His Father. But when  
He says "all" we are to understand  
"what it was meet for them to  
hear." See in how many ways He  
proves His love since He reveals to  
them the secrets of the Father. He  
is beforehand with them in love.  
He endures so many sufferings for  
them and declares that He will  
remain with them forever.

Te Deum laudamus.  
LAUDS

*Ant. 0* the depths of the riches  
of the charity of Jesus, how incom-  
prehensible are His works, how  
amiable His ways!  
Psalms for Sunday.

*Ant. 0* admirable love, non  
didst draw the Son of God from  
the bosom of His Father, to be  
come man for us, in the womb of  
His Mother, to speak with men

alleluia.

*Ant.* O dilectio ineffabilis! Ecce Cor Jesu, amoris et doloris impetu, pro nobis in morte disruptum est. Gratias ei super inenarrabili caritate ejus.

*Ant.* O amor amorum! carnem suam nobis in cibum, sanguinem in potum, in pretium, in lavacrum, et semetipsum in Patrem, in sponsum, in Caput, in Cor, et in prae-mium donavit aeternum. Gratias ei super immensis Cordis ejus donis.

160 -

*Ant.* Benedictum Cor tuum, O bone Jesu, super quod discipulus dilectus recumbens fluente Evangelii amoris tui, nobis effundenda, potavit, alleluia.

Capitulum: (3 Reg. 9)

Sanctificavi mihi domum hanc, ut ponerem nomen meum ibi in sempiternum, et erunt oculi mei et Cor meum ibi cunctis diebus.

Hymnus

Quid Corde Regis cordium  
Cui potest amantius?  
Cordi Patris charismatum  
Quid Corde Nati carius?

Ave, Cor, aula Numinis,  
Thesaurus, caelum, gloria,  
Amor Parentis Virginis,  
Amor triumphans omnino.

Memento, dilectissime,  
Amoris ardentissimi,  
Qui Patris ortum pectore  
Pro me dedit te Virgini.

Mundi recedant somnia:  
Amor meus, Rex unicus,  
Solus mihi sit omnia,  
Jesum volo, nil amplius.  
O summa Jesu caritas,  
Vultu benigno respice,

upon earth and to suffer a most cruel death.

*Ant.* O ineffable love, behold the Heart of Jesus crushed for us in death by the violence of His love and sorrow. Infinite thanks to Him for His ineffable charity.

*Ant.* O love of loves! He has given us His flesh to eat, His Blood to drink, to redeem us and to cleanse us; He has given Himself as Head, Heart and eternal reward. Thanks to Him for the immense gifts of His Heart.

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

*Ant.* Blessed is Thy Heart, O good Jesus, on which the Beloved disciple reposing, drank the flowing waters of the Gospel which He afterwards poured out for us, alleluia.

Chapter: (3 Kings 9)

I have sanctified this house, to put my name there for ever: and my eyes and my Heart shall be there always.

Hymn

What heart more worthy can we find  
To worship than our loving King?  
What dearer to the Father's mind  
Than His Own Heart for us to sing?  
O Heart, we hail Thee, richest treasure,  
Heaven's glory, Godhead's hall,  
Love for Virgin, passing measure,  
Love triumphant over all.  
O Heart loved far beyond the rest,  
Be mindful of that love divine,  
Which flowed from out the Father's breast,  
A gift to Mary, hers and mine.  
All worldly dreams now melt away;  
My King shall be my love alone,  
My only love, again I say  
None else but Jesus is my own.  
O Jesus, height of charity,  
Look down with countenance be

Mentes draconi subditas,  
Tuo redemptas sanguine.

nign,  
And see our minds' depravity  
Redeemed by 'nine own Blood di  
vine.

**OFFICE** 161 -

Heu! quanta pro mortalibus  
Tu Corde passus vulnera!  
Non vana peccatoribus  
Sint tanta Cordis munera.

Amanda raptor cordium,  
Per Cor tuum, fac omnia,  
Ad te, Creator omnium,  
Sursum rapi prxcordia.

O Cor, Pater viventium,  
Amore fac nos vivere:  
Fac in tuum, pro te, sinum  
Amore vitam fundere.

Amor, Pater clementiae,  
Amor, Redemptor omnium,  
Amor, Deus, fons gratiae,  
Regnes in onme saeculum. Amen.

V. Omnis Spiritus laudet Cor  
Jesu et Marix.

R. Et diligant illud omnia corda.

*Ad. Bened. Ant.* Benedictum sit

Cor amantissimum Jesu et Mariae,  
fons vivus benedictionis, fornax  
amoris, thronus divinae voluntatis,  
sanctuarium Divinitatis, alleluia.

Oremus

Pater misericordiarum, et Deus  
totius consolationis, qui propter  
nimiam caritatem qua dilexisti nos,  
dilectissimi Filii tui Cor amantissi-  
mum nobis ineffabili bonitate do-  
nasti ut te uno corde cum ipso per-  
fecte diligamus: praesta, quaesumus;  
ut cordibus nostris inter se, et cum  
Corde Jesu, in unum consummatis,

162 -

omnia nostra in humilitate et cari-  
rate ejus fiant, atque, ipso interve-  
niente, justa cordis nostri desideria

Alas! how multiplied the toll  
Of wounds mankind Thy Heart  
has cost!  
Thy gifts for every sinful soul  
Must not by us be vainly lost.  
All hearts' most loving captor Thou I  
Our prayer we offer through '17by  
Heart.  
To God of all creation now  
Uplift our souls, uphold our part.  
O Father of all those who live,  
Enliven us with love of Ilee.  
Within lly breast, through 17hee,

O give

Us depth of life eternally.  
O Love, of mercy sweet the Sire,  
O Love, Redeemer of all men.  
O Love, of God the grace and fire,  
Forever and forever reight Amen.

V. Let every soul praise the  
Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

R. And every heart love them.

*Ad. Bened. Ant.* Blessed be the  
most loving Hearts of Jesus and  
Mary, living fount of blessing, fur-  
nace of love, throne of the Divine  
Will, sanctuary of the Divinity, alle-  
luia.

Let us pray

Father of Mercy and God of  
all consolation, who, by the ex-  
ceeding love with which Thou hast  
loved us, hast given us with in-  
effable goodness the Heart of Tly  
beloved Son, so that having but one  
heart with Him we may love 77hee  
perfectly, grant, we beseech 11ce,  
that our hearts, being consumed in

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

unity among themselves and with  
the Heart of Jesus, we may per-  
form all our works in His humility

compleantur. Per cumdem.

#### AD PRIMAM

*Ant. 0 altitudo divitiarum. De  
Laudibus.*

R. Christi Fili.

V. Qui natus es de Maria Virgine.

#### AD TERTIAM

*Ant. 0 amor admirabilis.*

*Capit. Sanctificavi domum hanc, ut  
supra.*

R. Sic nos dilexit Jesus, \* ut claret  
nobis Cor suum. Sic nos.

V. Gratias ei super inenarrabili  
dono ejus. Ut daret. Gloria Patri.  
Sic nos.

V. Sicut dilexit me Pater, et ego  
dilexi vos.

R. Et vos manete in dilectione  
mea.

Oratio: Pater misericordiarum. ut  
ad Laudes.

#### AD SEXTAM

*Ant. 0 dilectio ineffabilis.*

*Capit: (Osee, 11) Ego quasi nu-  
tritius Ephraim, portabam eos in  
brachiis meis, et nescierunt quod*

#### OFFICE

curarent cos. In funiculis Adam  
traham cos, in vinculis caritatis.

R. Sicut dilexit me Pater, \* et  
ego dilexi vos. Sicut.

V. Et vos manete in dilectione  
mea. Gloria Patri. Sicut.

V. Vivat Cor Jesu, Rex cordium.

R. Et regnat super omnia corda  
in aeternum. ever.

#### AD NONAM

and charity, and that by His media  
tion, the just desires of our hearts  
may be accomplished. Through the  
same.

#### PRIME

*Ant. 0 the depths of the riches.  
From Lauds.*

R. Christ, Son.

V. Who wast born of the Virgin  
Mary.

#### TIERCE

*Ant. 0 admirable love.*

*Chapter. I have sanctified as  
at Lauds.*

R. Jesus so loved us as to give us  
His Heart.

V. Thanks to Him for His in  
effable gift.

V. As the Father has loved Me  
and I have loved you.

R. Do you abide in My love.

Oration: Father of Mercies . . .  
as at Lauds.

#### SEXT

*Ant. 0 ineffable love.*

*Chapter: (Osee 11) I was like a  
foster father to Ephraim. I carried  
them in my arms; and they knew*

not that I healed them. I will draw  
them with the cords of Adam, with  
the bonds of love.

R. As the Father hath loved Me  
and I have loved you.

V. Do you abide in My love.  
Glory be.

V. Live the Heart of Jesus, King  
of Hearts.

R. And reign over all hearts for

#### NONE

*Ant.* Benedictum Cor tuum.

*Capit* (Cant., 4)- Vulnerasti Cor meum, soror mea, sponsa, vulnerasti Cor meum, in uno oculorum tuorum, et in urum crine colli tui.

*R.* Vivat Cor Jesu, O Rex cordium. Vivat Cor.

*V.* Et regnat super omnia corda in aeternum. Rex cordium. Gloria Patri. Vivat.

*V.* Omnis spiritus laudet Cor Jesu et Mariae.

*R.* Et diligant illud omnia corda.  
ever.

#### IN 11 VESPERIS

*Ant.* O admirabile Cor Jesu, in quo Deus Pater altissimum dilectionis et gloriae suae thronum constituit! alleluia.

164 -

*Ps.* de Dom., sed ultimo loco,  
Lauda, Jerusalem.

*Ant.* O incomparabilis caritas! cum adhuc inimici essemus, dilexit nos et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo, alleluia.

*Ant.* Nolite timere, filioli, et si mulier oblita fuerit infantis sui, ego tamen non obliviscar vestri. Ecce in manibus meis et in Corde meo descripsi vos, alleluia.

*Ant.* Pater, quos dedisti mihi, volo ut ubi sum ego, et illi sint mecum; et nobiscum ac inter se sint cor unum, sicut et nos unum sumus, alleluia.

*An:.* Filioli, implete gaudium meum, ut omnia vestra in caritate Cordis mei fiant. Paratum cor nostrum, Deus cordis nostri, paratum cor nostrum, alleluia.

*Capitulum* (3 Reg-, 9)

Sanctificavi mihi domum hanc, ut ponerem nomen meum ibi in semipiternum, et erunt oculi mei, et Cor

*Ant.* Blessed is Thy Heart.

*Chapter* (Canticle of Canticles, 4). Thou hast wounded my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse, Thou hast wounded my Heart with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of my neck.

*R.* Live the Heart of Jesus, King of Hearts.

*V.* And reign over all hearts for ever.

*V.* Let every spirit praise the Heart of Jesus and Mary.

*R.* And love them forever and

#### SECOND VESPERS

*Ant.* O admirable Heart of Jesus in which the Father has set up the highest throne of His glory and His love.

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

*Psalms* for Sunday. Last psalm:  
Lauda Jerusalem.

*Ant.* O incomparable charity, when we were still His enemies, He loved us and washed away our sins in His Blood.

*Ant.* Fear not, little children, though a mother forget her child, yet will I never forget you. See, I hold you engraven on My hands and in My Heart.

*Ant.* Father, I desire that those whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me where I am, that they may be one among themselves and one with us, as Thou and I are one.

*Ant.* My little children, fill My cup of joy to the full by performing all your actions in the love of My Heart. Our Heart is ready, O God of Our Heart, Our Heart is ready.

*Chapter* (3 Kings, 9)

I have sanctified this house, to put my name there forever: and my eyes and My Heart shall be there



meum ibi cuncus diebus.

Hymnus

Flammata Jesu Pectora  
Amoris igne psallimus:  
Immensa laeti munera  
Cordis benigni pangimus.  
Ave, sacerdos cordium,  
Ave, Deo par victima,  
Templum Deo dignissimum,  
Et ara sacratissima.

O semper ara flammea,  
Cunctis parata victimis,

OFFICE

To corda tollas omnia,  
Flammis litanda coelicis.

O magna fornax Coelitum,  
Aeterna praebens gaudia,  
Praecordiis mortalium  
Coeli feras incendia.  
En illa fornax panditur:  
Afferte sacris ignibus,  
Afferte corda, pascitur  
Fornax amanda cordibus.

En corda, quae mirabilis  
Fornacis ignes concrement:  
Cordis faces amabilis  
Terram polumque devorent.

Tot ergo tanti Pectoris  
Omnes canant mysteria:  
Cordisque tam laudabilis  
Strati colant magnalia.

O Christe, fornax cordium,  
Immerge flammis supplices:  
Amor vorax amantium,  
Fac nos amoris martyrrs.

Amor, Pater clementiae,  
Amor, Redemptor omnium,  
Amor, Deus, fons gratiae,  
Regnes in omne saeculum.

Amen.

V. Ommis Spiritus ;audet Cor

always.

Hymn

We sing the praise of Jesus' Heart  
With fire of ardent love aflame:  
With joy we tell the boundless part  
His love and gifts so rightly claim.  
Hail, priest of hearts and victim,  
hail!  
Alone Thou equal art to God  
Most worthy Temple, Holy a~rail,  
And altar, holiest to laud.  
An altar flaming, all afire,  
And always set for victims there;

165-

Receive our hearts as victims, fire  
And burn them in Thy heav'nly  
flame.

O furnace of the heav'nly throng  
Begetting us eternal joys,  
In hearts of mortals kindle long  
Those holy fires that purge alloys.  
Lo! how that furnace opens wide!  
Bear up unto those sacred fires,  
Bring up our hearts, burn'd free of  
pride,

Each holy heart its flame desires.  
Here offer we our hearts, and pray  
This wondrous furnace shall as~  
some  
And shall devour them; that the ray  
Of love both heav'n and earth con  
sume.

Thy mysteries let all men sing,  
The greatness of Thy wondrous  
ways.

In prostrate worship may we bring  
With humble hearts unending praise.

O Christ, Thou furnace high above,  
O'erwhelm Thy suppliants in  
flames:

Our hearts devour by Thy love  
And with love's martyrs count our names.

O love, of mercy sweet the Sire,  
O Love, Redeemer of all men;  
O Love, of God the grace and fire,  
Forever and forever reign!

Amen.

V. Let every soul praise the

Jesu et Mariae.

R. Et diligant illud omnia corda.

166 -

Ad. Magnif. Ant. Tibi laus, tibi honor, tibi gloria, o amantissime Jesu, qui dedisti Cor tuum dilectissimae Matri tuae; ut ipsa tibi uno Corde in salutem humanam cooperans, digna Salvatoris Mater effici mereretur, alleluia.

Oratio.- Pater misericordiarum et Deus totius consolationis. . . .

Hearts Of Jesus and Mary.

R. And every heart love them.

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Ant. Praise, honor and glory to Thee, O beloved Jesus, Who didst give Thy Heart to Thy beloved Mother, that she, being one in heart with Thee and cooperating in the salvation of the human race, might merit to become the worthy Mother of the Saviour of the world, alleluia.

Oration: Father of Mercies and God of all consolation. . . .

167 -

**PRAYERS**  
**TO**  
**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

169 -

**LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

Kyrie, elcison.	Lord, have mercy on us.
Christe, elcison.	Christ, have mercy on us.
Kyrie, cleison.	Lord, have mercy on us.
Jesu, audi nos.	Jesus, hear us.
Jesu, exaudi nos.	Jesus, graciously hear us.
Pater, de coelis Deus, miscerere nobis.	God, the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
Fili, Redemptor mundi, Deus, miserere nobis.	God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
Spiritus Sancte Deus, miserere nobis.	God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nobis.	Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Cor Jesu divinissimum, miserere nobis.	Heart of Jesus most divine, have mercy on us.
Cor Jesu amantissimum.	Heart of Jesus most loving,
Cor Jesu mitissimum,	Heart of Jesus most meek,
Cor Jesu humillimum,	Heart of Jesus, most humble,
Cor Jesu misericordissimum,	Heart of Jesus most merciful,
Cor Jesu fidelissimum,	Heart of Jesus most faithful,
Cor Jesu, cor Patris aeterni,	Heart of Jesus, Heart of the Eternal Father,
Cor Jesu, origo Spiritus sancti,	Heart of Jesus, Principle of the Holy Ghost,
Cor Jesu, plenitudo Divinitatis,	Heart of Jesus, fullness of the Godhead,

170 -

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

Cor Jesu, sanctuarium Trinitatis,	Heart of Jesus, sanctuary of the Blessed Trinity,
Cor Jesu, thronus divinae Voluntatis,	Heart of Jesus, throne of the Divine Will,
Cor Jesu, Cor Virginis Mariae	Heart of Jesus, Heart of the Virgin Mother,
Cor Jesu adorabile,	Heart of Jesus most adorable,
Cor Jesu amabile,	Heart of Jesus most amiable,
Cor Jesu admirabile,	Heart of Jesus most admirable,
Cor Jesu incomparabile,	Heart of Jesus most incomparable,
Cor Jesu, fornax amoris,	Heart of Jesus, furnace of love,
Cor Jesu, miraculum caritatis,	Heart of Jesus, miracle of charity,
Cor Jesu, norma patientiae,	Heart of Jesus, model of patience,
Cor Jesu, speculum obedientiae,	Heart of Jesus, mirror of obedience,
Cor Jesu, exemplar virtutum,	Heart of Jesus, exemplar of all virtues,
Cor Jesu, fons omnium gratiarum,	Heart of Jesus, fountain of all graces,

Cor Jesu, lancea transfixurn,	Heart of Jesus, pierced with alance,
Cor Jesu, amore vulneraturn,	Heart of Jesus, wounded with love,
Cor Jesu, templum sanctitatis,	Heart of Jesus, temple of sanctity,
Cor Jesu, altare caritatis,	Heart of Jesus, altar of charity,
Cor Jesu, sacerdos amoris,	Heart of Jesus, priest of love,
Cor Jesu, hostia dilectionis,	Heart of Jesus, victim of dilection,
Cor Jesu, holocaustum xternum,	Heart of Jesus, eternal holocaust,
Cor Jesu, thuribulum aureum,	Heart of Jesus, golden censer,
Cor Jesu, calix inebrians,	Heart of Jesus, inebriating chalice,
Cor Jesu, nectar cleificans,	Heart of Jesus, deifying nectar,

## LITANY

171 -

Cor Jesu, consolator afflictorum,	Heart of Jesus, conSOler of the afflicted,
Cor Jesu, refugiurn peccatomm,	Heart of Jesus, refuge of sinners,
Cor Jesu, zelator animarum,	Heart of Jesus, zealous for souls,
Cor Jesu, raptor cordium,	Heart of Jesus, ravisher of hearts,
Cor Jesu, pars nostra, carissima,	Heart of Jesus, our dearest portion,
Cor Jesu, spes nostra dulcissima,	Heart of Jesus, our sweetest hope,
Cor Jesu, cordis nostri gaudium,	Heart of Jesus, joy of our heart,
Cor Jesu, cordis nostri Cor dilectis-	Heart of Jesus, most loving Heart
simum,	of our heart,
Cor Jesu, cordis nostri thesaurus,	Heart of Jesus, treasure of our heart,
Cor Jesu, cordis nostri paradisus,	Heart of Jesus, paradise of our heart,
Cor Jesu, vita cordis nostri,	Heart of Jesus, life of our heart,
Cor Jesu, rex cordis nostri,	Heart of Jesus, king of our heart,
Propitius esto, parce-nobis, Jesu.	Be merciful unto us, spare us, O Jesus.
Propitius esto, exaudi nos, Jesu.	Be merciful unto us, graciously hear us, O Jesus.
Ab omni peccato, libera nos, Jesu.	From all sin, deliver us, O Jesus.
A superbia vitz, libera nos, Jesu.	From the pride of life, deliver us, O Jesus.
Ab inordinato amore,	From disordinate love,
A cxcitate cordis,	From the blindness of heart,
A neglectu inspirationum tuarum,	From the neglect of Thy inspirations,
A morte perpetua,	From everlasting death,
Per Cor room amantissimum, ex-	Through Thy most loving Heart,
audi nos, Jesu.	hear us, O Jesus.
Per maximum ejus in peccatum.	Through Thy great hatred for sin,
odium,	hear us, O Jesus.

172 -

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Per infinitum ejus in Pattern aeter-	Through Thy infinite love for Thy
nu, amorem,	Eternal Father,
Per dulcissimam ejus in sanctissi-	Through Thy tender love for Thy
mam Matrem dilectionem,	most holy Mother,
Per ardentissimam illius erga sibi	Through thy most ardent charity for
devotos charitatem, exaudi nos	all those who are devoted to Thy
Jesu.	Service, hear us, O Jesus.
Per summum ejus erga crucem af-	Through Thy great love for the
fectum,	Cross.
Per acerbissimos dolores ipsius,	Through Thy bitter sufferings,

Per ipsum amoris et doloris impetu  
pro nobis in morte disruptum,  
Per eterna ejus gaudia,  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata  
mundi, parce nobis, Jesu.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata  
mundi, exaudi nos, Jesu.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata  
mundi, miserere nobis, Jesu.  
Jesu, audi nos.  
Jesu, exaudi nos.  
Oremus

Deus, qui propter nimiam carita-  
tem tuam nos Unigeniti tui membra  
et filios tuos efficiens, Cor unum  
cum Capite et Parse nostro habere  
voluisti: propitia, quesumus, ut igne  
tui amoris et flamma caritatis Cor-  
dis amantissimi Jesu accensi tuam  
in omnibus Voluntatem corde  
magno adimpleamus, et clux recta  
sunt desiderantes, desiderata per-  
cipere mereamur. Per eundem  
Christum Dominum nostrum.  
Amen.

Through Thy death out of love and  
sorrow for us,  
Through Thy eternal joys,  
Lamb of God, who takest away  
the sins of the world, spare us, O Jesus.  
Lamb of God, who takest away the  
sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Jesus.  
Lamb of God, who takest away the  
sins of the world, have mercy on us, O Jesus.  
Jesus, hear us.  
Jesus, graciously hear us.  
Let us pray

O God, who by the great love of  
Thy only-begotten Son hast willed  
to make us Thy members and Thy  
sons and hast given us one Heart  
with Thy Head and our Father,  
grant, we beseech Thee, that burn-  
ing with the fire of Thy love and  
the flame of the charity of the most  
loving Heart of Jesus we may do  
Thy will in all things, and desiring  
what is right we may merit to ob-  
tain what we desire. Through the  
same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

### SALUTATION TO THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY

« This salutation is a beautiful consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Holy Heart of Mary. Although the Heart of the Son is infinitely superior in excellence and sanctity to the Heart of the Mother, God has united these two Hearts so closely that they are always one single Heart in feeling, affection and will. Moreover, Jesus lives and reigns so completely in the Heart of Mary that He is truly the soul of her soul, the spirit of her spirit, and the heart of her heart. Thus, we may rightly say that Jesus is the Heart of Mary and salute and revere Jesus in her as the spirit, the soul, the life, and the Heart of His Holy Mother." Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes*, VIII, pp. 363-364.

"Furthermore, when in this salutation I use the words, *Adoramus te*, the trader must not be surprised. There are three kinds of adoration or worship: the worship of *latria*, which is paid exclusively to God; *hyperdulia*, which is the special reverence with which we honor the Blessed Virgin Mary; and *dulia*, which is the respect paid to the saints. Do not think that when you say the words, *Adoramus te*, we are paying the same reverence and respect to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Holy Heart of Mary. To the Sacred Heart we owe the supreme worship that is paid exclusively to God because of His uncreated and infinite excellence; to the Holy Heart of Mary we pay special worship, on account of her created but pre-eminent excellence." Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes*, VIII, P. 491-492

Ave, Cor sanctissimum,	Hail, Heart most holy,
Ave, Cor mitissimum,	Hail, Heart most meek,
Ave, Cor humillimum,	Hail, Heart most humble,
Ave, Cor purissimum,	Hail, Heart most pure,
Ave, Cor devotissimum,	Hail, Heart most devout,
Ave, Cor sapientissimum,	Hail, Heart most wise,
Ave, Cor patientissimum,	Hail, Heart most patient,
Ave, Cor obedientissimum,	Hail, Heart most obedient,
Ave, Cor vigilantissimum,	Hail, Heart most vigilant,
Ave, Cor fidelissimum,	Hail, Heart most faithful,
Ave, Cor beatissimum,	Hail, Heart most blessed,
Ave, Cor misericordissimum,	Hail, Heart most merciful,
Ave, Cor amantissimum Jesu et Mariae;	Hail, most loving Heart of Jesus and Mary;
Te adoramus,	We revere Thee,
Te laudamus,	We praise Thee,
Te glorificamus,	We glorify Thee,
Tibi gratias agimus;	We give Thee thanks;

Te amamus,	We love Thee,
Ex toto corde nostro,	With all our heart,
Ex tota anima nostra,	With all our soul,
Et ex totis viribus nostris;	And with all our strength;
Tibi cor nostrum offerimus,	We offer Thee our heart,
Donamus,	We give it to Thee,

Consecramus,	We consecrate it to Thee,
Immolamus;	We immolate it to Thee;
Accipe et posside illud totum,	Receive it and possess it wholly,
Et purifica,	Purify it,
Et illumina,	Enlighten it,
Et sanctifica;	Sanctify it;

Ut in ipso vivas et regnes et nunc  
et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.  
Amen.

That 'Thou mayest live and reign  
in it now, always, and forever and  
ever. Amen.

# MAGNIFICAT OF SAINT JOHN EUDES

## A Hymn of Praise and Thanksgiving to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Holy Heart of Mary

Magnificat anima mea Cor admirabile Jesu et Marix,	My soul doth magnify the admirable Heart of Jesus and Mary,
Et exsultavit Spiritus meus in magna Corde meo.	And my spirit rejoices in my great Heart.
Nam Cor suum maximum dederunt mihi Jesus et Maria, Or omnia mea, in caritate ejus fiant.	Jesus and Mary have given me their Heart, this immense Heart in order that all in me may be performed in its love.
Gratias illis infinitas super inenarrabili dono ipsorum,	Infinite thanks to them for their ineffable gift.
Fecit mihi magna Cor benignissimum; suscepit me ab Otero matris meae.	This Heart infinitely merciful has done great things for me; it has possessed me from the womb of my mother.
Gratias infinitas super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.	Infinite thanks for His ineffable gifts.
Abyssus miserationum mearum invocavit abyssum misericordiarum ejus.	The abyss of my misery has called on the abyss of His mercy.
Gratias infinitas super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.	Infinite thanks for His ineffable gifts.
Præcivit me Cor mitissimum in benedictionibus dulcedinis suae.	This Heart infinitely meek has presented me with blessings Of its sweetness.
Gratias infinitas super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.	Infinite thanks for His ineffable gifts.

## 176 - THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Sub umbra manus suae protexit Me, et custodivit me quasi pupillam Oculi.	He has protected me in the shadow of His Hand, and has guarded me as the apple of His eye.
Gratias infinitas super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.	Infinite thanks for His ineffable gifts.
Elegit me sacerdos sibi et cum principibus suis collocavit me.	He has chosen me to be His priest and has placed me with the princes of His people.
Gratias infinitas super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.	Infinite thanks for His ineffable gifts.
Dedit verba sua in ore meo et posuit os meum quasi gladium acutum.                      unto a sharp sword.	He has placed His words in my mouth and my tongue was like
Gratias infinitas super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.	Infinite thanks for His ineffable gifts.
Mortificavit et vivificavit me et fuit mecum ubicumque ambulavi.	He has led me to the valley of death and recalled me to life and He has been with me wherever I have directed my steps.



Gratias infinitas super inenarrabili-  
bus donis ejus.  
Inimicus fuit inimicis meis et ex  
omnibus tribulationibus meis lib-  
eravit me.  
Gratias infinitas super inenarrabili-  
bus donis ejus.  
O Cor amantissimum, fons om-  
nium. bonorum, a te mihi vene-  
runt innumera bona.  
Tibi laus, tibi amor, tibi gloria, te  
omnes linguz concinant, te dili-  
gant omnia corda.  
*Confiteantur tibi misericordiae tuae:*  
et amoris tui mirabilia filiis horni-  
mun.

Infinite thanks for His ineffable  
gifts.  
He has been the enemy of my  
enemies and has delivered me  
from all my tribulations.  
Infinite thanks for his ineffable  
gifts.  
O loving Heart, source of all good,  
it is from Ilee that all good has  
come to me.  
Praise, love and glory to Ilee, and  
may all tongues sing Tly benefits  
and may all hearts burn with Thy love.  
May lly mercies be praised and  
may the marvels of Thy love be  
distributed among the children of men.

#### MAGNIFICAT

177 -

Benedicant te omnes virtutes tux:  
laudent et superexaltant in sae-  
Mentor sit Pater misericordiarum  
omnis sacrificii tui: et tribuat tibi  
cuncta desideria tua.  
O Cor Jesu, amoris et doloris int-  
Peru pro nobis in cruce disrup-  
turn: tibi cor nostrum in igne tuo  
pcrpetuo immoletur.  
O Cor Marix, doloris gladic, trans-  
fixum! fac ut cor nostrum divini  
amoris sagitta jugiter transfiga-  
tur.  
O Cor Jesu et Marix, fornax amoris!  
in te cor nostrum denergetur in  
perpetuum.  
Moriatur in flammis tuis, ut cum  
Corde Jesu et Maria: cor unum  
fiat in xternum.  
Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui  
Sancto.  
Sicut erat in principio et *nunc et*  
semper et in sa:cula szculorum.  
Amen.

May all Thy virtues bless Thee and  
praise and exalt Thee above all cula. forever.  
May the Father of Mercies remem-  
ber all Thy sacrifices and grant  
all Thy desires.  
O Heart of Jesus broken for us  
upon the Cross by the violence of  
May love and suffering, may our  
hearts consumed by Tliy love be  
a perpetual holocaust.  
O Heart of Mary pierced with a  
sword of sorrow, may our hearts  
be continually pierced with the  
arrow of divine love.  
O Heart of Jesus and Mary, fur-  
nace of love, may our heart be  
forever plunged in your fires.  
May it die in your flames that it  
may be one with the Heart of  
Jesus and Mary for all eternity.  
Glory be to the Father and to the  
Son and to the Holy Ghost.  
As it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be world without  
end. Amen.

#### 178 - THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

##### ORATIO POST OFFICIUM

O clementissime Jesu, gratias ago  
tibi ex toto corde meo. Propitius  
esto mihi vilissimo peccatori. Ego

##### PRAYER AFTER THE DIVINE OFFICE

O most clement Jesus, I thank  
Thee with my whole heart for all  
Thy graces. Be propitious unto me

hanc actionem offero, divino Cordi tuo emandandam atque perficiendam, ad laudem et gloriam sanctissimi Nominis tui et beatissimae Matris tuae, ad salutem animae meae totiusque Ecclesiae tuae. Amen.

**INVOCATIO**

Benedictum sit Cor amantissimum et dulcissimum Nomen Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et glorissimae Virginis Mariae ejus, in aeternum et ultra.

a sinner. I offer this action to Thy Sacred Heart to be emended and perfected, for the praise and glory of Thy Holy Name and of that of Thy Blessed Mother, for the salvation of my soul, and for the whole church. Amen.

**EJACULATORY PRAYER**

Blessed be forever the most loving Hearts and the sweet Names of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the most glorious Virgin Mary, His Mother.

## APPENDIX

Excerpts from Papal Documents concerning St. John Eudes and the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus:

*Auctor cultus liturgici sacrorum Cordium.* "The institutor of the liturgical worship of the Sacred Hearts.'---Leo XIII in the *Decree on the Heroism of the Virtues of John Eudes*, January 6, 1903

"But his services to the Church received a vast increase when, burning with a singular love for the most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, *he was the first to think, not without some divine inspiration, of offering to them liturgical worship. Of this sweet devotion of piety, therefore, he is to be considered the father*, since from the beginning of his congregation of priests he provided that the feasts of those Sacred Hearts should be celebrated among them; *the doctor* also, for he composed special offices and masses in their honor; and finally *the apostle*, for he strove with all his might to spread everywhere this salutary devotion.»-Pius X in the *Decree of Beatification*, December 13, 1908

"His zeal was manifested in a singular manner in promoting the salutary devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. He was the *first to think, not without some divine inspiration, of rendering them liturgical worship....* The zeal of John Eudes reached its peak when in 1670, *after a mission at Rennes* and the foundation of a seminary in that town, *he was able there to celebrate for the first time the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, with the approval of the Ordinary, with which a great number of prelates hastened to concur. Two years later, the saintly founder explicitly ordained that the Feast be celebrated in all the houses of his congregation as the patronal

### 180 - THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

feast. Pius X, Our Predecessor of illustrious memory, sanctioned these two feasts, celebrated by the Eudistic family, and authorized as the day of the solemnity, February 8 for the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary, and October 2.0 for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This endeavour to spread the devotion to the Sacred Hearts, of which he is the *Father, the Doctor and the Apostle*, stirred up the hatred of the Jansenists, who made him suffer many trials; his invincible courage supported them for the love of God and the salvation of souls».Pius XI in the Decree of Canonization, May 31, 1925

"Lastly, in more recent centuries, especially at the time when heretics by propagating false piety were striving to turn the faithful away from the Blessed Eucharist, the public devotion to the Sacred Heart saw its beginnings. This was due primarily to the work of St. John who rightly deserves to be called the institutor of the liturgical worship of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.»--Office for the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Matins, Second Nocturn, Lesson 4.



**Letters and Shorter Works**

**BY**

**SAINT JOHN EUDES**

**Translated from the French by  
RUTH HAUSER, M.A.**

**With an Introduction by  
THE VERY REVEREND FRANCIS LEBESCONTE  
SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE EUDISTS FATHERS**

**NEW YORK  
P. J. KENEDY & SONS  
1948**

Imprimi potest

A. D'Amours, C.J.M.  
praepositus Provincialis  
Laval-des-Rapides, P.Q.  
die 17 Martii 1947.

Nihil Obstat

J. M. FEARNES, S.T.D.  
Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

Francis Cardinal Spellman  
Archbishop of New York  
January 15, 1948  
Copyright  
1948  
P.J. Kenedy & Sons, NEW YORK  
Made in U. S. A.

on.ca

## GENERAL PREFACE

ST. JOHN EUDES has been called "the wonder of his age." Missionary, founder, reformer of the clergy, he crowded into a life of seventy-nine years so many and such varied accomplishments that one marvels how a single man could achieve so much. In addition to the activities of an incessant and many-sided apostolate, he wrote a number of valuable books, which rank him among the most prolific ascetic writers of the seventeenth century.

For many years the devotional works of St. John Eudes were practically unknown.(1) Occasionally a volume was discovered in the library of some seminary or religious house. Many others preserved in manuscript form were lost in the chaos of the French Revolution(2) At the beginning of the present century the sons of St. John Eudes united in a tribute of filial piety to bring out a complete edition of the works of their spiritual father, seeking them in public and private libraries throughout the world(3) About twenty volumes were found and edited in 1905 by the late Fathers Charles Lebrun, C.J.M., and Joseph Dauphin,

(1).Before the French Revolution the works of St. John Eudes were popular in France. In 1792 the houses of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary were confiscated by the Government and its members were massacred or dispersed throughout Europe. With the suppression of the Eudists, their rich literary heritage was widely scattered and partially destroyed. It was not until the re-establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1826 that effort was made to recover the printed and manuscript works of St. John Eudes. The research was carried on until the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the "Preface Générale to the Oeuvres Complètes (Vannes, 1905), Father Charles Lebrun points out that one of the purposes of the edition was "to unearth these works buried too long in oblivion," exhumers ces ouvrages ensevelis depuis trop longtemps dans l'oubli...

(2)The following manuscripts were not found: The Christian Man, All Jesus, The Divine office, The Admirable Sacrifice of the Mass, Meditations, (2 vol.), Sermons of St. John Eudes (3 vols.), Favors obtained by the Diocese of Coutances through the Blessed Virgin, The Divine Childhood of Jesus, The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, The Admirable *Life of* Mary des Vallées, (incomplete copy found at Laval University Library, Quebec) and Correspondence of St. John Eudes.

(3). cf. *oeuvres Complètes*, P. xiv.

v -

## GENERAL PREFACE

C.J.M. The first edition in French, *Oeuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, ran into twelve octavo volumes with introductions, explanatory notes, analytic and alphabetic indexes of great value. These writings constitute a complete summa of ascetic and pastoral theology. The list is as follows:

*Volume 1 The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls.* In this work the Saint develops his spiritual teaching on the Christian life, namely, that the Christian life is simply the life of Jesus extended and continued in each one of us.

*Volume 11.* This volume contains six short treatises on subjects relating to the Christian life:

1. *A Treatise on the Respect Due to Holy Places*, which is an echo of the fiery denunciations he pronounced during his missions against profaners of the temple of God.

2. *Meditations on Humility*, a series of meditations on the profession of humility as used daily in his order of Priests, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

3. *Interior Colloquies of the Soul with God*, meditations on creation, the end of man and the grace of Baptism.

4. *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, a summary of the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Tradition on the Sacrament of Baptism.

5. *The Practice of Piety*, a brief explanation of what is necessary in order to live a Christian life.

6. *Catechism of the Mission*, an outline of the catechetical instructions given during a mission.

*Volume III.* Contains two important works on sacerdotal perfection:

1. *The Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*, an explanation of the dignity and duties of the priesthood.

2. *A Manual of Piety for Use in an Ecclesiastical Community*, in which the author explains how the means of sanctification he recommended to his priests should be practically applied in their daily lives.

*Volume IV.* Comprises significant works on the priestly ministry.

1. *The Apostolic Preacher* is one of the first treatises written on the ministry of the Word of God and is even yet one of the most practical.

## GENERAL PREFACE

V 11 -

2. *The Good Confessor* explains the qualities, and obligations of the minister of the Sacrament of Penance.

3. *Counsels for Mission Confessors* suggests practical means of assisting penitents to make their examination of conscience and excite themselves to contrition.

4. *The Manner of Serving Mass* explains the dignity and holiness of this act and what one must do to perform it devoutly and worthily.

*Volume V. The Admirable Childhood of the Most Holy Mother of God.* This book treats of the holy childhood of Mary and the practical means of honoring the mysteries and virtues of her early life.

*Volumes VI, VII, VIII* contain the entire writings of the Saint on the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The work is entitled: *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God.* It comprises twelve books covering the complete theology of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. Eleven books discuss the theory, history, and practice of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The last book deals with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is this work, together with the Offices of the Sacred Hearts, that merit for him the title of Father, Doctor and Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts.

*Volume IX. The Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*

*Volume X.* Contains *The Rules and Constitutions of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, the *Directory* of the Order, and a collection of two hundred and forty letters.

*Volumes XI and XII* embrace the Saint's *Liturgical Works*, comprising twenty-five Offices and Masses for feasts to which he urged special devotion, the *Memorial of God's Blessings* and several other minor works.

The second French edition appeared in 1935, *Oeuvres Choies de Saint Jean Eudes*, prepared under the direction of Father Lebrun, the leading authority on Eudistic research. It comprises nine volumes: *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, *Meditations of Various Subjects*, *Regulae Vitae Christianae et Sacerdotalis*, *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, *Letters and Minor Works*, *Writings on the Priesthood*, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, and *The Admirable Childhood of the Mother of God*. The format of

these volumes is compact and more convenient than the 1905 edition, which is now out of print.

The publication of the works of St. John Eudes revealed the extent and depth of their spiritual doctrine. Cardinal Pitra, who was associated with the cause of Beatification, discovered in the writings of St. John Eudes a remarkable depth of thought and purity of doctrine. Cardinal Vives has more recently expressed his admiration:

I was acquainted with the Doctors of the Order of Saint Francis; I was acquainted with Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, the mystical writers of my own country, Spain; but I was completely ignorant of the writings of Father Eudes. As a member of the Sacred Congregation of Rites it was my duty to study his life and his works, and I am in admiration. Blessed John Eudes must be ranked with the great lights of the Church. His spiritual doctrine is profound and of wonderful exactitude. He is one of the writers who has best propounded the doctrine of the Gospel.(4).

The late Father Ange Le Doré, for fifty years Superior General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, wrote:

The works of Blessed John Eudes, although they do not bear the scientific touch of the professional theologian, are nevertheless proof of his remarkable theological, ascetic and scriptural knowledge.... He is not a Doctor after the fashion of the scholastics of the thirteenth century or of the great theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As they, he might have built up theses and composed books didactic in form; but he was before all a savior of souls. For him the science of theology found its chief field of usefulness in the practice of virtue and in the acquisition of sanctity of which it is the principle.... He was a Doctor after the manner of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus de Liguori. The science which shines in his works not only emits light; it engenders piety and sanctity.(5)

The spiritual doctrine expounded by St John Eudes follows the teaching of Cardinal *Pierre de Bérulle* and Father Charles de Condren, two prominent members of the seventeenth-century French School of Spirituality. St. John Eudes applies this doctrine to the devotion to the

(4). Quoted by P. A. Bray, C.J.M., *Saint John Eudes* (Halifax, 1925), P. 116.

(5). Quoted by Buy, op. cit., p. 117.

#### GENERAL PREFACE 1 X -

Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, developing and rendering it more precise and practical. He has the rare gift of expressing the most sublime truths in simple, familiar language. He also excels in condensing into a few pages a complete scheme of Christian life and perfection.

The wish was repeatedly expressed that these inspirational writings could be made available to English-speaking readers. Excellent abridged editions of certain books were published in England and in Canada, but they did not do justice to the literary value of the Saint. Consequently, the Eudist Fathers commemorating their tercentenary in 1943 resolved to publish a complete translation of the principal works of their founder. Competent translators were secured and much time and effort were expended to produce readable volumes in modern English, faithful to the spirit and style of the original.

The first English edition, *Selected Works of Saint John Eudes*, is the result. In presenting it to the public the Eudist Fathers and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, and of the Good



Shepherd, wish to thank all those who contributed to the success of this comprehensive undertaking. They are especially grateful to the distinguished churchmen who have so graciously accepted to introduce these volumes to Catholic readers, because they consider that the works of St. John Eudes should be more widely known. The Saint in his apostolic work and in his writings ranks with the eminent figures who belong not to one country and to one religious order but to the universal Church. Three centuries have passed since he wrote the works now being printed in the new world, a striking illustration that he wrote for all time. He still speaks in accents that penetrate the mind and heart of the reader to enlighten, purify and sanctify so that Jesus Christ may live and reign in the Christian soul.

WILFRID E. MYATT, C.J.M.

PATRICK J. SKINNER, C.J.M.

*Editors*

Holy Heart Seminary

Halifax, N. S.

Feast of St. John Eudes, 1945.

## CONTENTS

General Preface . . . . .	
Introduction . . . . .	xxvii

### Letters

1. To Madame Laurence de Budos, Abbess of Holy Trinity Monastery at Caen [On the Death of Her Brother, Anthony, Killed at the Siege of Privas] . . . . .	1
2. To Sister Mary de Taillepie, Lay Sister of the Holy Trinity Monastery at Caen [On the Solemnity of Jesus] . . . . .	13
3- To Sister Mary de Taillepie [On the Feast of Easter] . . . . .	15
4- To Sister Mary de Taillepie [On the Use of a Worldly Expression and on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady] . . . . .	16
5- To Sister Mary de Taillepie [On Her Illness] . . . . .	17
6. To Sister Mary de Taillepie [On Her Infirmities] . . . . .	18
7- To Sister Mary de Taillepie [On Her Crosses and Afflictions] . . . . .	19
8. To Madame Laurence de Budos [On the Calumnies Directed against Him during the Pleurtuit Mission] . . . . .	19
9. To Madame Laurence de Budos [On Resignation in Time of Illness] . . . . .	20
10. To the Ladies of Mercy of Rouen [On the Refuge of Caen] . . . . .	24
11. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [On the Refuge of Caen] . . . . .	29
12. To Father William Gibieuf, Oratorian [On His Mother's Cure through the Intercession of Cardinal de Bérulle] . . . . .	30
13. To the Priests of the Caen Seminary [On Humility, Charity and Pure Love] . . . . .	31
14. To Father Richard Le Mesle . [Concerning Successful Negotiations] . . . . .	32

X 1 -

X11

CONTENTS

15. To Mr. and Madame Blouet de Camilly [On the Affairs of Our Lady of Charity, and on the Proper Disposition for Holy Communion] . . . . .	33
16. To Mademoiselle Eustace de Taillefer [To Strengthen Her in Her Vocation] . . . . .	36
17. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [To Induce Her to Give Her Daughter to God] . . . . .	38
18. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [On the Purchase of a House for the Religious of Our Lady of Charity] . . . . .	40
19. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [On the Qualifications Required of Postulants of Our Lady of Charity] . . . . .	42

20. To Fathers Richard Le Mesle and Thomas Vigeon [To Invite Them to Fulfill Their Promises to Join the Congregation of Jesus and Mary] . . . . .	45
21. To Father Simon Mannoury in Paris [On the Mission at Le Bec-Thomas] . . . . .	46
22. To Father Simon Mannoury in Rome [On the Mission at Autun] . . . . .	- - 46
23. To Father Simon Mannoury in Rome [On the Difficulties Encountered in Obtaining Approbation of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary] . . . . .	47
24. To Mother Elizabeth, Prioress of the Carmelite Monastery of Beaune [On the Death of Venerable Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament] - . . . . .	48
25. To Anne of Austria, the Queen Mother [The Saint Begs Her to Choose Good Bishops for the Church] . . . . .	50
26. Memorandum Presented to the Queen Mother on Several Outstanding Disorders in France and the Means of Correcting Them . . . . .	52
27- To Very Reverend Father Francis Bourgoing, Superior General of the Oratory [In Justification of the Saint's Withdrawal from the Oratory] . . . . .	57
28. To Mother Elizabeth, Prioress of the Carmelite Monastery of Beaune . . . . .	58
29. To Father John Baptist Saint Jure, S.J. [Concerning Baron de Renty] . . . . .	59

## CONTENTS

xiii-

30. To Father Simon Mannoury [On the Dependence of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary with Regard to Bishops] . . .	60
31. To Father Richard Le Mesle [The Saint Thanks Him for Consolation Received from Him] . . . . .	60
32. To One of His Sons Conducting a Mission at Gatteville [On Submission to the Will of God] . . . . .	61
33. To the Priests of His Congregation during a Mission at Gatteville [On the Care to be Devoted to Spiritual Exercises] . . .	61
34. To the Religious of Our Lady of Charity at Caen [On the Feast of the joys of Our Blessed Lady] . . . . .	63

35. To the Missionaries at Gatteville [On the Divine Will to Be Considered as Their Mother] . . . . .	65
36. To the Priests of the Caen Seminary [On the Persecutions Directed against Them by the Bishop of Bayeux] . . . . .	66
37. To Father Thomas Manchon at the Caen Seminary [On the Course to be Followed if the Seminary Chapel is Interdicted] . . . . .	67
38. To One of His Confreres [Concerning the Admission of a Postulant on Probation] . . . . .	68
39. To Mother Mechtilde of the Blessed Sacrament, Foundress of the Benedictine Nuns of the Blessed Sacrament [On a Favor Obtained through the Holy Heart of Mary] . . . . .	68
40. To the First Sisters of Our Lady of Charity [On the Letters of Establishment of the Order] . . . . .	69
41. To Sister Mary of the Assumption, Eustace de Taillefer [On Her Profession] - . . . . .	71
42. To Father Simon Mannoury [On a Postulant Admitted to Probation] . . . . .	72
43. To Father Simon Mannoury at Coutances [On the Mission at Corbeil ) . . . . .	74
44. To Father Simon Mannoury [On the Mission at Bernay ] -	74
45. To Father Simon Mannoury [To Ask Him to Send Helpers for the Mission at Bernay] . . . . .	75
46. To Father Simon Mannoury in Paris [On the Opportuneness of a Mission in Coutances and the Concessions to Be Made to the Bishop of Bayeux] . . . . .	76
X1V-	<b>CONTENTS</b>
47. To His Niece, Mary Herson [On the Dispositions with Which She Should Take the Veil] . . . . .	77
48. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin [On Various Matters] . .	80
49. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin, Superior of Our Lady of Charity [On Sister Mary des Vallées and on Matters concerning Her Spiritual Perfections] . . . . .	81
50. To Anne of Austria, the Queen Regent [On the Appointment of a Bishop to the See of Bayeux] ...	84
51. To the Priests of the Coutances Seminary [On the Reopening of the Chapel of the Caen Seminary] . . . . .	86

52. To Father Richard Le Mesle [On His Persecutions] . . . .	89
53. To the Community of Our Lady of Charity at Caen [On the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and on Zeal for the Salvation of Souls] . . . . .	90
54. To His Lordship Francis Harlay de Champvallon, Archbishop of Rouen [On the Self-Interest of Bishops in Protecting Seminaries] . . . . .	96
55. To Father Thomas Manchon, Superior of the Lisieux Seminary [On the Death of Sister Mary des Vallées] . . . . .	97
56. To the Community of Eudists at Lisieux [On the Death of Father James Le Duc] . . . .	100
57. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [On the Unexpected Cure of Father Thomas Manchon, and on Various Other Matters] . .	101
58. To Father Simon Mannoury at Lisieux [On Various Matters concerning the College at Lisieux and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity at Caen] . . . . .	103
59. To Sister Mary of the Assumption Eustace de Taillefer [On the Saint's Unchangeable Love toward the Caen Community] . .	105
60. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin, Superior of the Religious of Our Lady of Charity at Caen [On the Course to Be Followed in the Event of Opposition from the Sheriffs and on Various Other Matters] . . . . .	107
61. To Mr. Augustine Le Haguais [On Submission to the Will of God in Time of Illness] . .	109
62. To the Professors of the College at Lisieux [Advice concerning Their Conduct] . . . .	111

## CONTENTS

XV-

63. To the Priests of His Congregation Conducting a Mission at Honfleur [On the Sanction of the Caen Seminary by His Lordship Bishop Servien of Bayeux] . . . . .	115
64. To the Superior of One of His Houses [On the Value of Humiliations] . . . . .	119
65. To Madame de Bois-David, a Postulant at the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity at Caen . . . . .	119
66. To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Coutances Seminary [On Occupations Outside the Community and on Trust in God] . . . .	120
67. To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Coutances Seminary [On Obedience] . . . . .	121
68. To Father John Dupont [Concerning the Purchase of a Site in the Place des Petits Prés for the Erection of the Caen Seminary] . . . .	121

69. To the Priests of the Seminary at Lisieux [On Their Refusal to Accept Father Anthony Bernard as Their Superior] . . . .	122
70. To Father Thomas Manchon, Superior at Rouen [On the Conduct to Follow with Respect to the Jansenists] . . . .	124
71. To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Coutances Seminary [On the Opening of the Seminary at Rouen) . . . . .	125
72. To Father Thomas Manchon, Superior at Rouen [On His Difficulties] . . . . .	126
73. To Father Thomas Manchon [On the Poverty of His Seminary]	127
74. To Father Thomas Manchon [On Another Occasion] . . .	128
75. To Mr. D'Omonville, Counsellor of the Rouen Parliament [To Persuade Him to Maintain the Liberalities Pledged to the Rouen Seminary] . . . . .	129
76. To His Lordship Claude Auvry, a Former Bishop of Coutances [To Urge Him to Accept the Bishopric of Bayeux] . .	131
77. To the Bursar of the Rouen Seminary . . . .	133
78. To Father John James Blouet de Camilly [On the Mission at Vasteville] . . . . .	134
79. To Father John James Blouet de Camilly in Paris [On the Success of the Vasteville Mission] . . . . .	134
80. To a Confrere [On the Benefits of Missions] . . . .	136
81. To Father John James Blouet de Camilly in Paris [On the Villedieu Mission] . . . . .	136
XVI	
82. To Father John James Blouet de Camilly [On Mr. de Langrie's Cure] . . . . .	137
83. To Father John James Camilly [Regarding the Plan of the Chapel at Caen, Drawn Up through the Efforts of Father Mannoury] . . . .	137
84. To Father John James Blouet de Camilly in Paris [On the Edifying Conduct of the Candidates for Ordination at the Rouen Seminary] . . . . .	138
85. To Father John James Blouet de Camilly [On the Calumnies of Which the Saint Was a Victim in 1659] . . . . .	138
86. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin, Superior of Our Lady of Charity of Caen [On Her Spiritual State] . . . .	139

## CONTENTS



102. To Father John Dupont [On Complaints Received from Him] .	158
103. To the Priests of the Caen Seminary [On the Sermon Preached before the Queen Mother, February 8, 1661] . . . . .	158
104. To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Coutances Seminary [An Answer to Father Dupont's Letter Claiming That God Did Not Wish Him to Remain There] . . . . .	161
105. To Father Thomas Hubert [On His Illness) . . . . .	162
106. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin, Superior of the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity at Caen [On the Measures to Be Taken in Rome and on the Guidance of the Penitents] . . . . .	162
107. To Mother Margaret Francis Patin [To Ask That a Copy of the Rules of the Penitents Be Sent to Rome and to Prescribe the Articles for Them] . . . . .	165
108. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [On Her Husband's Illness] . .	167
109. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [How to Act during a Time of Illness] . . . . .	169
110. To the Priests of His Congregation [On the Death of Mr. James Blouet, Seigneur de Camilly, Which Occurred Suddenly on Octo ber 18, 1661) . . . . .	174
111. To Father Thomas Manchon [On the Death of Father Richard Le Mesle, Which Occurred on October 21] . . . . .	175
112. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [To Comfort Her on the Death of Her Husband] . . . . .	175

**xviii**

**CONTENTS**

113. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [On the Same Subject] . . .	178
114. To the Community of Our Lady of Charity of Caen [On the Ob servance of the Rules and the Practice of Certain Virtues] . .	180
115. To a Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary [On the Death of Father Peter Jourdan, Which Occurred on December 27, 1661]. . . . .	181
116. Permission Granted to Father Peter de Sesseval, Known as Dam ville, for the Foreign Missions . . . . .	182
117. To Madame Blouet de Camilly [On Various Subjects. Contem plated Establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary at Paris] .	184



118. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin [On Her Negotiations in Rome] . . . . .	185
119. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin [To Urge Her to Send Money to Father Boniface in Rome] . . . . .	187
120. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin [On the Same Subject] . .	191
121. To Father John Longeval, a Priest of the Seminary of Rouen [On the Archbishop's Manifestations of Satisfaction with the Seminary] . . . . .	193
122. To Mother Mary of the Nativity Herson [To Assure Her That He Willingly Forgets Past Grievances] . . . . .	194
123. To Father Louis Faucon, known as <i>de Sainte Marie</i> , the Successor of Father Thomas Manchon as Superior of the Rouen Seminary [On the Poverty of His House] . . . . .	195
124. Father John Avenel's Appointment to Lisieux . . . . .	196
125. To Cardinal Jerome Grimaldi, Archbishop of Aix [On the Organization of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary) . . . .	196
126. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [On the Cretteville Mission, in the Diocese of Coutances] . . . . .	199
127. To One of His Spiritual Children, after an Illness [On Obedience to the Divine Will] . . . . .	200
128. To the Priests of the Rouen Seminary [To Announce to Them the Nomination of Their New Superior, Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond] . . . . .	200
129. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, Superior of the Rouen Seminary [On the Mission at Châlons-sur-Marne] . .	201

## CONTENTS

X1X

130. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin [She Had Informed Him of the Apostolic Approbation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity] 201	201
131. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin [On Pious Practices with Respect to the Dying] . . . . .	203
132. To Mr. Augustine Le Haguais [On the Mission at St. Peter's Church, Caen, and on the Course to Follow in His Adversities] 204	204
133. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin [On Drawing Up the Constitutions of the Order of Our Lady of Charity] . . . . .	205

134. To Mother Margaret Frances Patin [On Various Subjects] . .	206
135. To a Nun (On the Death of Father John Doucet) . . . .	207
136. To His Lordship Henry du Tour de Maupas, Bishop of Evreux [To Request Him to Dismiss the Canons of Evreux from the Seminary] .	207
137. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, Superior of the Rouen Seminary [On the Precautions to Be Taken against the Plague] . . . . .	208
138. To Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre, Who Was Elected Superior of Our Lady of Charity after the Death of Mother Margaret Frances Patin [On the Fulfillment of Her Duties] . . . . .	209
139. To Bishop de la Vieuville of Rennes [To Advise That the Cele bration of the Jubilee Is Not Favorable to Giving a Mission] . .	211
140. To the Superior at Rouen [To Request Him to Send Father Thomas Vaguel to Him] . . . . .	212
141. To Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre [On the Estab lishment at Rennes, and on the Zeal That Ought to Be Mani fested on Such Occasions] . . . . .	212
142. To Sister Mary of St. Agnes des Champs, in Caen [On the Love of Jesus and Mary, and on Union with the Dispositions with Which They Died] . . . . .	214
143. To Mother St. Gabriel, a Religious of Montmartre [Concerning the Saint's Zeal for Missions] . . . . .	215
144. To Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre, Superior of Our Lady of Charity [On Spending the New Year Well] . .	215
145. To Sister Mary of the Assumption Le Grand [On Various Sub jects] . . . . .	216
XX-	<b>CONTENTS</b>
146. To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson, His Niece [On the Death of Her Sister-in-Law] . . . . .	217
147. To a Religious of Montmartre [On Submission to the Will of God] . . . . .	218
148. To Mother St. Gabriel [On the Mission Preached by the Saint to the Religious of Our Lady of Vernon] . . . . .	219
149. To Mother St. Gabriel [On the Occasion of an Illness of Ma dame de Lorraine, Abbess of Montmartre] . . . . .	219

150. To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson [On the Guidance of the Penitents, and on the Proper Preparation for the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary] . . . . .	220
151. To Sister Mary of the Child Jesus de Bois-David, the Second of the Name [On the Subject of Her Profession] . . . . .	221
152. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, Superior of the Caen Seminary [On the Registration of Letters Patent Obtained in View of an Establishment at Paris] . . . . .	222
153. To Sister Mary of St. Agnes des Champs [on Her Trials] . .	223
154. To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson [On Her Position as Mistress of Penitents, and on the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary] .	223
155. To Sister Mary of Jesus Allain [On the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary, and Some Virtues to Be Practised] . . . . .	224
156. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [On the Contemplated Establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in Paris] . . . . .	225
157. To the Priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary [On the Establishment of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus] . . .	226
158. To Archbishop Médavy of Rouen [In justification of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus] . . . . .	229
159. To an Unidentified Person [On the Plan for the Saint's Appointment as Coadjutor Bishop of Evreux with Future Succession] . . . . .	230
160. To the Same Person [On the Same Subject] . . . . .	230
161. To Father Simon Mannoury [On the Subject of His Appointment as Coadjutor Bishop of Evreux] . . . . .	231
<b>CONTENTS</b> XX1	
162. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [On the Same Subject) . . . . .	231
163. To Father James de la. Haye de Bonnefond [On the Same Subject.	232
164. To Sister Mary of St. Agnes des Champs [On Her Convalescence] . . . . .	233
165. To Sister Mary of St. Agnes des Champs [On Trust in Mary] .	234
166. To Mother St. Gabriel, a Religious of Montmartre [On the Death of Father Blouet de Than, Founder of the Caen Seminary] .	234

167. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Caen [On the Mission at Saint Germain-en-Laye, Given at the Command of Louis XIV]. . . . .	235
168. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [On the Mission at Saint Germain-en-Laye] . . . . .	236
169. To Mother St. Henry, a Religious of Montmartre [On a Marvelous Occurrence during the Mission of Elbeuf] . . . . .	236
170. To Mother St. Gabriel, a Religious of Montmartre [Concerning His Ardent Desire to See Jesus and Mary Live and Reign in the Hearts of the Abbess and Her Daughters] . . . . .	237
171. To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson [On the Government of the Charity Sisters of Bayeux) . . . . .	237
172. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [On the Difficulties to Obtain Approbation of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary] . . . . .	238
173. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond in Rome [On the Necessity of Having the Superior General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary Appointed by the Sovereign Pontiff] . . . . .	239
174. To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson [On the Consolations of Crosses and on the House of the Charity Sisters at Bayeux] . . . . .	240
175. To Colbert [On His Departure for Caen] . . . . .	241
176. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [Concerning Father Boniface's Petition] . . . . .	242
177. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [On Love for Jesus and Mary] . . . . .	242
178. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [To Ask to Resign as Superior General in Order to Calm the Tempest] . . . . .	243
<b>XX11</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b>
179. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [On the Indulgences Obtained for the Missions) . . . . .	243
180. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond in Rome [On the Ingratitude of One of His Children] . . . . .	244
181. To Mother St. Gabriel [On an Illness] . . . . .	244
182. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond in Rome [On the Indulgences Obtained for the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart] . . . . .	245

183 To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond in Rome [On a Defamatory Libel Published against Him] . . . . .	246
184. To the Priests of His Congregation [On Trust in God in the Midst of Persecutions] . . . . .	247
185. To Sisters Mary of the Nativity Herson and Mary of the Child Jesus Bois-David then with the Charity Sisters of Bayeux [To Request Them to Return to Caen] . . . . .	248
186. To the Superior of the Rouen Seminary [In Answer to a Letter Urging Him to Reply to the Libel of the Abbe d'Aulnay] . .	249
187. To Mother St. Gabriel [On Afflictions] . . . . .	249
188. To Mother St. Gabriel [On His Grief during His Disfavor with Louis XIV] . . . . .	250
189. To an Unknown Person [On His Numerous Duties during a Mission] . . . . .	251
190. To a Religious of Montmartre [To Assure Her That He Forgives His Enemies] . . . . .	251
191. To a Religious of Montmartre [Consolation in the Midst of His Trials] . . . . .	252
192. To a Religious of Montmartre [The Saint's Feelings toward His Enemies] . . . . .	252
193. To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson, His Niece [On Trust in God] . . . . .	252
194. To the Religious of Our Lady of Charity [On Humility I . . .	253
195- To the Community of Our Lady of Charity in Caen [On the Preparation for the Feast of Pentecost] . . . . .	253
196. To a Religious of Our Lady of Charity [To Console Her] . .	254
197- To Father Trochu, the Almoner of His Lordship the Bishop of Meaux [With Reference to the Rumors Circulated about the Saint in Connection with Mary des Vallées] . . . . .	254

## **CONTENTS**

## **XX111**

198. To His Lordship Francis de Nesmond, Bishop of Bayeux [On His Connections with Mary des Vallées] . . . . .	256
199. To Sister Mary St. Henry, a Religious of Montmartre [On a Libel Publicly Circulated by the Saint's Enemies] . . . . .	257

200. To an Unidentified Person [On the Ordeals to Which the Saint Had to Submit] . . . . .	258
201. To Mother St. Gabriel, a Religious of Montmartre [On the Value of Crosses] . . . . .	258
202. To King Louis XIV [Memoir Dealing with the Boniface Petition] . . . . .	259
203. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [To Urge Him to Accept the Position of Visitor of the Houses of the Congregation] . . . . .	260
204. To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond [To Entrust Him with the Duties of Visitor] . . . . .	261
205. To His Lordship Francis Harlay de Champvallon, Archbishop of Paris [To Request an Audience with King Louis XIV] . . . . .	261
206. To King Louis XIV [To Disclaim Father Boniface's Petition and to Request an Audience of Him] . . . . .	262
207..To Mother St. Gabriel [On the Illness of Which God Has Cured Him] . . . . .	263
208. To Madame d'Argouges [On the Projected Establishment of the Daughters of Our Lady of Charity in Paris] . . . . .	264
209. To Father Louis Francis d'Argentan, a Capuchin [On His Book, <i>Les Grandeurs de la Sainte Vierge</i> ] . . . . .	265
210. To Father Ralph de Bon [To Inform Him of His Appointment as Superior of the Evreux Seminary] . . . . .	266
211. To Father Richard Dufour, His Secretary [To Give an Account of His Audience with Louis XIV] . . . . .	266
212. To Father Ralph de Bon, Superior of the Evreux Seminary [On a Loss He Has Suffered] . . . . .	268
273. To a Superior of Missionaries [On the Course to Follow in Giving Missions] . . . . .	268
214. To a Benedictine Abbess [To Beg Her Not to Suppress the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary] . . . . .	270
215. To a Nun of the Order of St. Benedict [To Become Humble, but Not Discouraged because of Her Shortcomings] . . . . .	271
<b>XXIV</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b>
216. To Two Religious of Montmartre [On Crosses and Afflictions) . . . . .	272

217. To a Religious of Montmartre [On the Crosses and Afflictions of One of Her Sisters in Religion] . . . . .	273
218. To a Nun of the Order of St. Benedict [On the Good Use to Be Made of Her Headaches] . . . . .	274
219. To a Religious of Montmartre [On the Love of God] . . .	274
220. To Mother St. Gabriel, a Religious of Montmartre [On Trust in Mary] . . . . .	275
221. To a Nun of Montmartre [On Obedience during a Time of Illness] . . . . .	275
222. To One of His Nephews [On the Occasion of Some Services He Had Received from Him] . . . . .	276
223. To the Superior of the Coutances Seminary [On the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary ] . . . . .	276
224. To a Superior [On How to Say Holy Mass] . . . . .	276
225. To the Superior of One of His Houses [On Mistrust of Self and Frequent Recourse to Our Lord] . . . . .	277
226. To the Superior of One of His Seminaries [On Trust in God] .	277
227. To the Same Superior [On Another Occasion] . . . . .	277
228. To the Superior of the Rouen Seminary [On the Necessity of Offering Daily an Hour of Prayer] . . . . .	278
229. To the Superior of One of His Houses [To Request Prayers of Him for the Poor Who Are Involved in Lawsuits] . . . .	278
230. To a Superior [To Reprimand Him for Neglecting to Celebrate a Day Recommended as One of Thanksgiving in the Congregation for a Favor Received] . . . . .	278
231. To a Superior [On How to Direct Subordinates] . . . . .	279
232. To a Superior [In Answer to a Refusal to Allow the Departure of a Subject Requested by the Saint] . . . . .	279
233. To a Superior [To Ask Him Not to Be Too Exacting with Regard to the Sick] . . . . .	280
234. To a Confrere [The Saines Charity toward a Sick Person]	280
235. To One of His Sons [At the Beginning of the New Year]	281

236. To a Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary [To Inform Him that He Has Forgotten His Past Wrongs] . . . . . 281

## CONTENTS

XXV

237 To One of His Priests Who Is on a Mission [On the Persecutions of Which the Saint Is a Victim] . . . . . 281

238. To the Priests of His Congregation [On the Accomplishment of the Divine Will] . . . 282

239. To One of His Sons [On Obedience] . . . . . 282

240. To Some of His Priests during a Mission [On Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary] . . . . . 283

241. To a Priest of His Congregation [On Crosses] . . . . . 283

242. To a Priest of His Congregation [A Reply to Be Given to a Carmelite Nun of Caen, Who Believed She Had Been Inspired to Change Communities] . . . . . 283

243. To the Superior of the Coutances Seminary [On Trust in God during a Time of Trial] . . .284

## Shorter Works

*Memorialc Beneficiorum Dei* . . . . . 287

Vow to Offer Himself as a Sacrifice and Victim to Jesus . . . 315

Contract of Holy Matrimony with the Most Blessed Virgin Mary . 318

Letter to the Most Holy Virgin . . . . . 323

Last Will and Testament of Saint John Eudes . . . . . 325

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary to Give Thanks to Her, to Recommend to Her Care the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, and to Ask of Her a Good and Holy Death . . . . . 332



## INTRODUCTION

The English translation of the letters of St. John Eudes, which is now being presented to the public, deserves to be widely read. "The style is the man himself," and it is always interesting to know the man; this applies even more to a saint.

John Eudes is not a stylist. He does not attempt to charm with the sparkling wit of Madame de Sévigné or the naive simplicity of St. Francis de Sales. Only the first letter, written when he was still a member of the Oratory,<sup>(1)</sup> gives the impression of conscious effort and striving for effect. In the 242 (2) other letters, St. John Eudes reveals himself as he really was, and we can form an unerring picture of him with his Norman shrewdness, his profound wisdom, his exquisite tenderness and his consummate sanctity.

First we remark in these letters the sly shrewdness characteristic of the Norman peasant. Born at Ri near Argentan, in the section of Normandy later known as the "pocket of Falaise," John Eudes was the son of an educated farmer and a local country girl. In him we find

(1). On March 25, 1623, John Eudes entered the Oratory of Jesus, a religious order of priests, founded in 1611 by Cardinal Peter de Bérulle. The Saint was an Oratorian until 1643 when he left the Oratory to found the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

(2). In the course of his long and active career St. John Eudes wrote hundreds of letters. Several volumes of the original correspondence preserved by the Eudist Fathers at their Caen Seminary were lost during the French Revolution when the Seminary was confiscated by the Government. More fortunate than their spiritual brothers, the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of Caen were able to keep safe about 72 autographed letters that their holy founder had written to members or friends of the Community. Incomplete copies of this collection were to be found in many Refuge monasteries about the middle of the Nineteenth Century. When Reverend Charles Lebrun and Reverend Joseph Dauphin undertook the editing of the *Oeuvres Complètes* at the beginning of the present century, they collected in one volume all these letters together with many others that were found wholly or in part in the early biographies of the Saint. To these were also added a few letters sent to other communities or preserved in the National Archives of Paris. Up to the present the number of extant letters is 243.

XXV11-

XXV111-

## INTRODUCTION

the typical Lower Norman who upholds his "woolen stocking"<sup>(3)</sup> against Mother Margaret Frances Patin<sup>(4)</sup> and consents to advance money only upon receipt of a signature.<sup>(5)</sup> He is the crafty ruralist who, in view of the opposition registered by the aldermen of Caen to the transfer of the House of Our Lady of Charity, advises that the thing be done "with such secrecy that you will be housed before it becomes known."<sup>(6)</sup> On another occasion he purchased, under an assumed name, the "Petit Prés" land before the Reverend Jesuit Fathers, who coveted it equally, got wind of his intentions.<sup>(7)</sup>

Being a saint, he knows how to renounce the goods of this world, but being likewise a Norman, he tries to retrieve what he has just sacrificed.

As for the twelve hundred livres, we must, first of all, sacrifice them to God. After that, however, I am of the opinion that you should have a novena of Masses for the Dead said for the souls in Purgatory, in order to enlist their aid in recovering the money.<sup>(8)</sup>

When Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament (9) died, the Prioress of the Carmelites of Beaune sent him some medals of the Holy Infant Jesus to commemorate the occasion. The Saint thanked the Prioress profusely; then he added naively and charmingly: "We are deeply grateful to you for the eight medals, but there are (twelve) brothers in our little community . . ." (10) St. John Eudes is thus a typical Norman who never relinquishes what he has and claims what is his exact due.

- If Norman shrewdness can be read between the lines of the correspondence of John Eudes,
- (3). People in the rural districts of France often keep their valuables in woolen stockings, since they do not possess strongboxes.
  - (4). A Visitation nun who assisted St. John Eudes in founding the Order of Our Lady of Charity. For upwards of twenty years she directed the first monastery at Caen.
  - (5). See Letter 120. All references are to the present American edition.
  - (6). See Letter 60.
  - (7). See Letter 68.
  - (8). See Letter 212.
  - (9). Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, a saintly Carmelite nun Of Beaune, had a special devotion to the Child Jesus and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Cf. The Sacred Heart of Jesus (New York, 1946), p. 62.
  - (10). Letter 24.

## INTRODUCTION XX1X-

all his letters reveal patently the profound wisdom of the spiritual director of souls. Madame de Budos, Abbess of the Benedictine Monastery at Caen, and Sister Mary de Taillepie, a humble lay sister of the same abbey, both lived under his guidance. Mother Elizabeth, Superior of the Carmelites of Beaune, Mother Melchilde, Foundress of the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament, Mother Frances de Lorraine, Abbess of Montmartre, together with several of her daughters, Mother Margaret Frances Patin, the eminent Visitation Nun loaned to the Saint for the founding of Our Lady of Charity -all entrusted to him the guidance of their souls. There was also "his eldest daughter," Madame Blouet de Camilly(11) whom the Saint directed all her life and regarded as the true foundress of his institutions.

From all these letters we can glean a real treatise on the spiritual guidance of souls.

Rejoice, dearest sister, and have no fear of receiving Communion as usual, for every soul clothed with divine grace is prepared for Holy Communion, even though the senses are not garbed in the beautiful raiment of devout feelings and divine consolations, but remain in great dryness and poverty of devotion.(12)

This salutary advice was given at a time when even reputable theologians, influenced by the rigor of Jansenism, stipulated a perfectly pure love, accompanied by spiritual elation, as requisite for frequent approach to the Holy Table. St. John Eudes strove to counteract this insidious doctrine, using the very recommendations that were solemnly pronounced by His Holiness Pope Pius X almost three hundred years later.

The Saint teaches his disciples to profit richly by their shortcomings,(13) to sanctify even their headaches"so that~ by this means, you may pay some small measure of honor to His divine head crowned

(11). Madame Blouet de Camilly was a noble lady of Caen, Normandy. She assisted the Saint on several occasions when he was organizing the first house of the order of Our Lady of Charity and of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. She was very devout received spiritual guidance from Saint John

Eudes until her death in 1680.

(12). See Letter 15.

(13). See Letter 215.

XXX-

## INTRODUCTION

with thorns.(14) He constantly preaches a hatred for the world. One of the best illustrations of his ardor is found in his reproach to Madame Blouet de Camilly for considering marriage instead of the religious life for her beautiful daughter.

Marry Fanfan!(15) is Marry that lovely lily-bud! (16) Oh, if you but know how those words, though you spoke them laughingly, have left me heartbroken.(17)

... she will have to cooperate and prepare for it (the religious life) through an intense hatred for the world with its vanities, a great scorn of self and an ardent desire to endeavor to seek all possible means of pleasing Him who desires to wed her.

It is your duty, my dear daughter, to help her, through your instructions, to adorn and beautify herself in order to be pleasing in the eyes of the Son of God and of the Blessed Virgin Mary.(18)

These conversational letters reveal even the small but effective penances which a spiritual director may impose upon his charges, thus affording them so much pleasure. Sister Mary de Taillepiéd could tell us about the prayer she had to offer for seven minutes "on these words: 'They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world'"(19) in reparation for having used a worldly expression in one of her letters(20).

St. John Eudes clearly assigns the virtues to their proper position.

If you are ordered to eat meat, be extremely careful not to make the slightest resistance to obedience, for you will render more honor to God by eating flesh meat through obedience than by fasting on bread and water of your own volition.(21)

(14). See Letter 213.

(15). An affectionate nickname given to Mademoiselle de Camilly in her family circle.

(16). A nickname given to her by St. John Eudes.

(17). See Letter 17.

(18). See Letter 19.

(19). See John 17.

(20). See Letter 4.

(21). see Letter 221.

## INTRODUCTION      xxx1

We learn from the Saint's counsels to remain at peace by finding all our joy in God;(22) we learn how to sanctify our illnesses and to prepare for death without worrying about a general confession.(23)

These letters are a treatise on asceticism from which mysticism is not excluded. The practice of passive prayer(24) is censured in them, and the disciples of Mr. John de Bernières(25) are severely criticized.

That is what a holy person(26) had told Mr. de Bernières a number of times-that as many souls as he started on the path of passive prayer (that is God's province), he was starting on the road to hell.(27)

When God introduces a soul to mysticism, it must correspond with grace. St. John Eudes as the spiritual director of the celebrated mystic of Coutances(28) knows these secluded paths, and he gently teaches Madame Blouet de Camilly that spiritual rapture is not good for her, and that it is better for her to remain in the barren state of spiritual dryness to which she has been committed by the divine will, "our most bountiful Mother." (29)

If extraordinary happenings take place, such as visions or revelations, the Saint is not troubled; he understands the penetration of minds, and his doctrine closely resembles that of St. Francis de Sales in the

(22). Letter 3.

(23). Letter 109.

(24). The Saint refers to the prayer of quiet or quietism, an erroneous doctrine developed by Michael de Molinos in his work *Dux Spiritualis* (Rome, 1675). Molinos taught that in prayer one must not use images or discursive thought, but must remain in "obscure faith" and in quiet, forgetting every distinct thought of the Divine attributes, abiding in God's presence to adore, love and serve Him, but without producing any acts because with these God is not pleased. Quietism was condemned by Innocent XI in 1687.

(25). Mr. John de Bernières, a devoted friend of St. John Eudes. He was a fervent layman and built a house at Caen called The Hermitage where he and some gentlemen spent their leisure in prayer and devotional exercises. See Letter 15, note 12, and Letter 99, note 1.

(26). Mary des Vallées, called "The Saint of Coutances," as the victim of a curse and for many years suffered excruciating pains with admirable patience. Through her instrumentality God revealed many important matters to St. John Eudes, especially the founding of his two religious orders. See Letter 17, note 3.

(27). Letter 99.

(28). Mary des Vallées.

(29). *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book 8, Chap. 13.

XXX11-

## INTRODUCTION

*Treatise on the Love of God*. He stresses the fact that "the third mark of divine inspiration is holy obedience to the Church and to superiors." (29) To a Carmelite nun who asks his approval of her desire to change communities, he sends this reply full of wisdom:

... I exhort her to follow the example of her blessed Mother, St. Teresa, who, one day received a command from the mouth of Our Lord Himself to go and establish a new Order-a matter of far greater importance for her than merely changing from one convent to another. When the Saint informed her superior about her plans, she was prevented from carrying them out and was ordered to go elsewhere. Whereupon she obeyed at once ... without opening her mouth to make reply or plea. Afterwards Our Lord told her that she had been more pleasing to Him in obeying her superior than if she had made the new foundation. Let Sister St. Anne remain in peace where she is, according to that example, until I come to Caen to look into the matter more closely . . . Obedience does no harm. Sister may be mistaken in her revelations, but she will never make a mistake by being obedient.(30)

Another trait of character that the letters of St. John Eudes reveal to the reader is his inexpressible tenderness, the tenderness of a profoundly human soul. We are told that the Saint used to have bread crumbs scattered to the birds during the winter; that he would stroke the head of the

little page who served his meals; that he graciously shared the recreation of his spiritual daughters of Our Lady of Charity as St. Francis de Sales had formerly done at the Visitation Convent of Annecy. The formal writings of St. John Eudes do not reveal these lovable traits. His fatherly heart must be sought in his correspondence. We continually find him worrying about the health of his religious. To a Superior of Missionaries he writes:

Please be careful of your health, and to that end I urge you never to preach longer than an hour at a time. I also recommend to you the health of our dear brothers.(31)

(30). Letter 242.

(31). Letter 213.

## INTRODUCTION XXX111-

He exhorts Mother Margaret Frances Patin, the Superior of Our Lady of Charity, to exercise the utmost care in the direction of the house because

... the fervor of our good Sisters and their desire to mortify themselves may impel them to endure excessive cold which may cause illness among them.(32)

St. John Eudes brings all his daughters to the holy altar,(33) and never forgets them there. Seven or eight times a day he recites for their intention the *Nos cum Prole*, (34) and if he is separated from them by order of the Bishop, (35) he quotes St. Paul: "What shall separate my heart from the holy love I should feel for the most cherished abode of such a good Mother? (36)

This paternal affection is especially noticeable in the Saint's letters to Madame Blouet de Camilly, his celebrated charge, "whom we hold most dear on earth." In one of his letters to her he writes:

I am worried because you mentioned in your last letter that you were not well(37)

When Mr. de Camilly, her husband, falls sick, St. John Eudes consoles her thus:

God grant, my dearest daughter, that on the occasion of our beloved brother's illness I may give you the same reply as that of Our Lord to St. Martha and St. Magdalen, who had told Him just what you write to me: "He whom Thou lovest is sick." God grant, I repeat, that I may reply to you: "This sickness is not unto death." (38)

(32). Letter 88.

(33). Letter 114

(34). A blessing used in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary: *Nos cum Prole Pia benedicat Virgo Maria. Amen.* "May Mary with her Divine Child bless us. Amen."

(35). Bishop Francis Servien of Bayeux deprived the Saint of his office of Ecclesiastical Superior of the Order of Our Lady of Charity at Caen. Cf. Emile Georges, St. Jean Eudes (Paris, 1936), P. 218.

(36). Letter 59.

(37). Letter 19.

(38). Letter 10B.

## XXX1V-

## INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately Mr. de Camilly's sickness was fatal and simultaneously the Saint learned about the serious illness of Madame de Camilly:

I cannot tell you too often, my dearest daughter, how distressed and grieved I am, for that is inexpressible. Certainly I know well through experience that your griefs and sufferings are also mine.(39)

Her saintly director counsels her to profit well by her sickness and trouble; he reminds her how she should prepare for death, if it be God's holy will. St. John Eudes's paternal tenderness sets aside a magnificent present for her:

Yesterday and today I said Holy Mass to supplicate Our Lord to grant you three things:

First, to bestow upon you, in whatever way He deems best and finds most pleasing, all the graces and gifts He has deigned and will deign to grant me during my lifetime, all the Masses I have said and shall yet say, all my missions of the past and the future . . .

Secondly, to bestow on you all the Holy Masses, missions and goodworks which, through His grace, have been performed and will yet be performed in our Congregation.

Thirdly, to bestow on you all the souls He has granted and will grant me yet, in His great mercy, on all the missions I have given and will yet give, and in other circumstances; and grant you these things in order to contribute to the accomplishment of His designs for you from all eternity.(40)

Here is the principal thing I ask of you, my dearest daughter. It is that, when God has shown you mercy . . . you take our Congregation and the House of Our Lady of Charity under your special protection in heaven. To this end I constitute you to be henceforth in the name of Our Lord and His most holy Mother, the solicitor and provider of all spiritual and temporal affairs, that you may intercede and beg for us at the throne of God and

(39) Letter 109.

(40). Letter 109.

## INTRODUCTION

xxxv-

with the Blessed Mother.... Will you accept this position, my dearest daughter ... ? (41)

The Saint thus appoints Madame de Camilly the heavenly advocate of the Order of Our Lady of Charity and of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. It would be difficult to say in what proportion God ratified these gifts. But what concerns us is the deep and delicate affection of this manly soul, the very lifelike tenderness of its paternal devotedness, the charming ingenuity of this heart wholly identified with the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

What we discover above all else in these letters of St. John Eudes is his consummate sanctity.

In his "Introduction" to *The Kingdom of Jesus* Monsignor Sheen aptly comments that "the poet would hold the 'mirror up to nature,' but this Saint holds the 'mirror up to Jesus.'"

In his letters we constantly see that the Saint's reaction, instantaneous and without reflection, is the same sincere, spontaneous ejaculation, the simple all-powerful word: *Jesus*.

When his crosses, trials and persecutions are mentioned, St. John Eudes retorts that men are

but "rods used by this good Father to punish us." (42)

Even when the soul dearest to him reaches the point of death, it is not an occasion for weeping but a time to remind his friend what to do in order to die in the spirit of Our Lord:

The best disposition for a Christian death is to give yourself entirely to Our Lord, that you may unite yourself with all the holy dispositions with which He, His Holy Mother and all the saints died.(43)

Honors are offered to him. He is to be appointed co-adjutor Bishop of Evreux, but he answers thus:

I want no benefice other than the one my Saviour chose for Himself, that is, the Cross. That is the benefice I desire, that I embrace and love with

(41).Letter 109.

(42). Letter 61.

(43). Letter 109.

XXV1-

## INTRODUCTION

all my heart for the love of my most amiable Crucified Saviour, Who loved and preferred it to all that the world loves and esteems more highly. I want no other, unless God absolutely wills it.(44)

The mirror is admirably focused. The Saint loves the Cross of Christ and feels insecure whenever God refrains from overwhelming him with tribulations.(45)

Moreover, no misfortune troubles him for he places his hope not in earthly things, not even in his own dispositions or good works, but purely in the mercy of His all-bountiful God .(46)

Apostle and missionary, John Eudes was fired with zeal for immortal souls redeemed by Our Blessed Lord on Calvary. In his letters as well as in his writings on the priesthood, St. John Eudes ranks the work of the apostolate far above almsgiving, fasts, vigils and other mortifications; in fact, he places it above miracles(47) and even martyrdom itself, for

The most divine of all divine functions, says St. Dionysius the Areopagite, is to work with God for the salvation of souls. It is the continual occupation of the God-Man Himself; to it He devotes all His thoughts, all His efforts and all the powers of His divinity and humanity. It is the employment He gives to His angels and His greatest saints, the Apostles. It is the fruit of so many labors, so much sweat, so many tears, so much pain, so many fasts, so much preaching and shedding of blood, so many holy actions and cruel sufferings in the life of God on earth-a life of thirty-four years, terminated for the same end by His awesome death.(48)

His burning ardor for souls is also expressed forcibly elsewhere in the same letter written to the Ladies of Mercy in Rouen to exhort them to assist in the work of the Refuge of Caen:

(44). Letter 160.

(45). Letter 72.

(46). Letter 109.

(47) Letter 10.

(48). Letter 10.

Since it is so pleasing to God to build hospitals and sanitariums, think of the good accomplished by helping to establish a home and hospital for souls. . . (49)

To Father Blouet de Camilly, his successor as head of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, he writes:

What are all those doctors and bachelors of arts doing in Paris, while souls are perishing by the thousand for want of someone to offer them a hand to withdraw them from perdition and preserve them from everlasting fire? Certainly, if I dared, I would go straight to Paris and cry out in the Sorbonne and the other colleges: Fire! Fire! The flames of hell are consuming the whole universe! Come you doctors, bachelors, and parish priests, come all you ecclesiastics, and help to extinguish them! (50)

In the presence of such flaming zeal, we may conclude with another letter of the Saint which reveals the source of his passionate ardor for souls, namely his all-absorbing love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus:

Hear, hear, O great furnace of Love! It is a tiny wisp of straw that begs Thee most earnestly to be cast, engulfed, lost, devoured, consumed for ever in Thy sacred flames.(51)

The letters of St. John Eudes should not be read superficially or in haste. They are spiritual reading, rather heavy, perhaps, but rich in spiritual thought like the Norman soil from which they are sprung. When the peasant of Ri" turns over the sod, he knows that there "a treasure is hidden inside." Let us confidently plow the soil of these letters so filled with promise, and realize once more the prophecy of the Kingdom of Heaven; for it "is like a treasure hidden in a field. The man

(49). Letter 10.

(50). Letter 79.

(51). Letter 219.

(52). Ri, a village near Argentan, Normandy, the birthplace of St. John Eudes.

who finds it buries it again; then in his joy he goes forth to sell all his possessions and buys the field."(53)

Francis Lebesconte Superior General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.  
Sacred Heart Seminary Charlesbourg, P. Q. June 25, 1946

(53). See Matt 13, 44.



## LETTER I(1)

To Madame Laurence de Budos,(2) Abbess of Holy Trinity Monastery(3)  
at Caen. On the death of her brother, Anthony Hercules de Budos, (4)  
killed at the siege of Privas.(5)'

[1629]

LIVE JESUS AND MARY

Madame,

May the grace, peace and consolation of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His most Holy Mother be with you for ever.

I must and I wish to adore with you the most holy and amiable will of God in the affliction it has pleased Him to send you. I must and I wish to cherish and love His eminently just and amiable hand which has dealt your soul such a harsh blow and pierced your heart with so bloody a wound, since that divine hand does nothing save through love of self and its creatures whom it seems to love even as itself.

Nevertheless, I must confess that my soul is filled with sadness and my heart with anguish at the thought of your agony. I cannot think of

(1). The purpose of these footnotes is to identify persons to whom the *letters* are addressed or to whom reference is made. Historical and theological terms are also elucidated and brief annotations are added on geographical names unfamiliar to the average English-speaking reader. The chief source books of Eudistic data used in the preparation of this edition are: Ch. de Montzey, *Father Eudes* (London, 1874); D. Boulay, *Vie du Vénérable Jean Eudes* (Paris, 1908), a very elaborate biography in four large volumes; Matthew Russell, S.J., *The Life of Blessed John Eudes* (London, 1909); *Oeuvres Complètes du Bienheureux Jean Eudes* (Vannes, 1910); P. Costil, *Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie* and *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, two unpublished mimeographed volumes; J. M. Ory, *The Origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity* (Buffalo, 1918); H. Joly, *Life of Saint John Eudes* (London, 1932); E. Georges, *Saint Jean Eudes* (Paris, 1936).

## 2 - LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

you, nor of your piteous state, without pain and tears; that, I believe, is permitted me. I see Jesus, the joy of heaven and earth, giving way to profound grief at the sight of the tears of Martha and Magdalen, who were weeping for the death of their brother!(6) Why, then, may I not weep on a similar occasion? I wish to weep with Jesus, that I may honor His tears. I wish to weep with all who mourn, according to the words of the Apostle St. Paul: "Weep with them that weep." (7) I wish to weep from the same emotions and sentiments as Jesus wept. I wish to offer Him a sacrifice of tears in homage to His divine and adorable tears. Let us, Madame, offer Him our tears in honor of His. Let us implore Him to sanctify and bless them through His. Let us beseech Him to unite our grief with His own in such a way that the tears flowing from our eyes may be mingled with those celestial waters of which the Prophet David says: "Let all the waters that are above the heavens, praise the name of the Lord." (8)

Madame, would you have your tears united with those sacred waters which unceasingly bless God in heaven? Then weep holily and religiously, that is to say, shed tears worthy of a religious and of one who is in a state obligating her to holiness. Let your eyes weep, but let your will be submissive to the will of God. Let your eyes weep, but let

- (2). Madame Laurence de Budos, daughter of Viscount de Portes, belonged to one of the most illustrious families of France. When she became abbess of Holy Trinity Monastery at Caen, she found the house without enclosure, common life, regular religious dress, and scarcely any observance of the rule. All these irregularities she eventually remedied by her patience, meekness, and good example. St. John Eudes met the Abbess of Holy Trinity when he was a young Oratorian at Caen. Madame de Budos recognizing the profound wisdom and great *prudence* of the Saint, placed herself and her religious under his guidance. She died at Caen in the odor of sanctity on June 23, 1650. Cf. D. Boulay, *Vie du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, Vol. 1, p. 275; H. Joly, *Life of Saint John Eudes*, PP. 34 and 42; E. Georges, *Saint Jean Eudes*, p. 29.
- (3). A Benedictine monastery founded by Matilda of Flanders, wife of William the Conqueror. Only a lady of noble blood could hold the office of abbess. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 1, 274.
- (4) Vice-Admiral of France. Cf. Boulay, *ibid.*, P. 275.
- (5). Huguenot stronghold in Languedoc, southwestern France. The siege and capture of Privas in 1629 was the final episode of the religious wars during the reign of Louis XIII.
- (6). John 11, 35. V
- (7). ROM. 12, 15.
- (8). Ps. 148, 4-5

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS 3 -

your heart and lips frequently repeat these divine words uttered by Jesus at the height of His anguish, and in a distress infinitely more poignant than your own: O my Father and my God, "not my will, but Thine be done." (9) In short, weep patiently and moderately, not excessively and without restraint.

Blessed are your tears if they are shed in this manner, for they will deserve to be dried by the hand of God Himself, according to this passage from Sacred Scripture: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (10) They will be carefully gathered by the hands of the angels. They will be cherished like a precious liquid that perfumes heaven and renders eternal praise to God. If, on the contrary, they were not accompanied by these dispositions, they would be very displeasing to God and His angels and would serve only to make the flames of purgatory more painful for you. I implore Our Lord Jesus not to permit such a thing. I should gladly entreat Him, if it were possible, to transfer all the anguish in your soul to me, so that not only might I share your pain and sorrow, but even bear alone the weight of this affliction. Yet it is so heavy that only Our Lord can support it.

I beseech Him, then, to dwell in your soul, to enter into your heart, that He Himself may bear within you this painful cross which He has ordained to be yours. The Prophet Isaiah tells us that Christ came into the world to share the burden of our sorrows and infirmities (11). Indeed, Our Blessed Lord once experienced the same sorrow you are suffering now, a sorrow which for Him was infinitely more bitter and painful than yours is for you. The anguish you feel at this moment was one of the causes of the anguish He suffered in the Garden of Gethsemani, making Him sweat blood and utter these sorrowful words: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." (12) It was not only the sight of the pains He was to suffer in His own body which wrung these words from His lips, but also the clear knowledge He possessed at the time of all the afflictions, those of the body as well as the spirit, which His beloved children were to undergo. He saw even then the grief

- (9). Luke 22, 42.
- (10). APOC. 7, 17.
- (11). Isa. 53, 4.
- (12). Matt. 26, 38.

which oppresses you at this moment. He beheld your tears, He heard your laments and sighs; and all these sighs and complaints were as so many sharp and piercing arrows which transfixed His Heart with grief because of the infinite love He bears you, just as the complaints and sorrows of a child dear to his father are like painful shafts in the heart of that poor parent when he beholds the suffering of his beloved offspring.

Jesus, therefore, Who is your Father and Spouse, felt in His paternal Heart the same affliction which fills yours at the present time. For that reason it should seem sweet and soothing to you, since it has passed through a Heart so full of love and meekness. I repeat that He once bore the same affliction that you bear. He bore it without your help and for your sake; yet He still wishes to bear it now in you and with you. Admit Him, then, into your soul. Do not let yourself become so taken up with grief that you leave no place in your heart for Him Who is your joy, your consolation and your all.

I see Him knocking at the door of your heart and waiting there with His own Heart and hands full of ineffable graces, blessings and comforts which He yearns to bestow upon you.

I hear Him saying to you in a kind and gentle voice: "Open to me, my dearly beloved sister, open to me the door of your heart." It is open to Thee; enter, O good Jesus, enter this poor heart. It is open to Thee; of that I am certain. Could it be possible that this soul would be so unfaithful as to refuse Thee admittance into her heart, allowing herself to be fully possessed by a futile and pernicious sadness? No, no, I do not think so. Enter, therefore, O God of love and comfort, into this heart crucified by grief, that it may be filled with love and consolation. Rid it of sadness and weariness and fill it with that strong and vigorous love through which Thou didst bear with strength and constancy the sorrows and agonies of the Cross and death.

Madame, behold then Jesus within your heart. He is there with the desire to bear with you the harshness of your trial, but He neither can nor wishes to bear it without you. Therefore unite yourself with Him, that you may bear your sorrow with Him. Unite your spirit with His spirit, your heart with His Heart and your will with His will.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

5 -

Bear it holily, as He bore it holily and divinely; bear it strongly and courageously, as He bore it strongly and courageously.

To this end, I beg of you in His name to divert your mind from all considerations which sadden you, that you may devote it to better and holier thoughts. Consider the most holy will of God. Remember that this divine will is very worthy, excellent, powerful and absolutely sovereign in all things, is very just and equitable, very happy and joyous in all it does, and is very wise and prudent in all it ordains. All these points regarding that divine will are most worthy of consideration, and it seems to me that the purest, holiest and most perfect consolation I can give you should be drawn from these holy and divine considerations, and not at all from shallow and earthly thoughts, since I am addressing a person who has renounced everything shallow and earthly in the world in order to be professed in a holy and heavenly life.

Therefore consider, Madame, that the will of God is immense, that is, it reaches everywhere, arranging and ordaining everything that takes place in this world. That is why nothing happens by chance, nor by luck or accident; all things occur through the guidance and will of God.

Consider that the divine will alone is worthy of existence, continuance and accomplishment because of its infinite excellence and dignity; then let every other will be annihilated in the face of this one. Consider that it alone is worthy of reigning by reason of its sovereignty; then let every other will become submissive to its reign, not through compulsion, as in the case of the demons, but voluntarily, as with the angels. Consider that it is most just and equitable in itself and all its effects; then let all other wills acquiesce and conform to its decrees, as being eminently just and equitable. Consider that it is most sweet and amiable, doing all things through love of self and us; then let it be loved and cherished at least by those who have renounced love of the world to consecrate themselves to God. Consider that the divine will does all things with happiness and rejoicing; then let it be praised and blessed with happiness and rejoicing in all its manifestations, banishing all excessive sadness. Finally, consider that it does all things for the best, in the best possible way, at the most propitious time and place; then let

6 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

it be adored and glorified in all the conditions and circumstances in which it accomplishes its work.

Thus, Madame, do the angels and saints look upon and adore the most adorable will of God in heaven. Think how many saints there are in heaven who see their fathers, mothers, brothers and other relatives in the damnation of hell, which is the misfortune of misfortunes and the height of all woes; and notwithstanding, they adore, they love, they bless with joy and happiness that most just will because they see that such is the decree of divine justice concerning these relatives.

There is nothing like that in your case, thank God. The misfortune in which you have to adore the will of God is infinitely less grievous and bitter. Indeed, it is but honey and sweetness in comparison with the other sorrow. In that case it is a question of an eternal death, a terrible and fearful death; here it is a matter only of a temporal death which must not even be called death, but rather the passing from a mortal and unhappy life to an immortal and happy one. Then adore, on this occasion so sweet and benign to one who understands it well, adore, I repeat, and love and bless the most sweet and amiable will of God on earth, as the saints adore and bless it in heaven.

I do not doubt in the least that you are doing this. If you did not, how could you dare hope one day to be united with the saints in heaven, since one must do on earth what they do in heaven? If you did not imitate them, how could you dare say these words which you address to God so many times each day: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?" (13) Would you not fear that the Son of God might make the same terrible reproach to you that He once made to the hypocritical Pharisees: "Hypocrites, well hath Isaiah prophesied of you, saying: *This people honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me?*" (14) They pray with their mouths that my will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, but their hearts belie their tongues; their works are contrary to their words.

God forbid, Madame, that that should ever be said of you! Strive rather to be numbered among those who are referred to in the magnificent words which the Church so often puts on your lips: "To the

(13). Matt 6, 10.

(14). Matt 15, 7.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS 7 -

saints, who are in his land, he hath made wonderful all my desires in them." (15) It is Jesus Who speaks, through David His Prophet, of His Eternal Father and His saints. "My Father," He says, "hath

transmitted all my wonderfully admirable intents to the saints who are on earth." You are in the world of the saints, you are in a place of holiness; there should be no one in that place who is not a saint or inclined to saintliness. Therefore you should regard all the decrees of Jesus, whatever they may be, the most severe as well as the most delightful, as being equally wonderful, admirable and pleasant; let them all be wonderfully pleasant, dear and precious to you, and more precious than anything else in heaven and on earth. You can then say with your heart what you utter each day with your lips: "The law of thy mouth is good to me, above thousands of gold and silver;" (16) that is, My God, Thy will is dearer and more precious to me than not only millions in gold and silver, but even millions of brothers, relatives and friends if I had them. I should rather be deprived of a hundred brothers than that Thou shouldst be deprived of the accomplishment of the least of Thy desires.

By taking this attitude, Madame, you will deserve to be numbered among those who are meant in these words: "To the saints who are in his land . . ." (17) Therein is the epitome of true holiness, which is wholehearted submission to the will of God in all things.

As far as I can see, there could be no better opportunity for you to advance in grace and holiness. How dear and precious should be this hour of affliction! It is a time of grace and holiness. God at this moment has an infinite number of graces and blessings to bestow on you if you will but prepare yourself to receive them through the humble submission of your will to His. You can advance farther in grace in one hour during this time of affliction than in many days during a time of consolation. It is what Jesus intends for you now. He has an infinite desire to produce various effects of grace and sanctity in your soul through the medium of this trial which He has sent you. Do not suffer Him to be deprived of the effect of His desire; do not allow Him to be thwarted in His intention; and, what is still more important, do not

(15). Ps 15, 3

(16). Ps. 118, 72.

(17). Ps. 15, 3

8 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

deprive Him of the love and glory you can bring Him at this time. You have protested so often to Him that you want only to love and honor Him. Now, you will never be able to love Him more perfectly or honor Him more holily than at this moment. You can, in this hour of affliction, offer Him more glory and love in a single moment than in several days during a time of consolation. Do not deprive Him, then, of something so tremendous which you can and ought to give Him effortlessly by submitting your will to His. It is true that this is not easy for human nature, but it is easy with the help of the grace which is given you to do so. It will be easy for you if you remember that the severest and most terrible command that God ever had or ever will have was that by which He willed that His Son, His only Son, a Son such as Jesus is—He willed, I repeat, that this Son suffer inconceivably cruel and horrible torments; not only that He suffer them but that He die the most shameful and atrocious death of all possible deaths!

Oh, how severe is this will of a Father regarding His Son! How strange and terrible it is! Yet this same Son, Who is Jesus, in some way abandons and annihilates His own will, all-pure, all-holy and all-divine that it is, so that He may conform to His Father's will, so full of harshness and terror for Him that the very thought of it makes Him sweat blood. Therefore if Jesus somehow abandoned and annihilated a will as worthy and precious as was His human will, is it not highly reasonable, Madame, that we should forsake and destroy a will as impure, imperfect and corrupted by sin as ours is, so that we may accept the most holy, divine and amiable will of God?

But let me pause now, for I hear a voice more capable than mine of consoling you. It is the

voice of him whom you mourn as dead, who nevertheless is not really dead. It is the voice of your beloved brother who says to you: "Why do you weep so, my dearly beloved sister? Is it because they told you I am dead? But no, that is not true; I am not dead but living, and more alive than ever before. I am not dead but living in God, in Whom all things live. Those are the first words of the Office which was sung for me: "Come, let us adore the King to whom all things live." I am not dead, but rather I have ceased dying that I may begin to live. Do you not know that life on earth is a life of death? It is a living death and a dying life; a life which should rather be

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

9 -

called death and not life; an earthly life, an imperfect life, a sinful life. Will you say then that I am dead because I have left that miserable existence to participate in a heavenly life, a perfect life, an eternal and happy life? Do you not know that only the thoughtless and insane consider the faithful departed to be dead? No indeed, they are not dead. Those who die in Jesus Christ, that is, in His grace and love, do not die at all but pass from a most troublesome to a supremely happy life; and much less do they die who give their lives for the interests and glory of Jesus Christ.

"If I had died as a pagan, a heretic or an apostate, you would have reason indeed to weep. If I had died in a duel in defense of my honor and my private interests, I would say to you: Weep, weep, burst into tears, tears of blood; for those are the persons who are really dead, those who die in that way. It is for such a death that one must shed tears, and tears of blood. But look! I died in an army which fights the battle of God and His interests. (18) I died for the glory of Jesus Christ, for the defense of His Church and the establishment of His faith and Gospel! Is this not a happy death? Is it not a glorious one? Is it not worthy of gladness and rejoicing rather than tears and weeping? Does it not detract from the glory and dignity of such a death to deplore and lament, as if it were the most wretched death in the world?

"Why, then, my dear sister, do you grieve so? Is it because you will no longer see me on earth? But take comfort, for we shall meet in heaven, and very shortly. And I, while awaiting this happiness during your sojourn on earth, will always have you before my eyes, to help you in all your needs and wants at the throne of the King of heaven, with Whom I enjoy no less favor than I did with the King of earth. Cease, then, my beloved sister, cease, I beg of you, your grieving. Banish your sorrow, moderate your sighs, arrest the flow of your tears which henceforth would be injurious and unpleasant to me, insofar as it would offend Him Whom I love more than myself."

Those are the words and the voice of your beloved brother, Madame, which should console you greatly if you are at all capable of being comforted.

But I hear still another voice which comes to comfort you; the voice  
(18). Anthony de Budos fought in Richelieu's army against the Protestant Duke of Rohan.

10 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

of your dear Spouse, Madame. It is the voice of Jesus, the God of all consolation, which alone can give you perfect comfort. Please listen to it, therefore, and in order better to hear it, close your ears to all the voices of human nature, passion and self-interest which are wholly contrary to the voice of Jesus. Here, then, is Jesus addressing you:

"What is the matter, my dear daughter? What grieves you so? Yes, your brother is dead, it is true, but it was I who ordained his death, and who ordained it through love of you and of him, for your greatest good and for his. Should not that alone suffice to comfort you? Should not the sole

consideration of my most amiable will console and satisfy you? Have I not enough enemies who persecute and make war on in(!, opposing all my desires and intents? Do you wish to forsake me to take your place in their ranks? Do you wish to be numbered among those who desire to destroy and annihilate my most holy will, that they may supplant it with their own? Do you wish to deprive my sovereign will of the empire and domain it must exercise over all things, that you may superimpose your own will?

"I have deprived you for a little while of the presence of your brother, but am I not always with you? I am your best friend, your father, your brother, your spouse and your all; I am worth more than ten, yes, than ten million brothers; I love you with an infinite love; I am all heart and love for you; I have infinite power to help you in all your wants and needs and to defend you against your adversaries, or rather against mine? Those who oppose you oppose me; those who are your enemies are my enemies, provided you remain always united with me.

"Furthermore, I have taken your brother from you, not, however, to deprive you of him, but in order to return him to you in a better way. Do you not know that I repay a hundredfold all that is willingly given me? I have taken him in order to oblige you to give him to me, and if you relinquish him voluntarily and gladly, I will make it up to you a hundred times over, even in this life. I will give you a hundredfold all the help, comfort and favors you would have received from him, and thus you will lose nothing but gain much.

"Then give him to me, my daughter; give him willingly to me. Will you refuse me such a little thing-me, the one who has given and who gives you so much each day? Will you refuse me the life of a

## **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

11 -

mortal man, when I have given my own life for you-a life so precious and worthy that a single moment of it is worth more than all the lives of the angels and of men? Give him to me, then, voluntarily, and not through compulsion and necessity, and I will return it all to you a hundredfold.

"And do not proceed to fill your mind with useless thoughts and cares, saying within yourself: But what will become of this one and that one? What about these persons and those persons? Who will provide for the concerns of this house and that house? After all, where is the confidence you ought to have in my providence and goodness? Do I not love more than you those persons for whom you are so troubled? I am well aware of their needs. Is not mine the power to attend in the best possible way to all the things that concern them?

"With regard to your house, which causes you so much anxiety, and rightly so, know that it is more mine than yours, and that I do not lack the will and the might to direct wisely and advantageously all matters which pertain to it.

"Therefore, my beloved daughter, rid your mind of these trifling cares, relinquishing all things to my bounty and providence. Banish, too, every other thought and consideration which serves only to fill your soul with trouble and your heart with anguish. Put an end to your tears; enough of weeping and lamenting, enough of sobbing, enough of yielding to sorrow and sadness. It is time to dry your tears so that you may devote yourself to things more holy and more worthy of your state in life. It is time for your soul to return to its former tranquility and peace. It is time to give your sisters and all who know you the comfort and edification you owe them. It is time to render me the duties and obligations of the state in life in which I have placed you. Otherwise there would be reason to believe that you loved your brother more than me, and yet you know that I have said: 'He that loveth father or mother (brother or sister) more than me, is not worthy of me.'"(19) Would you not fear that these

words might be true of you? Would you not be afraid of making yourself unworthy of me if you persevered in your excess of sadness and tears? Would you not be fearful of giving scandal to so many persons in every walk of life whose eyes are upon  
(19). Matt 10, 37

12 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

you and who expect from you a courage and constancy worthy of your position?

"What would worldlings and laymen say if they saw that a person who has taught others about virtue and holiness for so many years had not yet learned to submit herself to my will, which is the foundation of all virtue and holiness? Would you not be giving them cause to despise the vocation and Order(20) in which you live, which would have done so little for your improvement during such a long time? No, my daughter, do not lower the dignity of your position; do not vitiate the holiness of your Order; do not wrong the virtue and power of my grace. Conduct yourself in such a way, in all your actions and feelings, in your speech and exterior deportment, that people may see nothing in you and hear no word from you that would be unworthy of the dignity of your rank, the sublimity of your vocation, the glory of your Order, or the holiness and excellence of my grace and love which dwell within you."

Madame, after these divine words of Jesus, your divine Spouse, there is nothing more for me to say. Only I implore the Mother of Jesus to implant the words of her Son deep in your heart. I beseech this Mother of grace and love, this Mother of all consolation, to fill your heart with her divine consolations and let you participate in the grace and love by virtue of which she bore unceasingly and courageously the most terrible wound inflicted by that sword of sorrow which pierced her soul, at the time of the Passion and death of her only and well-beloved Son.

I am writing you these words in anticipation of speaking personally to you, as soon as your time is less taken up with the many visits of condolence that you will receive.

I remain in Jesus and Mary, Madame,

Your most humble, obedient and devoted servant,

JOHN EUDES, priest of the Oratory of Jesus.

(20). Madame de Budos belonged to the Order of St. Benedict.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

13 -

### LETTER 2

**To Sister Mary de Taillepied, (1) Lay Sister of the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen. On the Solemnity of Jesus (2)**

[January 1634]

JESUS, MARY

In the name and on behalf of Jesus Who is your All and mine, dear Sister, in His person, spirit and love I give you, for the current month and for eternity, the great Solemnity of Jesus which we are celebrating on the twentieth(3) of this month.



It is one of the three great festivities which take place continually in heaven. If Our Lord summons you to join Him soon, (4) you will celebrate it there with great happiness and rejoicing while we are observing it here below in sorrow and anguish. We shall be solemnizing, you and I, the same feast, but alas! in a very different way.

I cannot think of this without sadness. Alas! who would not sigh and weep bitterly? I weep not for you, but for myself. Ah!! my dear and beloved Sister, if you have the least urge of charity toward your poor Father, beseech Our Lord, when you are in His presence, to take me soon from this abode of sin and imperfection to that place where I may love Him purely, perfectly and endlessly.

While awaiting the time when you shall celebrate the Solemnity of Jesus in heaven, I want to celebrate it for you on earth, or rather I implore Jesus to honor and glorify Himself in you, in whatever way He wishes. I entreat Him to accomplish this in such a manner that all

(1). Sister Mary de Taillepied was a member of a noble French Norman family. Out of humility she became a lay sister at Holy Trinity Monastery. Cf. Georges, op. cit., P. 33.

(2). A special feast celebrated by the Oratorians on January 28. The Mass and Office were composed by Cardinal de Bérulle. When St. John Eudes founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, he continued to celebrate the Solemnity of Jesus. With the establishment of the Feast of the Sacred Heart in 1672 the Saint suppressed the Oratorian feast in his Order. Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes du Bienheureux Jean Eudes*, Vol. 11, p. 591.

(3). This is an oversight As indicated in the preceding note the Solemnity of Jesus was celebrated on January 28.

(4). Sister Mary de Taillepied was very ill at the time.

14 -

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

that has ever been, is now or ever shall be in you, in your body and soul, in your thoughts, words and actions, in your temporal and eternal life, may render homage and glory to all that is in Him, in His body and His holy soul, in His divinity and humanity, in His temporal and eternal life. Finally, I implore Him to annihilate you entirely and to establish Himself perfectly in you; to draw and consume you completely within Himself; to be all in you, that one may no longer see anything but Jesus in your exterior and interior life, in time and eternity; to dwell in you, live and function in you, suffer and die in you, adore and glorify Himself in you in whatever way He desires. That, my dear Sister, is what Jesus wishes to effect in you through this feast, or rather through this great mystery which encompasses all the other mysteries and feasts, and which I give you on His behalf. Surrender yourself to Him with this sole intention, and I will do the rest for you.

Also on His behalf and in His name, I assign you as a virtue, this month and always, the holy love of Jesus, that you may live and die in His love. I implore Him to love Himself in you; offer a little prayer frequently to Him for this intention. I also beseech the Father of Jesus, the Holy Spirit of Jesus, the Mother of Jesus, and all the angels and saints of Jesus to love Him for you and to bestow upon Him a hundredfold all the love you should have given Him during your whole life. Say a little prayer also to these saints and divine persons for this intention.

This morning at Holy Mass I renewed the union that Our Lord has given your soul with mine. Now do the same, I beg of you, in Our Lord's presence, by an act of the will, so that you may love and honor Him for me in heaven, if you attain it first, while I am striving to love and honor Him in your place on earth.

Farewell, my dear and beloved daughter. I am ever yours in Jesus and for Jesus, to Whom I pray unceasingly for you, even though I dare not ask Him to give you health. May this most amiable

Saviour do whatever is pleasing to Him, provided He grants us the grace to love Him perfectly before long. Please make some reply to whoever reads this to you, telling her what you wish to have written to me.

Live Jesus and Mary.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

15 -

### LETTER 3

**To Sister Mary de Taillepied.** *On the feast of Easter.*

JESUS, MARY

What shall I say to you, my dear Sister, in this moment of joy and consolation, save what St. Paul says to us: "Rejoice in the Lord always; Again I say, rejoice!" (1)

Truly what an occasion we have for joy, beholding Jesus so full of glory, of grandeur, of felicity and content Surely we have very great reason to rejoice; there could be no one in the whole world with so great a cause for happiness.

What have worldlings to motivate their joy? Mud, dust, wind and smoke; whereas the reason for our joy is the same which gives jubilation to the Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, the angels and the saints.

Therefore rejoice, repeating with the Blessed Virgin Mary: "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." (2) I no longer wish to find happiness in myself or in created and perishable things, but in Jesus my Saviour. He is my All and I desire to belong wholly to Him. It is the most extreme folly and delusion to look elsewhere for any true happiness. Let us, then, vehemently and courageously renounce all other things and seek only Him.

Live Jesus and Mary.

(1). PH. 4, 4

(2). Luke 1, 47

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

16 -

### LETTER 4

**To Sister Mary de Taillepied.** *The Saint reprimands her for having used a worldly expression in writing to him, and directs her how to celebrate the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.*

I am sending you all that you asked of me, and something more. I like very much the ingenuousness and simplicity with which you write me; nevertheless, there was a worldly phrase that escaped in your letter. It was the expression, *kissing of hands*, which I had forbidden you to use. I advise you, -for that, to make seven or eight minutes of prayerful meditation on these words which Jesus spoke in referring to His own: "They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world." (1) Adore Jesus in His perfect separation from the world, as much in His manner of speaking as in all

other things. Adore Him pronouncing those words. Give yourself, as well as us, to Him, beseeching Him to *separate us* completely from the world, both in its manner of speaking and in all *else*; and kiss the ground as many times as there are words in this sentence: "They are not of the world."

Do not think, however, that you have committed a grave error by having spoken in this fashion, perhaps unthinkingly. It is just that it makes me very happy to have you honor these words of the Son of God. Alas! my sins are more grievous than such as this. Live Jesus and Mary, who alone are free from error and sin.

I am ever and increasingly at your service, my dear Sister, in this same Jesus.

#### *Exercise for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Render full honor today to the first moment of the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary on earth. O moment, worth more than all the centuries which preceded it since the beginning of the world! O life dearer and more precious to God, in that single moment, than all the lives of the  
(1) John 17, 16.

### **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

17 -

angels and the greatest saints! Who could ever comprehend the relationship of God with this little girl who has just been born, and hers with God! What an abundance of graces and blessings does He diffuse in the soul of this child! What zeal and love for God, what union with Him! She gives Him more love and honor at that moment than has been tendered to Him during five thousand preceding years! O holy Virgin, let all the moments of my life, all my eternity, pay homage to that first instant of thy life!

At this very moment, my dear Sister, let us begin a holy and celestial life with the Blessed Virgin in honor of her holy and divine life.

Live Jesus and Mary.

### **LETTER 5**

**To Sister Mary de Taillepied. On her illness.**

JESUS, MARY

What shall I say to you, my dear Sister, to comfort you? Shall I say what the world usually says to those who are sick—that this illness is nothing, and you will soon be well again? But that is not what you seek. Shall I tell you then that there is reason to hope that you will soon be free from the troubles of this earth and the exile you are suffering? But that is still not what you are seeking, since you wish to avoid any consideration of your own self-interest. What shall I tell you, therefore, to console you? I shall not speak to you at all about yourself, for we have to forget ourselves completely. I shall speak only of Jesus, Who alone should be the subject of our speech, our thoughts and our consolation. And what shall I say to you about this estimable and infinitely amiable Jesus? I shall tell you that He is all yours and you are all His, my dear Sister. What a consolation! What more could you wish? Live henceforth in peace, then, and fear nothing, for Jesus is wholly yours and you belong wholly to Jesus Who loves you infinitely, and Who has no thoughts or plans for you except those of love and goodness.

Do not be in the least troubled if you cannot recite your Office; say the prayers and perform your other exercises as well as you can because there are several persons who are doing these things for you. And what infinitely surpasses them is that Jesus Himself, your All, is unendingly absorbed in contemplation, praise and love of His eternal Father in your name. Finally, all things are yours in heaven and on earth. Dwell in peace, therefore, and in complete and total surrender of yourself, your health, life, soul and salvation into the hands of your most amiable Father Who is Jesus.

Live Jesus and Mary.

### LETTER 6

**To Sister Mary de Taillepie.** *On her infirmities.*

JESUS, MARY

Blessed be Jesus, my dearest Sister, for finding you a worthy subject in which to glorify Himself through the most excellent of all means, that of suffering. You have the opportunity to be a martyr if you wish. But you must love our dearest Jesus exceedingly and offer Him all that takes place within you, so that He may use it to your advantage. If your suffering continues, tell Madame<sup>(1)</sup> about it so that she may decide on the proper remedy. Always abandon and sacrifice yourself, nevertheless, to the most holy will of Him Who loves you more than yourself, and Who has more concern for you than anybody else could ever have.

Live Jesus and Mary.

(1).Madame de Budos, the abbess of Holy Trinity at Caen. See Letter 1, note 2.

### LETTER 7

**To Sister Mary de Taillepie.** *On crosses, and afflictions.*

Blessed be Jesus, and may He bless your poor heart, my dearest Sister. May He live and reign in it, and implant in it the dispositions necessary for you to profit from your present condition.

Take comfort, dear Sister, and rejoice in our most amiable Jesus, for He is yours and you are His; He is in you and you are in Him. Therefore live always in Him, for there will you find your paradise. Withdraw your mind and heart from everything else so that you may captivate and enclose them sweetly in this divine paradise. It is the paradise of the eternal Father, in which He finds all His delights. Let all your happiness be also in Jesus, for He alone is capable of satisfying your heart. Embrace willingly all the sufferings and afflictions that it may please Our Lord to send you, since this is the most efficacious means of destroying ourselves and establishing Jesus in our stead.

## LETTER 8

**To Madame de Budos.** On the calumnies directed against him during the Pleurtuit mission.

[Plouer,(1) 1636] Here I am in a borough to begin a mission. I do not know what will happen to me, but during the last mission(2) I received some very fine epithets.

(1).A small town in Brittany about seven miles from Dinan in the Côtes-du-Nord District.

(2). Pleurtuit, a larger town than Plouer, about six miles from Saint-Malo. Most Reverend Achilles de Harlay- Sancy, Bishop of Saint-Malo, had requested the Saint to preach these two missions in his diocese. At that time Brittany was not so devoutly religious as it is today. At Pleurtuit Some lax and ignorant persons attacked the reputation of the missionaries, especially that of their superior, Father Eudes. Despite the efforts of these adversaries the mission was a definite success as this letter points out. The confessionals were literally besieged by people wishing to go to confession. Cf. Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, Vol. 1, P. 30; BOULAY, Vie du Vénérable Jean Eudes, Vol. 1, p. 195.

20 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Some people called me the precursor of the antichrist; others said I was the antichrist himself. Some characterized me as a seducer, a devil who must not be believed; and others condemned me as a sorcerer enticing everyone in his wake. Some of them contemplated driving me away and might have carried out their plan, had not our Fathers arrived the same day. All that is but roses; the thorns that pierce my heart consist in seeing poor people sometimes follow me around for a week without being able to go to confession, although there are ten confessors here.

## LETTER 9

**To Madame de Budos.** *On resignation in time of illness.*

[1637] JESUS, MARY

Madame:

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you for ever.

I am filled with compassion for you at the sight of your incessant pains and weakness, and I should be filled with sorrow, too, if I did not perceive Jesus in your debility and suffering. In them I see only Jesus, only His goodness and love.

He is there, Madame; He abides within you. He is present in your anguish and sufferings. He is there, all love and completely transformed into love for your sake. He is there, preparing and ordaining these sufferings through love of you.

He is there, guiding and leading you along the paths of His love, drawing you toward the perfection of love by means of these trials and severities.

He is there, bearing with you through His love all the anguish of mind and body that is yours to bear. Even though you may often be unaware of it, He is nevertheless infallibly present, for if He were absent, you would find it impossible to support even the least of the infirmities you are suffering.

He is still there, purifying and sanctifying you and preparing great things for you, provided you, on your part, give the cooperation He asks.

He is there for the purpose of filling you completely with love for Him, and much more so than you are filled with suffering. I will say even more: not only does He wish to imbue you with His love, but also to transform you entirely into love for Him through crosses and sufferings, as His Cross and sufferings transformed Him into love for us.

He is there, finally, with a most ardent desire to draw you to Himself, to perfect and consummate you in Himself, along the path of these same sufferings. St. Paul says that it was fitting that Jesus Christ should be consummated by suffering "For it became him . . . to perfect the author of their salvation, by his passion." (1)

O dignity, O holiness, O admirable excellence of suffering used for the perfection and consummation of a God, for the perfection of Jesus, God and Man, for the consummation of Him Who is the consummation and perfection of all things! Great humiliation of Jesus, Who humbled Himself to a state in which He was capable of being perfected and consummated! And the immense dignity of suffering, chosen and used by Him and His Eternal Father to achieve this perfection and consummation!

Is it not a great honor for you, Madame, is it not a great favor, and should it not be a great comfort to you to be consumed and perfected through suffering, as Jesus was consumed by suffering? Does not Jesus show a rare and singular love for you by using the same means for your fulfillment and consummation as He employed for His own? May Christ Crucified be for ever blessed for so giving you a share in the blessings of His Cross! I implore Him to crucify you completely with Him, and to do so through the same love which nailed Him to the Cross for your sake.

I see an infinite number of crucified persons in the world, but few who are crucified by the love of Jesus. Some are crucified by their self-love and inordinate love of the world, but happy are they who are crucified for the love of Jesus; happy are they who live and die  
(1). Heb. 2, io.

on the Cross with Jesus. You will be numbered among these, Madame, if you bear your cross lovingly, like Jesus, accepting, embracing and cherishing it with all your heart in honor of and in union with the same love with which He accepted and bore it for you.

To achieve that end, cast your eyes frequently upon Jesus Who is always with you, Who penetrates and pervades you much more do the pains and sufferings which seem to take complete possession of you. See only Jesus in your pains and sufferings; see only His goodness and love, which are responsible for all that happens to you. Here only to Him; be attentive only to Him. Forsake your weal and displeasure; disregard them utterly; ignore them entirely. Turn your mind gently and firmly from all thoughts and objects which may cause you to worry. Turn to Jesus, Who is turned toward you, and always has His eyes fixed lovingly upon you. Cling closely to Him and His divine love, as to One Who is your All and outside of Whom you wish nothing. Let there no longer be anyone but yourself and Him in the world, and let yourself be entirely unaffected and unclaimed by anything at all that is not He. Lose every thought and consideration of your own interests, of yourself and everything else.

Yes, lose yourself wholly and happily in the abyss of this goodness and love of Jesus which encompasses, penetrates and possesses you, and is always considering you, always watching over you and all that concerns you; which is more zealous, more attentive, more preoccupied to an infinite degree in procuring your welfare and advantage in all things than you yourself are.

O love! O bounty! O Jesus, God of love and bounty! Adore, love, bless Jesus so full of love and kindness toward you. Adore, cherish, glorify all His attentions, all His plans and all His desires in your regard. Surrender yourself frequently to Him and offer Him your whole state of spiritual and bodily sufferings in homage to the sufferings of His body and divine soul. Adore, too, the peace and tranquility of that holy soul in the midst of its pains and torments, and pray Jesus to let you participate in that same peace and tranquility as well as in all the other dispositions with which He suffered.

These, Madame, are the practices and duties which Jesus asks of you now. They are the allegiance and honor you must render Him in

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

23 -

your present condition. I pray that He Himself may impress these thoughts and sentiments on your heart. I entreat Him to honor and glorify Himself in you. I implore Him, finally, to carry out all His plans and desires for you, allowing not even the slightest hindrance on your part.

And as for you, Madame, I beg only one thing of you, which is that you remember and put into practice something you said to me the last time I had the pleasure of seeing you. You told me that you no longer wanted anything except what God willed, and that you were submitting yourself unreservedly to all that it pleased Him to ordain for you. You spoke these words with a certain strength and energy which consoled me a great deal. I beseech you, therefore, not to contradict this statement, but to prove, whenever God may afford you occasion to do so, that you spoke those words not with your tongue alone but also with your heart and will.

You see, Madame, how freely I speak to you? But it is prompted by my zeal for your soul and my trust in your goodness. Let me say just one more thing, and that is to beg you to continue-for I believe that you are doing so now-to have something devotional read to you from time to time. I think that the acts of love<sup>(2)</sup> for Jesus which were recently sent you will serve the purpose. Have them read to you now and then, and dwell tenderly on them, without strain or exertion.

(2). The Saint probably refers to the thirty-four acts of love that are found in *The Kingdom of Jesus* (New York, 1946), Part V, P. 223 ff. This first devotional work of the Saint was published that year and was dedicated to Madame de Budos. See "Epistle Dedicatory" to *The Kingdom of Jesus*, p. xxix. Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. 1, P. 34

24 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 10

**To the Ladies of Mercy of Rouen.**<sup>(1)</sup> *On the Refuge*<sup>(2)</sup> at Caen.

Saint Malo,<sup>(3)</sup> July 19, 1642.

JESUS, MARY

Mesdames, my dearest sisters in Our Lord Jesus Christ:

May the grace, mercy and peace of this same Jesus Christ dwell in you for ever.

The zeal and piety that I discerned in you while I was in Rouen so edified and consoled me that I cannot sufficiently thank Our Lord. I implore Him daily, during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to shower the holiest blessings of His divine mercy upon you and yours, as well as to preserve and enkindle in your hearts ever more and more the fire of His most ardent charity. I was at Rouen only three months in body, but I assure you that I am and shall always be there in mind and heart accompanying you to the prisons, hospitals and the homes of the unfortunate sick, while rejoicing with Our Lord, His most holy Mother and your guardian angels to behold you thus persevere in your performance of the works of God.

Yes, my dear sisters, you must know that by these holy actions you are rejoicing all paradise as well as augmenting the glory and accidental

(1) A pious association of Catholic ladies who devoted their time and money to corporal works of mercy. They visited hospitals, prisons and the private homes of poor families in the city. The Saint wrote this letter to ask them to extend their charity in an institution for women who desired to reform their lives. These ladies responded generously to the Saint's appeal. Cf. Boulay, *Vie du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, Vol. I, P. 406; *The origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, p. 12; Henri Joly, *Life of St. John Eudes*, p. 142.

(2). As early as 1635 Saint John Eudes assisted in organizing a house for penitent women in the city of Caen. In 1641 the ladies in charge began to live a religious life under the direction of Margaret Morin, a Huguenot convert. Three years later Margaret Morin left the community and the Saint requested the assistance of the Visitation nuns of Caen to organize the religious community which eventually became the Order of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge.

(3). The Saint was then preaching a mission at the Cathedral of Saint Malo in Brittany. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 1, P. 416.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

25 -

joy of God. If you but knew what happiness you afford your guardian angels by doing just what so many great saints of both sexes have done before you! Furthermore, you confound the evil one and enrage all hell. You bring down countless blessings from heaven upon your city, your families, husbands, children and yourselves. You spread the odor of piety and give to all France a virtuous example which will encourage many of your fellow creatures to imitate your charity. In short, you will revive in God's Church that primitive spirit of holiness which formerly flourished among the first Christians.

But the devil, who is enraged by all that is done for the glory of God, will not fail to do everything in his power to discourage you and force you to abandon this holy work. He will create many obstacles and oppose all your good intentions, particularly those regarding the house of Our Lady of Refuge, for he is driven to despair at the sight of these wretched souls, whom he employs to bring about the loss of many others, being snatched from his claws. But you must show, my dearest sisters, that your devotion and loyalty to the service of our good Master is greater than the rage of the demon against Our Lord and the souls He redeemed at the price of His blood. That malignant spirit sometimes labors thirty or forty years before he succeeds in bringing about the damnation of a soul by causing it to fall into mortal sin. Then do not grudge a little time, a little effort, a little material wealth, that you may thwart these evil works for the destruction of which the Son of God shed His blood. If you prevented but a single mortal sin from being committed in your city, you would be doing an incomparably greater good than if you delivered it from all the plagues and other temporal afflictions imaginable, since one sin alone is a greater evil than the combined ills of the world.



You should, therefore, consider yourselves fortunate that Our Lord is giving you the grace to use a portion of the temporal goods He has bestowed on you for the same purpose for which He gave His life's blood. What happiness for you to be chosen by God to be associated with Him in the greatest of His works, which is the work of the redemption of souls! To free a man who is bodily a captive in the hands of barbarians is a noble deed, but to free a soul from the slavery of Satan is greater than to deliver all who are in corporal slavery.

26 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Since it is so pleasing to God to build hospitals and sanitariums for the relief and assistance of those who are physically sick, think of the good accomplished by helping to establish a home and hospital for souls who are suffering from an infernal plague which will bring death to them and to countless others if not remedied. There are so many hospitals everywhere for the body; is it not right that there should also be some for souls who are more horribly and dangerously ill than bodies, and that persons who love God and know how dear to Him are souls should have as much concern for them as for physical needs, and even more? A single soul is worth more than a thousand worlds; therefore whoever wins a soul to God does better than if he were to conquer a thousand empires.

To give alms to the poor is very commendable and highly recommended by God in Sacred Scripture, but to cooperate in the conversion of a soul is greater, says St. John Chrysostom, than to give to the poor all the gold in the world, if it were yours. Now by assisting in the work of the Refuge, my dear sisters, you are doing both; you are giving spiritual as well as corporal alms. Judge for yourselves how pleasing this is to God, Who is all charity and mercy, and Who so loves mercy and charity that He is merciless in His judgment upon him who fails to exercise mercy; whereas, on the other hand, He withholds judgment while showing mercy to him who performs works of mercy.(4)

Many are envious, and rightly so, says St. John Chrysostom, of the fasts, vigils, hair cloths, chastisements and other penances and mortifications of religious who lead austere and solitary lives, but to deliver a soul from the clutches of the devil and return it once more to Jesus Christ surpasses all the austerities in the world.(5)

People admire miracles which affect the body, such as the restoration of sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb and life to the dead, but St. Gregory the Great assures us that he who cooperates with the grace of God in the conversion of a sinner performs a miracle greater than if he were to raise a dead person to life again.(6)

In short, the most divine of all divine functions, says St. Dionysius

(4). James, 2, 13

(5). Oratio 5 contra Judeos.

(6). Dialog., lib. 3, Ucap. 17.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

27 -

the Areopagite, is to work with God for the salvation of souls(7). It is the continual occupation of God-Man; to it He devotes all His thoughts, all His efforts and all the powers of His divinity and humanity. It is the employment He gives to His angels and His greatest saints, the Apostles. It is the fruit of so many labors, so much sweat, so many tears, so much pain and fasting, preaching and shedding of blood, so many holy actions and cruel sufferings in the life of God on earth—a life of thirty-four years, terminated for the same end by such an awesome death.

Is it not a great honor for you, dearest sisters, to participate in something so worthy, so

exalted, so precious and divine? Should you complain or stint a little of this life in a cause for which God sacrificed Himself? How shameful for a Christian soul if Jesus Christ should reproach him at the hour of death for having spent on feasts, balls, pastimes, unnecessary clothing and a thousand other frivolities all the wealth that He had bestowed on him, while refusing to contribute anything to the salvation of souls for whom He sacrificed Himself!

Let each of you examine your conscience on this point, and there will be few who do not find yourselves guilty and have not great reason to fear the judgment of God. The goods and money you possess are not yours, but God's. Nevertheless, you have hitherto spent much of it on the world, on vanities, and consequently on the devil.

How can you expiate this sin? Henceforth do at least as much for Him to Whom you owe all as you have done in the past for His enemy, who is also yours. What you have used to gratify the world and Satan is lost, but whatever you give for Jesus Christ shall be returned to you a hundredfold in this world, and shall acquire eternal life for you in the next, according to the infallible promise of the Son of God. There is not one among you who does not have a very special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of all purity. Remember, then, that you can do nothing more pleasing to her than to help maintain this poor little house dedicated to her under the title of Our Lady of Refuge, because it is a place of refuge for the chastity she dearly loves—a virtue which is so horribly persecuted in our century.

When I began this letter, I had no intention of making it so lengthy,

(7). De Coelesti hierarchia, cap. 3

28 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

but I believe that God wanted it so. Please accept all these counsels, therefore, not in the least as coming from me, who am nothing and wholly unworthy to be heard by you, but as coming from God. Read and re-read them, consider them attentively, and you will find them useful.

All goes quite well, thanks be to God, in the house of Our Lady of Refuge at Caen, and I assure you that it was a great comfort to me to find it so when, on my return to Caen, I called there to see how everything was progressing. For I found that God was being greatly glorified, both by the good order which is maintained there, and by the care being taken to establish these poor penitents firmly in the fear of God and the ways of piety, as well as to have them use their time profitably by keeping busy. Nevertheless, there are but three persons in Caen who are supporting this house, and they are not the wealthiest in the city. I implore you, my dear sisters, since you have more power in temporal things than those in Caen, to have also more charity. I very humbly entreat Reverend Father Angelique de Gaillon(8) to spare none of his zeal and piety for the advancement of the glory of our Master in this cause. Should some objection or obstacle arise, consult among yourselves and then appeal to his Lordship the Archbishop through his vicar general, Reverend Father Toussaint(9). I am quite sure that the love and most ardent zeal of this worthy prelate for the Church of God and the salvation of souls will move him to give you his powerful aid in every way possible.

In conclusion, do not forget me in your holy prayers. I remain with all my heart, in Jesus and Mary,

Your most obedient and humble servant,  
JOHN EUDES, priest of the Oratory of Jesus.

(9). Father Joseph Mary Ory is of the opinion that Father de Gaillon was an Oratorian. Cf. *The Origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, p. 16.

(10). «Father Toussaint, whose family name was Thébault, was certainly an Oratorian. A penitentiary canon as well as vicar-general, he was interred in the cathedral of Rouen in 1660.» *ibid.*, p. 16.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

29 -

### LETTER 11(1)

**To Madame Blouet de Camilly.**(2) *The Saint urges her to continue her support of the Refuge of Caen.* ( 3 )

[1643]

Continue, my dear daughter, to put your confidence in God, and rest assured that our admirable Mother will take care of her children and send them all that is necessary. It is well, however, to feel the weight of the Cross; it is our glory and our crown.

(1). Many of the letters in this collection are fragmentary. The short extracts are taken from the early biographies of the Saint, from the Annals of the Order of our Lady of Charity or from the Annals of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. This passage is from a letter written at Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, where St. John Eudes was preaching a mission. Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes du Bienheureux Jean Eudes*, VOL 11, P. 41

(2). Anne Le Haguais married James Blouet, Lord of Camilly, whose family had received the title of nobility for services rendered to France in 1610. She had three sons and one daughter. One of the sons entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and succeeded St. John Eudes as superior general. For many years Madame de Camilly, a devout and pious lady, was under the spiritual guidance of the Saint. She assisted him on many occasions with her influence and her wealth, especially when he undertook to found his two religious orders.

(3). See Letter 10, note 2, and *The Origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, p. 19.

30 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 12(1)

**To Reverend Father William Gibieuf.**(2) *On his mother's cure, obtained through the intercession of Cardinal de Bérulle*( 3 ) *in April, 1634.*

November 25, 1643 ( 4 )

I witnessed a very obvious miracle which was wrought in the case of my mother. At a time when she was so ill in the crisis of a high fever that I no longer expected anything but death, she had brought to her a picture of Cardinal de Bérulle and some of his relics which I had given her, and upon kissing them and recommending herself to him, she found herself instantly cured. When I arrived to prepare her for death after having received word of her illness, I discovered her in church in good health.

(1). This letter is taken from Germain Habert's *Vie du Cardinal de Bérulle*, p. 898.

(2). Father Gibieuf, born at Bourges, entered the Congregation of the Oratory. He received his doctorate in theology at the Sorbonne and became one of the most prominent Oratorians of the day. During the absence of Cardinal de Bérulle, he was vicar general of the Order and religious superior of the Carmelite monasteries of France. He died at the Saint-Magloire Oratory in Paris in 1650.

(3). Cardinal Peter de Bérulle (1575-1629) founded the Oratory of Jesus in 1611.

(4). This letter was written eight months after St. John Eudes left the Oratory to found the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

## LETTER 13

**To the Priests of the Seminary at Caen.(1)**  
*On humility, charity and pure love.*

Paris, December 9, 1643

JESUS, MARY

My dearest brethren:

I am leaving Father Manchon(2) the task of writing you the news.(3) These few lines are only to assure you that you are all present in my heart, which is filled with unsurpassed affection and tenderness for you. But that is nothing; your real cause for rejoicing is that you are present in the Heart of Our Lord and His most holy Mother. Let us also bear them in our hearts and strive to keep them living and reigning there by means of true and profound humility, perfect and sincere charity, complete scorn for the world and self, and pure love for God. Those are the things in which you will find peace of soul and paradise on earth. I beseech Our Lord and His most holy Mother to

(1). The first Eudists at Caen resided in a small house called *The Mission*, which was used as the seminary; they were then known as the Priests of the Seminary of Jesus and Mary of Caen.

(2). Father Thomas Manchon (1617-1663) was one of the first five members of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. A gifted speaker he labored with the Saint on many of his missions. He also directed the Seminary of Lisieux and of Rouen, where he died on February 6, 1663. It might be well to mention here the names of the other four Eudists who accompanied the saintly Founder to the Shrine of our Lady of Deliverance, ten miles from Caen, on March 25, 1643, and dedicated their lives to the sanctification of the clergy and the preaching of missions. Besides Father Manchon, the first companions of St. John Eudes were Simon Mannoury of Lisieux, Peter Jourdan of Coutances, Andrew Godefroy of Caen, and John Fossey of Thorigny. The two last did not persevere, but were very soon replaced by James Finel and Richard Lemesle, both Priests of the diocese of Coutances, Normandy. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, P. 20.

(3). What the news was we cannot say with certainty. Apparently the Saint went to Paris to request Anne of Austria, the Queen Mother, to use her influence to have his new Congregation approved by Rome. Practically nothing resulted from these negotiations. Cf. BOULAY, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 68.

32 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

dispose of us all according to their Heart,(4) in whose love I embrace all of you together and individually and remain with all sincerity,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES,

Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

(4). The Saint uses an expression which is now a common prayer in the Church: *Fac cor nostrum secundum cor tuum*. Boulay, Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 67.

## LETTER 14

**To Father Richard Le Mesle.(1) Concerning successful negotiations.( 2 )**

Rejoice that so far the Blessed Virgin has strengthened, helped and guided you in this whole matter, and continue to thank her, for her assistance is very evident. The less help you receive from earth, the more shall you receive from heaven. Let us put our trust in Our Lord and His holy Mother and abandon ourselves to their holy will, overlooking nothing that can be done in their interests, and welcoming, for the sake of their love, all the difficulties which arise, and which they permit only to beautify and enrich your soul, and to render it more pleasing to His Divine Majesty.

(1). Father Le Mesle (1608-1661) joined the Congregation of Jesus and Mary a short time after the foundation in 1643. He was a man of great prudence and zeal and worked successfully in the first Eudist Seminaries at Coutances and Caen. He died on October 21, 1661. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, p. 10.

(2). The parents of Mr. Nicholas Blouet de Than, a wealthy gentleman of Caen, were trying to prevent their son from giving a substantial donation to the Eudists for the founding of the Caen Seminary. Father Le Mesle persuaded them to allow their son to turn over to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary an income of 1500 livres and 3000 livres of arrears. Mr. Nicholas Blouet de Than became a Eudist on August 15, 1644. Cf. BOULAY, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, P. 85

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

33 -

## LETTER 15 (1)

**To Mr. and Madame Blouet de Camilly(2 ) On the affairs of Our Lady of Charity,(3) and the proper dispositions for receiving Communion.**

March 5, 1644

JESUS, MARY

My dearest spiritual brother and sister:

I received your letter. Blessed be God for the fervor of Messrs de Lion and de Répichon! (4) As soon as Mr. Dubuisson(5) arrives in Bayeux,(6) please let us know how the matter stands. Mr. de Lion writes me that it would be well, if the thing is urgent, to send the pastor of Notre Dame.(7) Please consult with Mr. Dubuisson about that, and then I will do whatever you decide upon together.

Rejoice, dearest sister, and have no fear of receiving Communion as

(1). This letter was written from Coutances, Normandy, where St. John Eudes was preaching the Lenten sermons. Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. 11, 41.

(2) See Letter 11, note 2. Mr. James de Camilly was also a staunch friend of the Saint, who often called them his "spiritual brother" as he did in this letter.

(3). Monastery of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge founded at Caen in 1642. See Letter 10, note 2.

(4). Mr. Robert de Répichon, sieur d'Avenay and de Lion, belonged to one of the oldest and most illustrious families of Normandy. He promised the Saint 14,000 livres for the foundation of the Caen Seminary on condition that the letters patent would be registered in Parliament and that the Seminary would be recognized by the Mayor and Councillors of Caen within two years. As difficulties prevented the Saint from carrying out these conditions, Mr. de Répichon contributed only 3000 livres. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 87-88. In 1646 Mr. de Répichon defrayed the expenses of the mission which St. John Eudes preached at Lion-sur-Mer, ten miles from Caen. Cf. Boulay, Ibid. Vol. 2, P. 192.

Mr. de Lion was the son of Mr. Robert de Répichon. He was a pious young man, who, acting on the advice of the Saint, entered the Congregation of the Oratory.

(5). An excellent Catholic gentleman, who defrayed the expenses of the Vimoutiers mission which St. John Eudes preached in 1645. Vimoutiers is a small town of 3000 inhabitants situated between Lisieux and Argentan in Normandy. Mr. Dubuisson received the missionaries in his own home and waited upon them himself. Cf. Boulay, *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, P. 178.

(6). A small town about 17 miles north west of Caen.

(7). The Rector of Notre Dame Church at Caen. Cf. Boulay, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, P. 466.

34 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

usual, for every soul clothed with divine grace is prepared for Holy Communion, even though the senses are not garbed in the beautiful raiment of devout feelings and divine consolations, but remain in great dryness and poverty of devotion.

We are praying daily for you and all your affairs. I wrote you by the last mail what reply was received in that connection. Our admirable Mother has promised to give a farthing<sup>(8)</sup> to her daughters, our Sisters; she calls it a farthing because she has not a very high opinion of temporal things. Of this farthing she sent me two hundred livres today which I have in my possession. I do not know how much of the farthing still remains,<sup>(9)</sup> nor by what means to forward it to you. If Mr. de la Mare,<sup>(10)</sup> or some other person, could send someone to call for it here and deliver it to you in Caen, that would be excellent.

At any rate, I am asking you to give this sum to them little by little, according to their needs and your own discretion. If I do not find any other way to get it to you, I shall bring it at Easter.

I am with all my heart, in Jesus and Mary,  
Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, priest.

P. S. Please tell Mr. de Lion that it is absolutely imperative for him to go to Bayeux himself, and ask Mr. Dubuisson to tell him that he alone can do more there than anyone else in the world.

I greet and embrace all our brethren, especially our dearest Brother Dubuisson. Greetings also to our Sisters, particularly Madame de Montfort.<sup>(11)</sup>

Please put the address and postage on the letter I am writing to our

(8). Mary des VALLÉES, a saintly woman of Coutances, gave the Saint 800 livres for the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity at Caen. This may be the farthing to which the Saint refers in this letter. See Letter 17, note 3.

(9). This money received was on account and the Saint says that he does not know how much of the 800 livres remains to be drawn. *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. 11, P. 42. Boulay, *Op. cit.* VOL. 2, P. 94

(10). The editors of the English translation were unable to identify this gentleman.

(11). A sister of Mr. John de Bernières. See note 12. She assisted the Saint on many occasions. In 1641 she paid the expenses of the mission preached by St. John Eudes at Ramilly. Cf. Boulay, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, P. 288, P. 334.

Brother de Bernières,(12) and also mail that of Father Chrysostom,(13) after having scaled them both, as well as the few lines to Mr. Poisson.(14)

Never forget to date your letters.

(12). John de Bernières, a devoted friend of St. John Eudes, was born at Caen in 1602 and died there in 1659. He was very pious and charitable. Despite the fact that he was treasurer of France in the city of Caen, he spent a great deal of time in prayer and good works. Acting on the advice of his spiritual director, he built a house called The Hermitage, in the vicinity of the Ursuline Monastery and formed a community of devout laymen who lived with him. Mr. de Bernières was most generous to St. John Eudes when the latter was organizing the first house of Our Lady of Charity. Cf. Boulay, *ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 287-288.

(13). Father John Chrysostom was a member of the Order of St. Francis. He was a very holy and learned man from whom the Saint received wise advice in 1641 and 1642 when he was contemplating the founding of his two orders. It was through this devoted religious that St. John Eudes consulted St. Vincent de Paul concerning the foundation of the Caen Seminary. Father Chrysostom died in 1645. Cf. Boulay, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 196.

(14). Peter Poisson was a publisher of Caen. He brought out the first edition of *The Kingdom of Jesus* in 1637.

36-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 16

**To Mademoiselle Eustace de Taillefer, (1) afterwards Sister Mary of the Assumption.** *The Saint encourages her in her vocation, and speaks to her of Margaret Morin (2) with whom she was living at that time.*

[1644]

JESUS, MARY

My dearest daughter:

I implore Our Lord and His most holy Mother to be your strength in this present affliction and temptation of yours which grieves me deeply. And have I not reason indeed to be distressed? I see that souls whom God has entrusted to me,(3) and who are dearer to me than life itself, are in anguish at this moment and in great danger of losing their vocation, and then of falling into the clutches of the infernal wolf;

(1). Renée Eustace de Taillefer entered the Refuge of Caen following the mission preached by the Saint at Valognes in 1643. She took the habit of the Order on February 12, 1645, was professed on June 2, 1652, and died on May 30, 1668. In 1644 the Community of the Refuge passed through a formidable crisis. Margaret Morin, who was acting as directress, sought to introduce a spirit entirely at variance with that which Saint John Eudes was striving to implant. This divergence of viewpoint between the founder and the directress led to the withdrawal of several postulants for whom the Saint had been harboring great hopes. Mademoiselle de Taillefer saw her sister, who had entered the Community with her, leave under these circumstances. She herself was on the point of abandoning her vocation, and it was to dissuade her from doing so that the Saint wrote her this letter. Cf. Boulay, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 99-101.

(2). Margaret Morin, a native of Coutances who had made her home in Caen, was born a Protestant. After her conversion she devoted herself to the performance of good works. Saint John Eudes decided upon her as the one to give him the assistance he needed in the founding of Our Lady of Charity. But Margaret Morin was unable to share his views and gave up the work in 1644. After her departure she remained several years in Caen in charge of the Hospital of the Petits-Renfermés. In 1652, in company with Mary du Bosc, she founded the Order of the Sisters of Charity of Bayeux, was professed on June 1, 1657 and died there in the odor of sanctity on October 1st of the same year.

(3). Reference is made here either to three postulants whom the Saint had sent to the Refuge of Caen, following the missions of Saint Sauveur-le-Vicomte and Valognes (1643), all of whom gave up their vocations with the exception of Mademoiselle de Taillefer, or to the directresses who were placed in charge of the work along with Margaret Morin, and who abandoned it when she did. Cf. Ory, op. cit., P. 24

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

37 -

yet I am not allowed to see them and speak to them in order to prevent it. She who stands in the way of this ought indeed to fear the vengeance of God. With all my heart do I pray Him, however, to have mercy on her. As for you, my dearest daughter, I beseech you, in God's name, to do nothing until I have spoken with you. Be patient a little longer and avoid temptation. Rest assured that in a few days you will be as happy and consoled as you are now disheartened.

Consider, my dear daughter, that divine Providence has directed you to me, and that it has pleased Him to make me instrumental in winning you over to His service. That is why I am entreating you, in the name of Our Lord and His most holy Mother, to grant me what I am asking of you, which is not to leave your house until I have first talked with you. She to whom you listen would have you believe that I am turning her out of the house, which is in nowise true, for I have always said, and I still say, that if she wishes to remain obedient and not rebel against all the things I have said to her, but rather comply as she should, I shall be very pleased if she remains. If she leaves, therefore, it is certainly not by my command but through her own disobedience. Finally, my dear daughter, I implore you once again to have a little patience, and you will see how this storm blows over.

What I am saying to you is intended for all our dear Sisters as well, whom I love, in truth, with my whole heart. Be so good as to tell them what I have told you, and you will be doing something very pleasing to God.

Your most affectionate father,  
JOHN EUDES, priest of the Congregation  
of Jesus and Mary.

P. S. Kneel for a moment at the feet of the most Blessed Virgin Mary and give yourself to her, asking for strength. She is your true Mother and will never forsake you.

38 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 17

**To Madame Blouet de Camilly.** *To induce her to give her daughter to God.*

[March 1644]

JESUS, MARY



We pray daily here to God for you and all that concerns you. Continue to receive Holy Communion according to the rule I gave you in parting.

Marry *Fanfan!*(1) Marry that lovely "Lily Bud"! (2) Oh, if you but knew how those words, though you spoke them laughingly, have left me heart-broken! Nevertheless, I too am of the opinion that she should be married, but to a heavenly and divine Spouse Who is King of heaven and earth. Try, my dear daughter, to incline her gradually to this divine marriage, for that adorable Spouse is considering her, but He wants her to consider Him in return. The Eagle(3) was speaking to me about it two days ago, and of her own accord, without my bringing up the subject, she confessed that she is worried about her. She urged me to tell you to prepare her little by little to be the bride of the divine Spouse, that is, to become a nun. She told me she fears very much that the girl does not give enough consideration to this most amiable Spouse, who complained about it, and that she regards her enemy, the world, a little too much. She said that you should guard against this, frequently counseling her to hate the world with its vanities and fashions which the most holy Virgin abominates and which always arouse her wrath. She also said that you should be careful with whom and in what way she seeks diversion, and that you should insist on

(1). An affectionate nickname given to Mademoiselle de Camilly by the members of the family circle.

(2). A nickname given to her by St. John Eudes.

(3), A figurative name for Mary des Vallées, a holy woman of Coutances, Normandy, who was born at Saint Sauveur Lendelin, diocese of Coutances, on February 18, 1590. St. John Eudes met her during a mission in August, 1641. He received many special graces from God through Mary des Vallées. See *Memoriale Beneficiorum Dei*, note 27.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

39 -

joining her sometimes in her recreation. (4) All that is the language of the Eagle, spoken of her own volition, and I noticed that she was preoccupied with all these things. She revealed to me that she often thinks about them-not that she has any knowledge of something more, as she assured me. Just the same, it is a warning that deserves your careful consideration, my dear daughter, and ought to be put to good use. I forgot to mention that the Eagle also told me that you should advise her to meditate a little and should often speak to her of Our Lord, striving to imbue her with a great hatred for the world and sin, and a great love for Him Who desires complete possession of her heart.

All the Josephs, the Eagles, the Vines and the Earthworms(5) greet you in Jesus and Mary, who live and reign for ever in all hearts in heaven and on earth! Amen, amen! So be it! I embrace our spiritual brother.

I am writing a letter to someone (6) and am sending it to Madame de Caen,(7) with instructions to deliver it to you or have it delivered to you. When you receive it I beg of you to give it, or be sure to have it given, to the person to whom it is addressed. But be careful not to let anyone know that it has passed through the hands of Madame de Caen; please

(4). A girl (Mademoiselle de Camilly) in whom Mary des Vallées took great interest would sometimes indulge in the singing of profane and worldly songs. This she did, however, with such secrecy that even her own mother had no knowledge of it. But Our Lord informed Sister Mary about it, though she was eighteen leagues distant, and commanded her to warn the mother. She did so through a note written in these terms: « *Warning to our lovely Lily Bud whom the divine Spouse is considering. He wishes her to behold Him in turn and He reproaches her for taking pleasure in the singing of profane songs. Profane songs are a plague which destroys chastity; be careful of them.* »

«As soon as the mother received this warning she spoke about it to her daughter, who confessed that it was true that she sometimes sang these songs; but from then on she abstained completely from them." *Vie Admirable de Marie des Vallées*, Bk. 8, Ch. 9, Quebec MS.

Madame de Camilly's daughter joined the Benedictines of Holy Trinity, where she died a holy death on August 23, 1654.

(5). Figurative names for devout and humble friends of the Saint. In this letter he refers to Mary des Vallées as *The Eagle*.

(6). We are unable to say who this person was and why the letter was first sent to dame de Budos, the Abbess of Holy Trinity, and then to Madame de Camilly.

(7). The Abbess of Holy Trinity Monastery held the title of Madame de Caen. She took that name because it had been the title of the second abbess, who was a daughter of William the Conqueror. Cf. Trébutien, *Caen, son histoire, ses monuments*, 3rd edition, p. 156.

40 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

deliver it as if you had received it directly from me and inform this person that if she wishes to make a reply, she should give it to Father Mannoury(8) if he is still there. If he is not, let her give it to you, and you can mail it to me. If Madame de Caen sends for you, be sure to conceal (9) from her that you know anything about this matter.

(8). Father Simon Mannoury (1614-1687) was one of the first five members of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. He made two journeys to Rome in 1645 and 1646 to obtain the approbation of the Holy See for the Caen Seminary and for the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. The second journey was a successful one. Later Father Mannoury became rector of the Lisieux, Caen and Evreux Seminary. He died March 23, 1687, Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, p. 103

(9). The reason of this secrecy is unknown.

## LETTER 18

**To Madame Blouet de Camilly.** *On the purchase of a house for the religious of Our Lady of Charity.*

[March 1644]

JESUS, MARY

I was hoping to receive a letter from you in today's mail, my dearest daughter, to learn how you feel about Mr. de Montfort's house,(1) but I heard only from our brother Mannoury,(2) who wrote that he is coming to see me. I assume that you are sending me word through him.

Father Mannoury informs me that he and Father Jourdan(3) inspected Mr. de Montfort's house and found it wonderfully suitable and habitable. According to all that he writes me, we must not allow this opportunity to pass. The house is rather close to the Oratory, (4) but that matters little.

(1). Mr. de Montfort was Mr. John de Bernières's brother-in-law (See Letter 13, notes 11 and 12). The Saint was at that time trying to purchase a house at Caen for his new foundation, The Order of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge. Cf. Ory, op. cit., P. 23.

(2). See Letter 17, note 8.

(3). Father Peter Jourdan (1608-1661) was one of St. John Eudes's first companions. He was a saintly priest and an excellent spiritual director. He died on December 27, 1661. See *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, P. 13; Boulay, OP. cit., Vol. 2, P. 8.

(4). St. John Eudes was a former Oratorian. After he left the Congregation of the Oratory, his former confrères strove their utmost to hinder the development of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 259-264.

However, I am leaving it all to your judgment and to that of our spiritual brother.(5) I am sending you the letter written me by Father Mannoury. Read it, please, and give it some thought. I implore our good Mother to inspire you with her will in this matter. If you judge the house to be suitable, kindly write Mr. de Bernières(6) to take it from Mr. Patri(7) and to close the deal.

We are making a novena here for the Bayeux affair(8) and for the Bulls of approbation(9) for our sisters. The novena consists in reciting once daily the *Veni Creator*, the *Memorare* and the *Ave Maria filia Dei Patris*;(10) *Monstra te esse Matrem admirabilem* twelve times; and twelve times these words which were recommended to the Eagle:(11) *Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, Virgo cui data est omnes potestas in caelo et in terra, fiat nobis secundum verbum tuum*, that is, be it done unto us according to thy promises. I beg of you and our fair "Lily Bud" (12) to join us in this novena, and our dear sisters too, but without telling them about the Bayeux affair which must always be kept secret. I am making the same request of our dear Father Jourdan. Recommend it also to the Mother of St. Joseph, to the poor, and to the Visitation Sisters.

The Eagle also told me yesterday that you should try little by little to instil in *Fanfan*(13) an affection for the things of God and have her choose her recreation along the same lines. She added that the evil spirit, perceiving your desire to give her to God, is striving now to attract her to the world, and that you, for your part, must exercise extraordinary care if she is to respond to Him Who calls her. She told me all that of her own accord, without my speaking to her about it, for she has great affection and concern for *Fanfan* and all her interests. That

(5). Mr. James Blouet de Cantilly, her husband.

(6). See Letter 15, note 12.

(7). Probably the real estate agent.

(8). Something relating to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Cf. Ory, Op. cit., P. 23.

(9). Papal approbation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity.

(10). A prayer to Our Blessed Lady recited daily in the two orders founded by St. John Eudes. See The Priest: *His Dignity and Obligations* (New York, 1947), P. 171.

(11). See Letter 17, note 3

(12). See Letter 17, note 2.

(13). See Letter 17, note 1.

makes me wonderfully happy, since it is a very great favor to you.

Adieu, my dear daughter. I remain devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES,

Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

## LETTER 19

**To Madame Blouet de Camilly.** *On the qualifications required of girls who are received into the Institute of Our Lady of Charity, and on other subjects.*

March 23, 1644

Dearest daughter:

I received your last very informative letter, but not in the last mail, which brought me

nothing at all. I am worried because you mentioned in your preceding letter that you were not well.

I have no leisure just now to write to anyone but you. That is why I am asking you to write once more to Mr. de Bernières(1) that he should make sure of the house, and that if they demand a down-payment, he should tell them that the pastor of Notre-Dame(2) and Father Finel (3) will take care of it.

Contact our dear Sister Margaret,(4) too, and tell her for me that I have ascertained that this N&Nébou girl is quite sickly, and along with her having as little as she has,(5) there is no likelihood of admitting her into the house.

As for the candidate from Caen, what you have told me about her is impressive. Nevertheless, I think it would be better to postpone receiving

(1). See Letter 15, note 12. See Letter 15, note 7.

(2). Father James Finel (1618-1652) joined the Congregation Of Jesus and Mary shortly after the foundation. He contributed generously to the establishing of the Caen Seminary. After a fruitful career as a missionary and a seminary director he died at Coutances, Normandy, on March 16, 1652. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, p. 6.

(3). Margaret Morin. See Letter 16, note 2.

(4). Because of the poverty of the monastery St. John Eudes insisted on the dowry that the postulants were supposed to bring when they entered the Order.

## **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

43 -

her until my return. However, I am leaving that to your own judgment, my dear daughter, and to your will in the matter. I ask only that you consider the girl well to determine whether she has the necessary qualifications, namely, a spirit of piety, humility, meekness, obedience and simplicity, a firm resolution to renounce her own will completely, zeal for the salvation of souls, a naturally good disposition, and a sound body. For I cannot overemphasize the importance of being careful about the girls whom we accept, and of painstakingly examining and questioning them. Over and above all else must we be on our guard against taking in those who are worldly, proud and vain.

May God forgive you for your over-anxiety on the subject of the greatest happiness that can befall the fair "Lily Bud" (6) and her mother. You have a very great reason for rejoicing, inasmuch as the noblest, richest and most powerful Lord in the world loves you so much that He wants you to give Him your daughter as His spouse. The Eagle(7) speaks in that fashion, advising you that Our Lord and His most holy Mother most assuredly are beholding her and calling her to be clothed in red and white, which are the colors of the heavenly Spouse, that is virginal purity and love, charity and other virtues which beautify Him -provided, however, she so desires. For, even though she is called to such a happy and exalted state, she must nevertheless enter it voluntarily. She will receive extraordinary help, but she will have to cooperate and prepare for it through an intense hatred for the world with its vanities, a great scorn of self and an ardent desire to endeavor to seek all possible means of pleasing Him Who desires to wed her. And it is your duty, my dear daughter, to help her, through your instructions, to adorn and beautify herself in order to be pleasing in the eyes of the Son of God and of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As for yourself, Madame, you are advised . . . that the way of the Cross is the most pleasing to God, since Our Lord Jesus Christ chose it for Himself and for you; and that you should be happy that the Blessed Virgin, in speaking of you, calls you her daughter and says that you and your spiritual brother are doing a work which is very pleasing to her,

(6). See Letter 17, note 2.

(7). See Letter 17, note 3.

44 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

that of caring for her daughters,(8) and that she looks upon you and loves You as if you were the superior, as if you were an inmate of her house and had made a vow to live there. Why should you have any further doubt? You are wrong if you give any consideration to these anxieties, for it is impossible, in view of all that we know, and as I have seen and heard for a month, to be able to entertain the slightest suspicion. Be at peace then, dearest daughter, always humbling yourself, however, and trying to do whatever you can on your own part. Do not be discouraged, though, when that fails you. Pray Our Lord and His most holy Mother to supply the deficiency, and they will surely do so.

We will write to Mr. de la Bonneville.

All here send their regards to you, as well as to your spiritual brother, whom I embrace most affectionately.

I beseech our lovely "Lily Bud" to hate the world more than the plague and hell itself, and to love Him Who beholds and loves her with such great strength, purity and generosity.

It is in Him that I am

Very humbly yours,  
John Eudes,  
Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.  
Live Jesus and Mary.

(8). Religious of Our Lady of Charity of Caen.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

45 -

### LETTER 20

**To Fathers Richard Le Mesle and Thomas Vigeon.(1)** *To invite them to fulfill their promises to join the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. ( 2 )*

Lion-sur-Mer,(3) September 23, 1646

I beseech you to hasten here, that you may consummate your sacrifice and dwell with your brethren who love you tenderly, and ardently desire you *ad convivendum et ad commoriendum*, in life and in death. For you know that no one who looks behind him after he has put his hand to the plow is fit for the kingdom of God. Come then, my beloved brethren, in the name of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, and be faithful to Him Who calls you. Come without delay so that you may spend the rest of your lives together in the service of our good Master and conquer for Him souls which were redeemed at the cost of His blood. Take care lest the tempter ensnare you or the world seduce you. Close your ears to the voice of the serpent, that you may open them only to that of heaven.

(1). See Letter 14, note 1. Father Thomas Vigeon entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in

1646. A model of charity, meekness and zeal, Father Vigeon had a special talent for directing and converting souls through the Sacrament of Penance. He died at the Caen Seminary on March 16, 1651. Cf. Boulay, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, P. 194, 461 and Fleurs, Vol. 1, p. 10.

(2). Members of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary do not take vows, but make solemn promises to obey their superiors and constitutions until death. By these promises the Eudist is incorporated into the society.

(3). A village about nine miles from Caen in Normandy, where St. John Eudes preached a mission in 1646. Mr. de Répichon, the seigneur of the district, defrayed the expenses and provided board and lodging for the missionaries.

46 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 21

**To Father Simon Mannoury, in Paris.**(1) *On the mission at  
Le Bec-  
Thomas. ( 2 )*

Le Bec-Thomas, July 24, 1647

Here we are in Le Bec-Thomas, where there are great crowds of people and where there exists an extraordinary need for a mission. Grief ran high when we left Nogent-le-Rotrou(3) to come here. I had never before seen anything like it. So let us take courage, dear brother. The more crosses we encounter in God's work, the more abundant are His blessings.

(1). See Letter 17. Father Mannoury on his way home from Rome had remained in Paris to interview friends that might help to obtain the approbation of the Congregation. Cf. BOULAY, Op. cit. Vol. 2, P. 293.

(2). A village in the diocese of Evreux, Normandy. The expenses of this mission were defrayed by Madame de Bec-Thomas, a wealthy lady who later married Mr. de la Porte, councillor of the Rouen Parliament. Cf. Boulay, Ibid., Vol. 2, P. 292.

(3). A town of 6,000 inhabitants, north of Chartres. Baron de Renty was instrumental in obtaining this mission for St. John Eudes. See Letter 24, note 4.

### LETTER 22

**To Father Simon Mannoury, in Rome.**(1) *On the mission at Autun ( 2 )*

Autun, December 12, 1647

We arrived on the feast of St. Andrew, in good health, thanks be to God, after having very palpably experienced the special help of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother on each day of our trip. We were received

(1). Father Simon Mannoury had left for Rome in November, 1647 to obtain the papal approbation of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. He arrived there at the beginning of December. Cf. Georges, op. cit., p. 99.

(2). A town in Saône-et-Loire Department. The mission began on December 1 and lasted eleven weeks. St. John Eudes preached almost every day. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 2, PP. 304-305.

here with great demonstrations of affection by his Lordship the Bishop,(3) the priests, magistrates and all the people. There are thirteen of us missionaries,(4) and soon we shall number twenty; but if there were a hundred of us, it would still not be enough, for the good God is showering extraordinary blessings on this mission. I think we shall be here about two months, that is to say, until the Purification. Then we shall leave to spend twelve days or a fortnight at Arnay-le-Duc, (5) and thence to Beaune (6) for Lent.

(3). The Bishop of Autun was Claude de la Madeleine de Ragny. Cf. Boulay, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, P 313.

(4). Missions in the seventeenth century lasted much longer than they do today. It was not unusual for ten or more missionaries to preach and hear confessions in a parish for several months. The expenses of the mission were often defrayed by some wealthy person in the parish. Cf. Matthew Russell, Blessed John Eudes, P. 37.

(5). A town midway between Autun and Beaune. St. John Eudes was there until Quinquagesima Sunday, February 23, 1647.

(6). A town about 25 miles from Dijon in the Côte d'Or Department. The mission began on Ash Wednesday, February 26, and closed on April 20. Cf. Boulay, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, P. 336.

### LETTER 23

**To Father Simon Mannoury, in Rome.**

*On the difficulties being encountered in the proceedings to obtain approbation of the Congregation.* ( 1 )

April 7, 1648

Courage, my dear brother; we want only the will of God. Let us, on our part, do all we can in the interests of our good Master and our dear Mistress, and then abandon ourselves in all things to their most holy will. If our hour has come, the whole world united will not be capable of resisting what is decreed; if it has not yet come, "expect the Lord, do manfully and let thy heart take courage." (2) One thing should encourage us greatly: namely, that it is impossible to doubt that this is the work of God, in view of the tremendous and extraordinary blessings it has

(1). The Congregation of the Holy Spirit was founded by St. John Eudes on March 25, 1643.

(2). Ps. 26, 14

pleased Him to bestow upon our puny efforts. It clearly shows that they must be His efforts, and that consequently He will not abandon His work ... He will accomplish it at the proper time and in the most fitting way, and much better than we could ever desire. We have only to be faithful and always travel our way with humility, strength and trust.

### LETTER 24 (1)

**To Mother Elizabeth, the prioress of the Carmelites of Beaune. On  
the death of Venerable Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament.** ( 2 )

Citry, (3) August 16, 1648

Reverend and dearest Mother:

May Jesus, the Most Holy Heart of Mary, be the heart of our hearts for ever.

I am writing you this from Citry, at the house of our dear Brother de Renty,(4) where he gave us the medals you sent him, which we all received with inexpressible respect, joy and consolation. I thank you for them with all my heart, in the name of all my confreres. I can assure you, my dearest Mother, that we shall cherish them the rest of our lives. For I cannot tell you what respect and devotion the holy Infant

(1). See the photographic copy of the original opposite the title-page. The original is preserved in the Archives of the Carmelite Monastery of Beaune.

(2). Sister Margaret died on May 26, 1648. See *The Sacred Heart of Jesus* (New York, 1946), p. 62.

(3). A Small village about 75 miles from Meaux in the Seine-et-Marne Department.

(4). Gaston John Baptist, Baron de Renty (1611-1648), was born in 1611 at the castle of Beny-Bocage, in the diocese of Bayeux, Normandy. After completing his education he took up a military career. An accomplished and energetic soldier, he distinguished himself in the army by his courage and military talents as well as by his virtue and piety. In 1638 he relinquished his rank in the army in order to devote himself entirely to the poor and the sick. Baron de Renty was a faithful friend of St. John Eudes and followed him on many of his missions. From the village of Citry where he was lord of the manor Baron de Renty wrote to Father Olier, the founder of the Sulpicians, on June 10, 1648: "Father Eudes' labours here are blessed beyond belief." De Renty died on April 24, 1649. Cf. Joly, *Life of Saint John Eudes* (London, 1932), P. 123, 125.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

49 -

Jesus has impressed on our hearts for His saintly spouse, our dearest Sister Margaret. For my part, I honor and invoke her daily. We have already experienced various effects of her charity, both spiritual and temporal, about which our dear Brother de Renty can tell you more.

The moment we learned of her decease we made a vow to say forty Masses in honor of all that the Divine Infant Jesus is in her soul, in thanksgiving for all the graces He has granted her, for the accomplishment of all His intentions in her regard, in supplication for some special bond between her and ourselves and for participation in her grace and spirit, as well as to pray Him to obtain from God peace for us with several persons.

I implore you, my dear Mother, to grant us a union of prayers(5) with your holy Community. This can be done without displeasing anyone, for it shall remain strictly a secret. Do not refuse this favor, then, which I beg of you in the name of the Holy Infant Jesus and His most sacred Mother.

We are deeply indebted to you for the eight medals, but there are (twelve) brothers(6) in our little Community and I should like very much for the others to participate in this favor. I beseech you, therefore, to be mindful of this and to place in the hands of our dear Brother de Renty the fruits of your charity.

On our part we will pray daily to God for your blessed community, and you shall have a very special share of all the blessings it may please His divine bounty to bestow on our missions. And I in particular, Reverend and dearest Mother, will remain eternally, in the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, priest of the seminary of Caen.

(1). The union of prayers between the Eudists and the Carmelite nuns of Beaune was renewed on September 12, 1933 by the late Very Reverend Mathurin Jehanno, superior general of the



Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Cf. *Les Saints Coeurs de Jésus et Marie* (revue mensuelle), December, 1933, P. 325.

(2) The number is omitted in the original copy. The Congregation of Jesus and Mary consisted of twelve members at that time. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 2, P. 379; *Oeuvres Choies de Saint Jean Eudes*, Vol. 5, p. 68.

50 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 25

**To the Queen Mother.**(1) *The Saint begs her to remedy the religious evils prevalent in France by choosing good bishops.*

Paris, September 2, 1648

Madame:

I cannot disregard the inspiration that God has pleased to send me while I was offering the holy sacrifice of the Mass for Your Majesty, at the time Of the riots in Paris.(2) This thought was to beseech you in all humility, in the name of Jesus Christ and His most Holy Mother, to use the power conferred on you to check the impetuous torrent of iniquity which today is creating a strange havoc in France, dragging an infinite number of souls down into hell, and constituting the sole cause of all the miseries in this Kingdom.

It is a deplorable thing, Madame, provocative of tears of blood, to witness the loss of so many souls which cost the precious blood of Jesus Christ, to notice that this evil is spreading, and to see that so few persons bother about it. When it is a question of some temporal interest of the kings and princes of this world, they stop at nothing. But the interests of the Sovereign Monarch are ignored. We exhaust ourselves on our missions by dint of crying out against the numerous disorders existing in France, which dishonor God in the extreme, and are the cause of the damnation of countless souls; and He gives us the grace to remedy some evils. But I am certain, Madame, that if Your Majesty were willing to use the power He has entrusted to you, you alone could do more toward abolishing the tyranny of the devil and establishing the reign of Jesus Christ than all the missionaries and preachers combined.

If Your Majesty wishes to know how this can be done, it will be easy to suggest the means, and still easier for you, with the help of Our Lord's grace, to put them into effect.

For the time being I shall mention only the most powerful of all

(1). Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV and regent of France (1601-1666).

(2). These incidents occurred on April 27, 1648. Cf. Boulay, OP. cit., Vol. 2, PP. 381-382.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

51 -

means: that of giving the Church good bishops, because good bishops and priests would make for good Christians, and in that way the Church of France would soon change its aspect and resume its former splendor. This, Madame, is Your Majesty's weightiest obligation. It is the greatest service you can render to God and His Church, and it is of such importance as to be highly deserving of Your Majesty's personal attentions(3) since you will be the first to have to render an account of it to the Sovereign judge; an account all the more terrible in that it involves the salvation of an infinite number of souls whom He has committed to your care. For I hear the Holy Spirit crying out through the lips of St.

Paul: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (4) So that at the hour of his death he shall be condemned by God as an apostate and punished more severely than pagans and infidels.

If Your Majesty renders this service to Jesus Christ and His Church, He will shower you with spiritual and temporal blessings. But should you neglect to do so, I solemnly declare to you, in the name and in behalf of the great living God, that all the sins committed in France, because of your having failed to provide the Church with good bishops, will be attributed to you as if you yourself had committed them; that you will have to suffer condemnation and punishment for them; and that all the souls who may consequently be lost and every drop of blood shed by Jesus Christ for their salvation will cry out for vengeance against you at the hour of death.

In conclusion, Madame, I can assure Your Majesty in all truthfulness that in this whole matter I have no interest or end in view other than the glory of my Master and the salvation of souls. He Who knows the depths of the heart knows that I speak the truth.(5) In Him and His most Holy Mother, Madame, I remain always with all possible respect Your Majesty's

Most humble, obedient and faithful subject and servant,

JOHN EUDES, priest.

(3). Without referring the matter in Mazarin, the Prime Minister.

(4). 1 Tim. 5, 8.

(5). In the words of Boulay this letter is a masterpiece of tenderness as well as respectful boldness and dignity. Boulay, *ibid.*, Vol. 2. P. 384.

52 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 26

*Memorandum presented to the Queen Mother on several outstanding disorders in France and the means of correcting them.( 1 )*

[About 1648] LIVE JESUS

The Queen is most humbly petitioned, in the name and for the love of Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, His Mother, the Queen of the universe, to be so kind as to read this memorandum, carefully and in its entirety.

1. The principal feasts of the Church are singularly profaned by the fairs which are held on those days, as much because most people attending these fairs miss Mass, as because of the unbridled profanity, perjury, cheating, thievery, drunkenness and other sinful excesses which are usually a part of such occasions. This state of affairs is so prevalent that God is more dishonored on those days which should be used to praise and glorify Him than on all the other days of the year-a thing which is capable of bringing down a great curse on France.

*Remedy.*- It would be very easy to correct this evil by having these fairs transferred to two or three days after the feast days.

11. God is no less offended and dishonored on the feasts of the patron saints of each parish, almost everywhere in France, by the dances, games, drunkenness and other dissipations which occur.

It appears that there are no longer any days consecrated to God, but only those dedicated to the devil. There are no longer any Christian feasts, but only pagan ones, and ordinarily more sins are committed on those days than during all the rest of the year.

(1). According to Martine, *Vie de R. P. Jean Eudes*, 1. 4, n. 29, this *Memorandum* was accompanied by a letter which began as follows: "I have been deliberating for a long me, Madame, whether I might use the liberty of writing your Majesty in describe to you the things that are going on, and which are of very great consequence to the glory of God and the good of your subjects. I was afraid to write you these somewhat unpleasant facts which will perhaps not be easy to remedy. But over and above that, I was afraid of betraying my ministry if I failed to speak out, and of rendering myself responsible for all the evil if I did not call your attention to these abuses so that I might beseech you to use your power to correct them."

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

53 -

*Remedy.*-Issue an edict, to be published throughout France, by which all these disorders would be forbidden under pain of heavy fines that could be donated to the Church or to the poor. Let it be accompanied by strict injunctions to the judges and officers of each place to be responsible for its enforcement.

III. During the missions we conducted in several places, we found that the churches were deserted on Sundays and feast days, and even on the principal solemnities, because the inhabitants of those places did not dare come there for fear of being apprehended by policemen and tax collectors who seize them even at the foot of the altar to drag them off to prison-an iniquitous thing not practised even among the Turks, but which is nevertheless so true that I myself can testify to it with positive proof. On the feast of Corpus Christi a certain parish priest had taken the Blessed Sacrament from the altar and was about to leave his church to begin the procession. His parishioners were preparing to follow him but they resolved, all of them, not to leave when they learned that tax collectors were waiting to arrest several of them upon their exit from the church. One man alone protested that he would not forsake the Blessed Sacrament; but the moment he set foot outside the church, the police seized him and led him off to prison. Is not such barbarity and impiety enough to bring the thunderbolts of divine justice crashing down on our heads?

*Remedy.*-Since God has established Sundays and feast days to be days of rest and holiness devoted to His service, see to it that His people may serve Him at least on those days in peace and security. To this end, forbid collectors, tax-gatherers, bailiffs and sergeants to disturb them at those times.

IV. The spirit of the world wages open warfare upon chastity, a virtue eminently pleasing to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, and without which no one shall see the face of God. This evil spirit employs all his efforts, in this century of corruption, to banish chastity from France and bring about the triumph of its enemy instead. To accomplish this he uses several kinds of armies. Here are six of them furnished by France herself:

The first army is composed of the balls and dances which give rise to a thousand sins. That is why St. John Chrysostom says that dancing is

54 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

"the abyss of hell," which swallows up a great number of wretched souls; and St. Ephrem and the other holy Fathers tell us that it is the work, invention and assembly of the devil. One of the holy councils of the Church assures us that there are not so many sins committed by tilling the soil on Sundays as by dancing.

The second army is made up of the love comedies which are even more dangerous than dancing, and cause the damnation of many souls.

The third is composed of the love stories which are veritable books of the devil, employed by him to cause countless numbers of sins to be committed. That is why the very learned and pious Gerson, chancellor of the celebrated University of Paris, was quite right in saying, with reference to a romantic novel written in his day, that if he knew that the author of that book had done no penance for it before dying, he would no more pray to God for him than for Judas. And notwithstanding, the whole of France is poisoned by such books, which are actually authorized by permission of our most Christian King.

The fourth army consists of the lascivious songs which are printed, sold and publicly sung in the streets—a thing that singularly corrupts the morals of our youth. If they printed or publicly sang something offensive to the King, who would tolerate that?

The fifth army is the luxury, vanity and worldliness of women in their dress, against which all the holy Doctors of the Church say such terrible things, calling it the ornament and pomp of the devil, and which these women, in baptism, solemnly promised God to renounce. If they do not fulfill these promises, they can never hope to be associated in any way with Him.

The sixth is made up of the indecent sculptures, paintings and pictures which are also the source of more sins than people imagine. Nevertheless, one sees almost nothing else in the offices, halls and inner rooms of many Christians, instead of the likenesses of Our Lord, His most holy Mother, the holy Apostles and the other saints.

*Remedy.*— If the King were even slightly concerned about or offended by all or one of these things, the means of curtailing them would easily be found. Now, it is certain that the great King of heaven is mightily offended by them. That is why the Queen, who has so much love for His Divine Majesty, will not lack the courage and ingenuity

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

55 -

to annihilate all these poms of Satan, and to snatch from his hands these infernal weapons with which he aspires to banish chastity from France.

Would it not be very easy for her Majesty to lead the way in renouncing balls, comedies and all these other Satanic poms, according to the promise she made to God in baptism, so that, through her example, she might inspire horror for them in the hearts of all her subjects?

Would it not be easy for her to order the chancellor to refuse permission henceforth for the printing of love stories, and even to forbid printers and booksellers to print and sell such books?

Would it not be easy for her to prohibit indecent songs from being printed and sold, and from being sung in the streets?

We often see poor people in prison for having sold a little salt in order to gain a livelihood. They are sentenced to pay heavy fines, and being unable to do so, they rot there in jail and are forced to ask as a favor that, instead of paying the fine, they be flogged by the executioner. I can testify to this myself, having interceded a number of times to obtain this concession for some of them. All these penalties are imposed because it is a question of the King's interests! But how much more is the glory of the Sovereign Monarch concerned in the above mentioned disorders, and with what zeal,

consequently, should those truly devoted to Him strive to remedy them!

V. I do not even speak here about the blasphemies, curses and imprecations which defile the present-day speech of the French people. I make no mention of the passion for dueling which sacrifices so many souls to hell and causes the greater number of our French noblemen to become martyrs of the devil. Sufficient edicts have been issued against these disorders, but the important thing is to enforce them, for God will not exonerate anyone for having made fine decrees if no attempt is made to have them carried out.

VI. The greatest evil existing in France today is heresy,(2) an infernal rage which precipitates countless souls into eternal damnation.

(2). The heresy in question is not only Calvinism but also Jansenism which was beginning to spread throughout France. Cf. *Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 3. P. 187.

56 -

## **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

Remedy.-Make peace, so that the royal authority may then be devoted to ridding France of this plague.

### **Conclusion**

If the Queen is wholeheartedly devoted to God's interests(3) and uses her power to remedy the above-mentioned disorders, He will crown her with incomprehensible glory and inexpressible happiness. But if she ignores them and fails to do all in her power to abolish them, all the sins proceeding from them will be laid to her and she will be fearfully punished for them. Divine Bounty forbid that such should be the case. Rather, let her be an instrument of God to promote the reign of Jesus Christ in the hearts of all the French people.

(3). Anne of Austria was undoubtedly a pious and well-meaning woman; because, far from being hurt by such remonstrances, we have the best authority for saying that she gave much good example in attending, and listening to the Saint's sermons whenever he preached in Paris, or in the vicinity of the royal palaces. H. Joly, *Life of Saint John Eudes* (London, 1932), P. 193.

## **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

57 -

### **LETTER 27**

**To Very Reverend Father Francis Bourgoing, Superior General of the Oratory.(1)**

St. John Eudes sends him a memorandum in justification of his withdrawal from the Oratory(2)

Paris, September 10, 1648

JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH

Most Reverend and Honored Father:

I kneel at your feet in spirit and in heart to receive, may it please you, your holy blessing, and to implore you very humbly, in the name of Our Lord Jesus and His most holy Mother, to be so good as to read and consider, with your usual kindness and charity, the things I have set forth in writing on the sheet I am attaching to this letter. I have composed this paper to clarify many things of which I believe you are not informed. Perhaps when you understand them, God will give you different

sentiments. And I assure you, most Reverend

(1). Father Francis Bourgoing (1611-1662) was elected superior general of the Oratory of Jesus on May 7, 1641. In this letter and in the memorandum that accompanied it St. John Eudes justified himself for withdrawing from the Oratory. He undoubtedly expected that the Superior General would take steps to stop the unjust hostility of some Oratorians who sought to bring about the dissolution of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary founded in 1643.

(2). The memorandum which St. John Eudes sent to Father Bourgoing has not come down to us. We are therefore unable to say with certainty why he withdrew from the Oratory Of Jesus. Some writers have stated that the Saint left the Congregation because it had come under the evil influence of Jansenism, which destroyed to a great extent the work of de Bérulle and de Condren. It is true that St. John Eudes was always a vigorous opponent of Jansenism. Nevertheless the opinion that he left the Oratory to escape dangerous associations is groundless. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 1, P. 487. Most biographers attribute the Saint's determination to leave the Oratory to his desire to realize the paramount objective of the Congregation at its foundation, namely the sanctification of the clergy through proper training in seminaries. This purpose had been almost entirely neglected by the Oratorians after the death of de Bérulle. Cf. Boulay, ibid., Vol. 1, P. 530. A recent biographer, Father Emile Georges, C.J.M., in his biography written for the canonization of the Saint, rejects both opinions and holds that St. John Eudes left the Oratory to obey the will of God manifested to him by a number of providential events. Cf. Saint Jean *Eudes*, p. 62, p. 67 ft

158 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Father, that I am stating them to you with the same sincerity and truth with which I should want to speak to my confessor if I were about to die and appear before the tribunal of the great God. if you deem it opportune to turn this paper over to your Council, and especially to Reverend Father Gibieuf, (3) I shall be very grateful to you, for I am most anxious for him to see it. And if, after that, you honor me with a reply, kindly address it to me at Caen, where I intend to return and where, as everywhere else, I wish to demonstrate, whenever the providence of God permits, that I am and shall remain all my life, with all possible affection and respect, very reverend and honored Father,

Your most obedient, grateful and devoted servant,

JOHN EUDES, priest.

(3). See Letter 12, note 2.

### LETTER 28(1)

To the Prioress(2) of the Carmelites at Beaune.

Caen, December 20, 1648

JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH

Very Reverend and dear Mother:

May Jesus, the most Holy Heart of Mary, be the heart of your heart for ever.

I cannot tell you what joy my confrères and I have derived from our possession of the precious medals you were kind enough to send us by our dear Brother de Renty, (2) and for which we very humbly thank you. But I implore you now to look with favor, my dearest Mother, upon this repetition of the supplication I made to you through him, that of giving us some special alliance and union with

your holy Community(4).

(1). The original of this letter is reproduced on opposite page. The English editors are grateful to the Carmélites; of Beaune for the photographic copy.

(2). Mother Elizabeth of the Trinity. See Letter 24.

(3). See Letter 24, note 4

(4). See Letter 24, note 6.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

59 -

in honor of the most intimate union of Our Infant Lord Jesus with His most Holy Mother. All our confreres ardently desire it, too, and add their supplications to mine. Please do not, therefore, refuse us this favor. As for ourselves, we gladly affirm in the sacred love of the most Holy Infant Jesus for His Amiable Mother: *Omnia nostra vestra sunt*. Now we shall wait and hope for the same from you. In conclusion, if anything singular has happened since the decease of our dearest Sister,(5) you will oblige us exceedingly by letting us know about it.

I am with all my heart, very reverend and dear Mother,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(5). Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament See Letter 24.

## LETTER 29

**To Father John Baptist Saint Jure,(1) a Jesuit. Concerning Baron de Renty(2)**

[1649]

We have seen him carried away by his zeal and fervor in the church at Citry, sweeping it, removing the sweepings with his hands and ringing the bells to summon the people to the exercises. We have noticed him with tears in his eyes on such occasions, and when I asked him the reason, he confessed that they were caused by the excessive joy he felt upon witnessing the emotion of so many persons who were showing definite signs of conversion, restoring the goods of others, becoming reconciled with their enemies, getting rid of bad books, forsaking the occasions of sin and beginning a new life.

(1). Father Saint Jure (1588- 1663) entered the Society of Jesus at the age of 16. He was an excellent spiritual advisor and the author of a number of devotional works, *The Religious Man*, *Treatise on the Love and Knowledge of Jesus Christ*, and *The Life of Mr. de Renty*. This letter is taken from *The Life of Mr. de Renty*.

(2). See Letter 24, note 4.

60 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 30

**To Father Simon Mannoury. On the dependence of the Congregation with regard to bishops.**

[1649]

Our benefactors(1) are moving heaven and earth. They have told astounding things about us to

his Lordship of Bayeux;(2) among others, that we wish to establish ourselves by prerogative from Rome, without bishops. He is angry about this and determined not to tolerate it. I have written him to refute this calumny.

(1). The Oratorians who accused St. John Eudes of seeking independence from the Ordinaries. The Saint always called his adversaries his "benefactors."

(2). His Lordship Edward Molé was consecrated Bishop of Bayeux on February 14, 1649. Because of the false reports concerning the Saint, Bishop Molé was hostile to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Cf. Georges, op. cit., PP. 97-98.

## LETTER 31

**To Father Richard Le Mesle.(1).***The Saint thanks him for consolation received from him.*

[1649]

I thank you with all my heart for your charitable letters. Reading them brought tears to my eyes, for they reveal the very sincere and cordial charity that Our Lord has given you toward me, and the very deep concern you have about my troubles. Let me assure you, too, my dearest brother, that there is no one in this world who loves you as much as I do. You are the only one of all our good confrères to console me in this trial, which is the hardest I have ever borne in my whole life.'

(1). See Letter 14, note 1.

(2). Reference is made here to the numerous grievances which Saint John Eudes had to endure from the hostility of Bishop Molé of Bayeux, who was seeking to suppress the Congregation Of Jesus and Mary.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS 61 -

### Letter 32.

**To One of His Sons Conducting a Mission in Gatteville.(1)***On submission to the Will of God.*

[Paris, June 1650]

I had hoped to join you soon in the Gatteville mission, but Our Lord does not find me worthy of it and is keeping me here in my Paris purgatory for my sins longer than I had anticipated. Not that I wish it to be otherwise, for, thanks to His mercy, He gives me the grace to desire nothing in this world save to do His most holy will. And to tell you the truth, everywhere that I find His will, there I am in my element and paradise. Therefore Paris, which used to be my purgatory, is now my paradise, because I see clearly that the divine will has brought me here and is detaining me yet for a few days ... It makes no difference to me where I am nor what I do, provided I am serving my God and accomplishing His holy will. That is all we have to do in this world, and therein should we find all our happiness.

(1). A small town in the vicinity of Cherbourg.



## LETTER 33

### To the Priests of the Congregation during a Mission in Gatteville. On *the care that must be devoted to spiritual exercises.*

[Paris, June 1650]

I implore you never to conduct in haste any of the exercises which directly concern God, such as the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Divine Office, morning and evening prayers, and those of the *Benedicite* and the thanksgiving, under any pretext whatsoever, but to conduct them slowly, distinctly and with devotion.

In addition, "Let us not love in word, nor in tongue," like the children of this generation, "but in deed, and in truth," (1) like true children

(1). 1 John 3, 18.

62 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

of God. In short, let these words of the Holy Spirit be impressed on our hearts and stamped on our words and actions: "Humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God: for great is the power of God alone: and he is honoured by the humble." (2)

Our affairs are going well, thank God. Get ready now for three important missions at Bernay (3) Pontoise (4) and Saint Sulpice. (5) I implore Our Lord and His most holy Mother to prepare us for the accomplishment of their most holy wills. Once again, in the sacred love of their most loving Heart, do I embrace all of you, including our dear brethren Fathers Ameline, (6) Delaunay, (7) Paillot (8) and the others with you. I remain, my dearest brethren,

Devotedly your servant,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(2). Ecclus. 3, 20-21.

(3). A small town in the Eure Department, Normandy.

(4). A town in the archdiocese of Rouen.

(5). A parish in the city of Paris where Father John James Olier opened the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. The mission preached by St. John Eudes began on February 2nd and continued until the end of Lent.

(6). Father Ameline was a priest of Caen who later wrote a pamphlet against Mary des Vallées. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 3, P. 140.

(7). Father De Launay-Hué, vicar general of Bayeux. Cf. Boulay, ibid. Vol. 4. P. 330.

(8). Father Nicholas Paillot, a priest of St. Michael of Vaucelles, a village in the Nord Department, six miles from Cambrai. He assisted St. John Eudes in many of his missions. Father Paillot was not a member of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. He died at Vaucelles On May 21, 1687. Cf. Boulay, ibid. Vol. 2, P. 46; Vol. 3, P. 370. See Letter 92.

## LETTER 34

**To the Religious of Our Lady of Charity at Caen.** *On the feast of the joys of Our Blessed Lady. (1)*

Paris, July 5, 1650(2)

J. M. J.

My dearest Sisters:

May Jesus, the most Holy Heart of Mary, be the life and joy of our hearts for ever.(3)

I was exceedingly happy to receive your beautiful and charitable letter, for which I thank you a thousand times. I trust that the Communion you offered to God for my intention, on the feast of St. John,(4) will be profitable to you as well as me, since all my intentions have no end save the sanctification of your souls and the establishment of the reign of God in your hearts. It is that for which we must unceasingly strive; all our happiness lies therein, and it alone should constitute our joy.

Speaking of joys, I am writing you this on the fifth of July, which is the feast of the Joys of Our Blessed Lady, our good Mother. If you have overlooked it, I am asking our dear Mother Superior to appoint another day on which you may observe this feast, and to permit all of you to receive Holy Communion, which you must offer to God for these five intentions:

1. In thanksgiving to the most holy Trinity for all the joys bestowed by It upon the Blessed Virgin, on earth as well as in heaven.

(1). This feast is still celebrated on July 5th by the Eudists and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity.

(2). This letter was written from Paris where St. John Eudes had gone with Father Mannoury to obtain from Bishop Molé of Bayeux the approbation for Our Lady of Charity. This was granted on February 8, 1651.

(3). St. John Eudes places this salutation at the head of most of his letters to his communities until 1660 when he begins to use "May the Divine Will Be Our Guide in All Things." See Letter 87

(4). We know that the Saint had received the name of John in baptism. The above letter shows that the sisters at Caen had sent him their feast day greetings on the feast of St. John the Baptist, June 24. Boulay thinks that John Eudes's patron saint was the Apostle St. John. Cf. Boulay, *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 15.

2. In satisfaction and reparation for the sorrows and griefs she suffered during her life on earth, because of our sins.

3. For the increase and extension of her joys in heaven.

4. To ask God for the grace to scorn and detest all the false joys of this world.

5. To ask also for the grace to find all our joy in doing His most amiable will everywhere and in all things, and in carrying the Cross with our most adorable Saviour. For truly, my dearest Sisters, there is no real cause for joy on earth other than this: to perform the will of God and to be despised and crucified with Jesus Christ. Oh, would that we shared the sentiments of St. John of the

Cross! When Our Lord asked him what he desired for the services he had rendered Him, he made this reply: "Lord, I ask nothing of Thee save to suffer and be despised for Thy sake." It was indeed the Holy Spirit Who inspired him to ask for the greatest blessing of this life.

After you have received Communion for these intentions, I pray you, my dear Sisters, to think seriously, each one to yourself, about what you can do to increase the joys of the most precious Virgin Mary.

In conclusion, we are overlooking nothing, Father Mannoury and I, that can be done for your house, or rather for the house of Our Lord and His most holy Mother. But the affairs of God are transacted only with much patience and resignation. I trust, however, that they will soon be settled, and that the outcome will be satisfactory to all of us. This letter is intended both for the Mother and her daughters, whom I greet one and all.

I pray you also to contact our dearest brethren,<sup>(5)</sup> so that, if they have forgotten to observe the feast of the joys of Our Blessed Lady, they may atone for their omission, for I have not the leisure just now to write them.

I am with all my heart, my dearest Sisters,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(5). The Eudists of the seminary at Caen.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

65 -

### LETTER 35

**To the Missionaries at Gatteville.** *On the sorrow he feels on being separated from them, and on the Divine Will which he invites them to consider as their mother.*

Paris, July 9, 1650 J. M. J.

My dearest brethren, whom I embrace with deepest affection, *in visceribus Christi*:

Here it is already the ninth of July and there is no prospect of my being able to leave Paris for two weeks yet. For that reason I am giving up the hope I had of seeing you at the mission in Gatteville. I can assure you that this mortification is one of the hardest I have had to bear for a long time, for it seems to me that I am separated not only from my own heart and body, but from something still dearer to me, since in truth I love you more, collectively and individually, than my inmost parts. I believe that I speak without exaggeration and in all sincerity.

The most adorable Will of God, which is our most bountiful mother, has ordained this separation; may it be for ever blessed for having done so! I call it our godmother, since from it we have received our being and life, that of nature as well as of grace. It must govern us, and we must obey it and abandon ourselves with the utmost confidence to its guidance, for it has a truly maternal love for us! That is why I urge, my beloved brethren, that we regard, honor and love God's Will as our most amiable mother, and that our principal devotion be to conceive a strong affection of mind and heart for it, conform faithfully to it in all things, and obey all its orders "with a great heart and a willing mind." Let us find all our glory and happiness therein and regard all else as pure folly.

"We can do nothing," says St. Paul, "against the truth: but for the truth." May God grant us so many graces that we may truthfully say:

(1). 2 Mach. 1, 3.

(2). Cor 13, 8.

66 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

"We can do nothing against the will of God, but for the will of God." We can do nothing, that is, we cannot think, say nor do anything contrary to the divine will, but we are strong and powerful to obey Him in all things.

Furthermore, when I call the divine will our mother, that does not imply that the most Blessed Virgin is not our Mother too, for the divine will so fills, possesses and animates her that it is like her soul, her mind, her heart and life, in such a way that she is but the same thing, if one may so express it, as the divine will itself. Thus the most precious Virgin is our Mother, and the divine will is also our mother. And nevertheless, they are not two mothers but one, to whom I offer and abandon myself with all my heart, along with my dearest brethren, that she may live and reign within us, carrying out all her designs, now and for ever, in her own way rather than in ours. Say *amen*, my beloved brethren, but say it with deep sincerity, not merely with your lips but much more with your works. To this end, I entreat you to practise faithfully what I wrote you in my last letter, which I pray you to re-read together if you still have it.

### LETTER 36

**To the Priests of the Seminary at Caen.** *The Saint encourages them during the persecution directed against them by the bishop of Bayeux, His Lordship Edward Molé, who was seeking to interdict their chapel( 1 )*

Coutances, November 6, 1650

I hope that this storm will pass and that Our Lord will salvage great good from it. His Lordship of Coutances(2) is showing me extraordinary charity and cordiality. I shall not tell you the rest; you will see it in its effects(3) Let us continue to humble ourselves before God and beg Him

(1). By decision of the Bishop's Court at Caen the Seminary chapel was placed under an interdict on November 29, 1650.

(2). Claude Auvry, a friend and protector of St. John Eudes. Cf. Boulay, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, P. 417.

(3). The Saint is referring to the imminent establishment of the Congregation at Coutances.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

67 -

to carry out His designs for us. Furthermore, it is a special act of Providence that I should be here at this time. I shall remain for a few days yet, no longer on account of the business which has kept me here until now, but for another matter of which I will tell you when I see you, and which I ask you to recommend to Our Lord and His holy Mother.

### LETTER 37

**To Father Thomas Manchon(1) at the Seminary in Caen.** *The course to follow if the seminary chapel is interdicted.*

[Coutances, autumn of 1650]

Do not be astonished, my dear brother; it is a storm that will pass. If they intimate anything to you, make no reply but tell them that in my absence you have nothing to say until my return. However, if they order you to close the chapel, do so, and say your Masses wherever you can. Give encouragement to our brethren and exhort them to humble themselves in the sight of God, putting all their hope in Him and His most holy Mother, and spending as much time as possible before the Blessed Sacrament. Send some of them to Our Lady of Deliverance.(2)

(1). See Letter 13, note 2. Father Manchon was then acting superior of the Caen Seminary. Cf. Boulay, *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, P. 505.

(2). A shrine about nine miles from Caen. It was there that St. John Eudes and his first five companions dedicated their lives to the work of seminaries and missions on March 25, 1643.

68 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 38

**To one of his confreres.** *Concerning the admission of a postulant to probation.*( 1 )

With regard to the young man about whom you wrote me, send him to Coutances,(2) my dearest brother, provided he is highly resolved to renounce his own will completely, to be admonished about his shortcomings, and to live and die in the Congregation.

(1). The name given to the formative years in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. According to the original rules as laid down by the Saint the probation was to last three years and three months in memory of three years and three months that the Apostles and Disciples lived with Our Lord before being incorporated into His apostolic family on Pentecost Sunday. The first year in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary is devoted to prayer and spiritual training and corresponds to the novitiate in other religious orders. The remaining years are spent in the study of philosophy and theology. In recent years the probation has been changed to four years. After completing his probation the candidate is incorporated into the Congregation by virtue of the perpetual promises that he takes to obey his superiors and the rules of the Order.

(2). The Probation House was then at Coutances in Normandy.

### LETTER 39

**To Reverend Mother Mechtilde of the Blessed Sacrament,(1) Foundress of the Benedictine Nuns of the Blessed Sacrament.** *On a favor obtained through the Holy Heart of Mary.*

[About 1650]

In 1648 we were conducting a big mission at Autun, in the course of which we celebrated, in the cathedral,(2) the feast of the Holy Heart of the Queen of Heaven which enkindled the fire of that devotion in many hearts. It happened that a Benedictine nun of the Abbey of St. Mary(3)

(1). Mother Mechtilde was then at the Benedictine Monastery of the Holy Trinity at Caen. She founded the Benedictines of Perpetual Adoration in 1651.

(2). The first solemn feast of the Holy Heart of Mary was celebrated at the Autun Cathedral on February 8, 1648

(3). Benedictine Monastery founded in 589 by Queen Brunehaut. Cf. Boulay *ibid.*, Vol. 2, P. 319

of St. John the Great at Autun, named Frances du Rey and called "of the Cross," eighteen years of age, was sick with measles which had deprived her of sight and caused a severe inflammation of the eyes, with constant and very acute pain. She called her nurse and requested her to kneel near the bed, reciting by heart the salutation to the most holy Heart of the Mother of God, *Ave Cor sanctissimum*, (4) printed in a little book. (5) When this was done she asked for the booklet which she applied to her eyes for about the length of a *Miserere*, supplicating the Blessed Virgin to restore her sight and health through the merits of her most holy Heart. After this she removed the book from her eyes, and not feeling any more pain, she opened them without difficulty and began to see as clearly and perfectly as ever . . . I have an authentic attestation of this, in addition to having been an eye-witness of it.

(4). Prayer to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary recited daily in the two orders founded by St. John Eudes. Cf. *The Sacred Heart of Jesus* (New York, 1946), p. 173.

(5). *La Dévotion au Saint Coeur et au Saint Nom de la très Sainte Vierge* by St. John Eudes. It was published at Autun in 1648, Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, Vol. V1, p. V111; Boulay, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, P. 320.

## LETTER 40

**To the First Religious of Our Lady of Charity.** *The Saint announces the signing of the letters of establishment for the Order. He exhorts them to have true devotion to the most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

Paris, February 11, 1651 J. M. J.

My dearest daughters;

May Jesus, the most Holy Heart of Mary, be our life and our joy for ever.

I have wonderful news for you. But first, kneel down to receive it, not as coming from me, but from our adorable Jesus and His most worthy Mother.

At last, after several years of patient waiting, the letters for your establishment were signed by his Lordship of Bayeux (1) last Wednesday,

(1). Edward Molé. See Letter 30, note 2.

+

70 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

February 8th, the feast of the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin and the contract of foundation was also signed by him and by Mr. and Madame de Langrie. (2) So you are now true daughters of the Heart of the Queen of heaven, and obliged, in a special manner, to honor and love her most amiable Heart, to celebrate its feast with special devotion, to have but one heart with her and with one another, and to engrave on your own hearts a perfect likeness of the love, charity, obedience, humility, meekness, zeal for the salvation of souls and other virtues which reign in her Heart, so that you may thus conform to the Heart of her Son.

No longer need you be afraid. Your Community and Order are founded upon the Holy Heart of the sovereign Empress of the universe, and this was accomplished not through the efforts of men but by a special mandate from heaven. For last Tuesday his Lordship of Bayeux, after several previous

delays and difficulties, had again postponed the affair to Friday; then on the very same day he announced that it would take place on Wednesday, which it did. Eternal thanks be rendered to the most Holy Trinity, Our Lord Jesus Christ, His most precious Mother and all the angels and saints who interceded in this great work, and may all who cooperated in it in any way whatsoever be for ever blessed with the choicest blessings of heaven.

In thanksgiving, my dearest daughters, it is my opinion that you should do the following things: Recite every day for a week, in a body, the *Te Deum*, the *Ave Cor sanctissimum*, and each day one of the eight litanies of the most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin, contained at the end of the book of devotion<sup>(3)</sup> to this same Heart. Then after this prayer, recite the litanies of St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, the Holy Guardian Angels, and the prayer to all the saints which is used on All Saints Day.

In addition, you should receive thirty-four Communion, at your

(2). It was mainly through the influence of John Leroux, Seigneur de Langrie, Royal Counsellor, President of the Rouen Parliament, that St. John Eudes obtained the contract of foundation from Bishop Molé on February 8, 1651. Mr. de Langrie donated 10,000 livres to the monastery, and Madame de Langrie in recognition of the great service she had rendered the Order was given the privileges and rights of foundress. Cf. Father John Mary Ory, *The Origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, PP. 55, 57

(3). See Letter 39, note 5.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

71 -

convenience, in thanksgiving to the most Holy Trinity, to Jesus, to the most holy Heart of His glorious Mother, to the angels and saints, and for his Lordship of Bayeux, your founders and benefactors, and all who have contributed to the success of this affair.

Furthermore, it seems to me that you ought to write four letters of thanks: 1. To his Lordship of Bayeux; 2. To President de Langrie; 3. To Madame de Langrie; 4. To Madame de la Porte,<sup>(4)</sup> to whom you are greatly indebted. I am asking our dear Sister Mary of St. Francis Xavier<sup>(5)</sup> to write these four letters. Above all, I implore you to begin now in good earnest to live as true daughters of the most Holy Heart of the Mother of God.

It is in the sacred love of this Heart that I am and will ever be, my dearest daughters,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. Wait until Father Mannoury and Mr. de Langrie arrive in Caen before you sing a solemn *Te Deum*, but while you are waiting do not neglect to recite it, as I mentioned in this letter.

(4). Madame de la Porte, whose husband was a Councillor of the Rouen Parliament, accompanied Mr. and Madame de Langrie when they visited Bishop Molé in Paris to request the approval of the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity of Caen. See Letter 21, note

(5). She was probably the secretary of the community.

## LETTER 41

**To Sister Mary of the Assumption, Eustace de Taillefer.<sup>(1)</sup> *The Saint urges her to prepare to be professed.***

Paris, March 11, 1651 J. M. J.

My dearest daughter:

May Jesus, the most Holy Heart of Mary, be ours for ever.

I should like to have you make your profession as soon as possible,

(1). See Letter 16, note 1.

72 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

and if it were left to me, you would already have done so. But first you must have some Sisters with you, and you shall have them soon. Therefore be patient until then, my dearest daughter, and prepare yourself meanwhile for this holy act.

I beg Our Lord and His most Holy Mother to help you with your preparation, and to fashion you entirely after their own Heart. It is in the love of this most holy Heart that I remain, both to you, my beloved daughter, and to all my dearest daughters,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. I gave Madame de la Porte the book of *The Heart*, ( 2 ) along with the signature and your letter. She seemed very pleased with them and told me that she would write to thank you.

(2). See Letter 39, note 5.

## LETTER 42

**To Father Simon Mannoury, in Coutances.** *Regarding a postulant admitted to probation.*

(Corbeil,(') April or May 1651)

You will take care to form him according to the spirit of Our Lord, which is a spirit of detachment and renunciation of oneself and all things; a spirit of obedience and abandonment to the divine will, manifested to us by the rules of the Gospel and the regulations of our Congregation, which are simply an expression of the evangelical maxims, and by the behavior of those who act in God's stead; a spirit of pure love for God which inclines us to do nothing save only to please Him; a spirit of singular devotion to Jesus and Mary, to the mysteries of their lives, and to all the saints most closely associated with them; a spirit of scorn and aversion for the world, which is the body of Satan, and of all that the world loves; a spirit of love for the Cross of Jesus,

(1). A small town situated on the Seine River about 20 miles south of Paris.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

73 -

that is, for scorn, poverty and sorrow; a spirit of hatred and horror for every kind of sin, which should incite us to wage war on it unceasingly and destroy it in ourselves and others; a spirit of humility, contempt, hatred and annihilation of self, as indicated in these words from the *Imitation of Christ*: "Love to be unknown and to be esteemed as nothing; (2) spirit of cordial and fraternal charity toward our neighbor, especially toward those of our Congregation and the poor, and of zeal for the



salvation of souls; a spirit of virtue, in order to love all the virtues and practise them steadfastly in the spirit of Jesus, as is stated in the book *The Kingdom of Jesus*,<sup>(3)</sup> the reading and practice of which you should strongly recommend to those under your direction; a spirit of love, esteem and respect for the Church and all that pertains to it, as well as for all the religious Orders in the Church, for we should have a Catholic, that is to say, a universal, spirit-one that embraces, honors and loves all that is of God, for the sake of God; and we should hate and despise only sin and ourselves; finally, a spirit of prayer and piety, that we may perform all our actions in the spirit, that is, in the dispositions which are those of Our Lord.

Study these dispositions as carefully as possible, with the grace of Our Lord, and impart them to others by your example, prayers, discourses and meditations, readings and other exercises. Above all, implore God to grant you the spirit of meekness and watch yourself particularly on this point, that you may make yourself loved, and win hearts in which you may afterwards instil what God may grant you for that purpose.

Keep this letter and read it over from time to time.

(2). *Imitation of Christ*. Book 1, verse 3.

(3). Treatise on Christian perfection by St. John Eudes published by Peter Poisson at Caen in 1637.

74 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 43

**To Father Simon Mannoury, in Coutances.** *On the mission at Corbeil.*

Corbeil, May 18, 1651.

All our brethren here in Corbeil send affectionate greetings to their brethren in Coutances. Our dear brother Father Jourdan<sup>(1)</sup> is ill with a fever. We are here among a "stiffnecked" people but the mission is bound to convert some of them.

(1). Father Peter Jourdan (1607-1661) was One Of the first five Eudists. He was a zealous missionary and took part in the great mission given in Paris at St. Germain-des-Prés in 1661. He died on December 27, 1661. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 3, PP. 307-309. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, p. 13.

### LETTER 44

**To Father Simon Mannoury.** *On the mission at Bernay.* ( 1 )

June 2, 1651

We are leaving tomorrow for Bernay, to begin the mission there on Sunday. It seems to me that it will be a good thing for Father Saché<sup>(2)</sup> to come on this mission, but first have him make a three-day retreat.

(1). See Letter 33, nov 3.

(2). Father Stephen Saché (1615-1678) was born at Aseville, in the diocese of Coutances, Normandy, in 1615. He entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1650. An intelligent and cultured priest, Father Saché won the hearts of all by his simple and pleasing personality. For twenty years he was assistant superior of the Seminary and College of Lisieux. He died on January 9, 1678. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, P. 48

## LETTER 45

**To Father Simon Mannoury.** *The Saint asks him for helpers for the mission at Bernay.*

(Bernay, June 1651)

wrote you to send us Father Sache, but you have made no reply to me about it. This is a mission which begins where the others end, and we have a great dearth of workers for it. I was afraid that we should not have any crosses on this occasion, but God has provided, for our dear brother Father de Montaigu (1) has been ill since Sunday morning with a continuous fever, and Father Jourdan is kept busy taking care of him. Hurry and send us Father Sache. Could you do without Father Le Mesle(2) so that he could come to help us? I am leaving it in your hands. Write to the pastor of St. Gervais(3) and importune him to send us some of his good workers for this mission. Ask him, however, not to send any except those whom we have already seen.

(1). Father John Baptist de Montaigu (1610-1681) met St. John Eudes at Autun in 1647 and asked the Saint to be admitted into the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. In addition to his missionary activities Father de Montaigu was for eight years superior of the Seminary of Coutances. He died at the Rouen Seminary in 1681. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol, 1, p. 61.

(2). See Letter 14, note 1.

(3). The parish priest of St. Gervais Church in Coutances. Cf. Boulay, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, P. 466.

## LETTER 46

**(1)To Father Simon Mannoury, in Paris.** *On the opportuneness for a mission in Coutances, and the concessions to be made to His Lordship Edward Molé, the Bishop of Bayeux.*

(Summer of 1651)

I have written to his Lordship the Bishop of Coutances(2) to ask for his approval of our giving a mission in Coutances at this time. Press him for a reply so that we may begin as soon as possible, for there are a good many persons who desire this work, and it would be fitting for us to render this service to God and to the public at the outset of our establishment there . . .

I beg of you not to leave Paris until you have used to advantage, as much as possible, all the means that the providence of God has placed and will place at your disposal to win over his Lordship the Bishop of Bayeux and his father.(3) Concede to his Lordship everything he wishes except the authority to appoint the superior of the seminary; he must be persuaded to consent to his election by the Community.

(1). Father Mannoury had gone to Paris on business, probably to request the Bishop of Bayeux to lift the interdict on the chapel of the Caen Seminary.

(2). Bishop Claude Auvry, who was in Paris at that time.

(3). Matthew Molé, a magistrate of repute and a personal friend of Cardinal Mazarin, the Prime Minister. Cf. Boulay *ibid.*, VOL 2, P. 297

## LETTER 47

**To His Niece, Mary Herson,(1)afterwards Sister Mary of the Nativity.**

*On the dispositions with which she should take the veil.*

September 3, 1651

My dearest niece and daughter in Our Lord Jesus Christ:

With all my heart do I bless our most amiable Saviour for the good sentiments He gave you during your retreat, and I beseech Him to grant you the grace to be faithful to Him by using them well, as He wishes you to do.

It is a mortification for both of us that I shall not be present at the ceremony of your clothing, but it will be better that way and greater blessings will result, since it is quite certain that the more crosses there are in the affairs of God, the more advantageous it is for us. But that will not prevent my being present in mind and heart in order to supplicate Our Lord and His most Holy Mother to use their own holy hands to divest you of yourself and all earthly things, that you may be clothed instead with their spirit and virtue.

On your part, there are eight things you must do:

The first is to enter into an ardent desire of wholly renouncing yourself and everything that is not God, and of giving yourself perfectly to Our Lord, that He may command of you all that is pleasing to Him, without reservation.

The second is to offer yourself to the holy Virgin with a fervent desire to serve, honor and imitate her as your dearest Mother, and to cultivate a special devotion to her most amiable Heart.

The third is to consecrate yourself to the Son and the Mother, that

(1) She was the eldest daughter of the Saint's sister and was born on March 5, 1629. At the age of twelve she entered the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity of Caen. Nine years later, on September 8, 1651 she took the habit and received the name of Mary of the Nativity. She became superior of the Community and did much to spread the Order and in establish regular observance. She worked with the ecclesiastical superior, Father Legrand, parish priest of St. Julian of Caen, at the revision of the Constitutions and at the composition of the Custom-Book. She died on June 4, 1709 at the age of eighty-five. Cf. Ory, *The origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, pp. 65, 194, 269.

you may occupy yourself according to their most holy will with the salvation of lost souls who are so precious to them.

The fourth is to protest to Our Lord that you wish to do all these things, particularly on the feast of the Nativity of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, not for the sake of rewards from heaven, nor earthly merits and consolations, but purely for His love and glory, and to accomplish His most adorable will.

The fifth is to remember that you are to perform an act which has previously been performed

in such a holy manner by many saintly religious of both sexes, and to unite yourself to their holy dispositions, asking them to grant you a share in them.

The sixth is to pray to St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, your guardian angel, the holy guardian angels of your house, and all the saints who had a particular zeal for the salvation of lost souls, to help you perform this act.

The seventh and principal one is to humble yourself profoundly at the sight of your own unworthiness, wretchedness and lowliness, and earnestly to beseech the Blessed Virgin to obtain for you from her Son the grace to regard and treat yourself always as the lowliest of anyone in the house, and to be willing to be regarded and treated as such by others. That, my dear daughter, is what I particularly recommend to you; implant it so deeply in your heart that it may never escape, and in that way you will truly be one of the daughters of the Mother of love and humility.

The eighth is that, after you have done everything possible on your part to prepare yourself for so great an act, you place no reliance upon it and depend in nowise for support upon your own efforts and preparations, but that you offer and give yourself to Jesus and Mary, imploring them to do for you all that you yourself should do, and to prepare you themselves in their own way and according to their most holy will.

Lastly, all the sentiments of our good Mother are so precious to me that I can wish only what she wishes. Hence I am very pleased that you will bear the name of the Nativity of the most Blessed Virgin, so that you may regard that feast as the day of your rebirth into a whole new life--a day on which you may begin to live, with the Mother of sweet love, a life in imitation of hers.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

79 -

Ask our good Mother to look to the needs of each of the Sisters, as well as to whatever else may be expedient, and to have these purchases made, and I will gladly settle for them.

I am writing to my nephew, your brother,(2) that I am glad he is coming, but I shall not be able to see him, for I cannot come out of seclusion and it would be inopportune for him to come here. Do not forget to ask him how he is behaving whether he goes frequently to confession and to a good and regular confessor, whether he kneels to say his morning and evening prayers, and whether he goes to catechism instructions and sermons. Give him this good advice: 1. To fear offending God above all else; 2. To live in peace and charity with everyone; 3. Never to lie or swear when buying and selling; 4. To place all his trust in God; 5. To have devotion to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph.

I greet our dearest Mother and thank her with my whole heart for all her care and trouble in your behalf, and I beseech Our Lord and His most holy Mother to thank her for both of us. I also send greetings to all our dearest Sisters and recommend myself to their prayers. I remain, in the sacred love of the most holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my dearest niece and daughter in Our Lord,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. Do not forget to ask your brother for news of your little sister(3) -how she is getting along, and how much he could give her if she wished to become a religious.

(2). John Herson.

(3). France Herson entered the Order of Our Lady of Charity and made her profession as a lay sister on July 25, 1662. She took the name of Sister Mary of St. Francis.

## LETTER 48

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.(1)** *On various matters.*

(1651) My very dear and good Mother:

May Jesus, the most holy Heart of Mary, be ours for ever.

It is always a great pleasure for me to receive letters from you, but even if you did not write me at all, I could never doubt your most cordial charity toward me, any more than your participation, in company with our dear Sisters, in my small afflictions. I thank you with all sincerity, my dear . est Mother, and beseech you to obtain for me from Our Lord the grace to bear them in His spirit.

I entrusted your letter for his Lordship of Bayeux to Mr. Le Tardif, who is well acquainted with the matter, and who can say whatever is necessary and fitting. He offered of his own accord to deliver it. Pray God to bless this affair, and to let His most adorable will be done in all things.

I am delighted that our dear Sisters are travelling so happily and courageously along the paths of heaven through the practice of sound virtues. I beseech them always to continue their advancement, especially in humility, obedience and mutual charity, and in the love of our most amiable Jesus and His most worthy Mother. It is in this same love that I send greetings to one and all, and that I am with all my heart, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(1). In 1644 St. John Eudes asked the Visitation Nuns of Caen to assist him in the training of the first sisters of Our Lady of Charity until his spiritual daughters would be able to choose from among themselves a sister qualified to govern them. On August 10, 1644, Mother Margaret Frances Patin, a Visitation Nun, became superior of the Refuge of Caen. For twenty years she guided the nascent community and trained the young sisters that were destined to govern the order. Mother Patin died the death of a saint on October 31, 1668. Cf. Ory, *ibid.*, P. 32 ff; George, *op. cit.*, p. 204 ff.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 49

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin, Superior of Our Lady of Charity.** *The Saint speaks to her of Sister Mary des Vallées and gives her some spiritual advice.*

(January 1652)

My dearest Mother, whom I love most cordially in the sacred love of the most holy Heart of Jesus and Mary:

May they be the heart of our hearts for ever.

Our dear Timothy(1) is now undergoing extraordinary sufferings, and it is therefore

impossible to speak with her about anything. As soon as she has returned to her normal state, I will read her your letter, and if she gives me any message for you, I will not fail to convey it to you. However, I can assure you, my dearest Mother, that she loves you deeply and sincerely, and that you and all your dear Community have a very special place in her heart.

As for your own condition, after I had recommended you to Our Lord and given myself to Him, that He might direct me what to tell you, this is what came to my mind.

It is true, my dear Mother, that the miseries of the children of Adam are infinitely great beyond the power of speech or thought, for we bear within ourselves two unfathomable abysses of wretchedness: the first is the abyss of our nothingness, and the second is that of sin. God permits you, or rather He gives you the special grace, to see in yourself some portion of these two inexhaustible sources of miseries, and for two reasons:

First of all, He desires you to use this means to close all the approaches of your heart to that accursed vanity which so singularly ravages many souls who profess to be virtuous and pious, and who even aspire to perfection; and which, alas! precipitates many into the fires of hell. Then too, it is to preserve, strengthen and increase within you the most essential of all virtues, that of humility, which shapes the souls

(1). Mary des Vallées. See Letter 17, note 3.

82 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

it possesses according to the Heart of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother.

Secondly, it is to render you conformable to our most adorable Master, Who is Jesus. According to the testimony of the Prophet Jeremias, He says this of Himself: I am the man that see my poverty."(2) For His humanity perceived perfectly and clearly that of itself it was nothing, and that, having sprung from nothingness and from Adam, it would have been born in original sin and consequently would have been capable of falling into all the miseries of the children of Adam if it had not been preserved by the great miracle of the hypostatic union. It penetrated even to the depths of these two abysses of nothingness and sin, a sight which caused Our Lord the most profound and inconceivable humiliation, as well as inexpressible pain.

Adore that divine humanity in this state, my dearest Mother. Thank Our Lord for having deigned to assume it for love of you. Give your~ self to it so that you may accompany it on whatever road it may please to take you. Offer it your little troubles in thanksgiving for His immense trials. Pray it to make good use of them in your name. Finally, abandon yourself with your whole heart to Divine Providence, that He may lead you wherever He will and in His own way. On your part, remain always humble and submissive to the guidance of God, but take care never to become discouraged; rejoice, rather, and give thanks to Our Lord for the graces He grants you. For I repeat, my dearest Mother, what I perceive quite clearly to be true, that your present state, as you describe it to me, is a great gift from God. "Blessed is he," says St. Paul, "that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth."(3) For it frequently happens that, when one feels and believes himself to be very good, he is not good; and when he thinks himself quite wicked, it is then that he is most worthy in the eyes of God. But let us abandon ourselves entirely to the judgment, will and guidance of Him Who knows and loves us infinitely more than we ourselves do. Let us dwell in the house of our nothingness and await with patience, humility, simplicity and submission Him Who desires only nothingness as the material and substance with which to do whatever is pleasing to Him.

(2). Lam. 3, 1.

(3). Rom. 24, 22.

With my whole heart do I deliver you, my dearest Mother, to His omnipotent bounty, beseeching Him to annihilate you so completely that He may be all things in you. Please offer the same prayer for me.

Lastly, I send affectionate greetings to all our dear Sisters, imploring them not to fail to visit faithfully the most lovable infant Jesus every day during these forty days that commemorate His sojourn in the stable of Bethlehem, that they may adore, praise and love Him, give themselves to Him, and supplicate Him to grant them the spirit of His divine childhood, which is a spirit of innocence, humility, poverty, simplicity, obedience and charity. They should also call upon His most worthy Mother to thank her, give themselves to her and ask her to obtain for them this same spirit of her dearest Son. Then let them offer proportionate supplications to St. Joseph for the same intentions.

Father de Montaigu(4) told me that Mr. de Taillefer's bond(5) must be ratified by his sons-in-law, and that so far he has taken all the steps to have this done and will give it his whole attention, but that we must wait until Mr. de Taillefer comes here. However, if you desire him to return it to you, he will do so.

I will convey to Timothy, as well as I can, everything indicated in your letter.

I remain with all my heart, in Jesus and Mary, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(4). See Letter 45, note 1.

(5). The Saint refers to the dowry that Mr. de Taillefer was to offer the Community before the profession of his daughter, Mademoiselle Renée Eustace de Taillefer. See Letter 16, note 1. Also *Oeuvres Complètes du Bienheureux Jean Eudes*, Vol. 10, P. 503

### LETTER 50

**To the Queen Regent.**(1) *On the appointment of the bishop of Bayeux.*

(1653) Madame:

Having learned that the abbe de Sainte Croix(2) has declined the Bishopric of Bayeux, I should deem myself extremely culpable if I did not follow the advice given me by several great servants of God and point out to Your Majesty that, from time immemorial, no episcopal visitation has been made by the bishop in this diocese; that this negligence has produced disorders and profanations of greater duration than would have been caused had armies inimical to the Christian name passed through it a number of times. This voluntary resignation of such a wealthy benefice seems to be a warning to Your Majesty that God, Who has numbered even the hairs of our heads, does not permit such an extraordinary thing in these miserable times of corruption (when men do not scruple to renounce the benefice of eternity to acquire or keep one far less valuable than the bishopric of Bayeux), save with the intention of giving Your Majesty an opportunity to render justice to the blood of His Son Who, by shedding it to the last drop, acquired the domain and ownership of all the souls in this diocese, with a much better and indisputably more just claim than those who buy slaves at the cost of money, over whom they nevertheless have absolute power.

These considerations, Madame, incomparably more important than those which determine the government of the greatest monarchies on earth, demand of Your Majesty a saint as bishop of this diocese. You are obliged by the Holy Council of Trent, under pain of mortal sin, to nominate to all the benefices which have charge of souls, not merely those whom Your Majesty considers worthy, that is to say, saints, but rather the worthiest, that is, the greatest saints. All the more, Madame,  
(1). Anne of Austria, Mother of Louis XIV. She was Regent of France from 1643 to 1661.  
(2). Appointed bishop of Bayeux in 1653, the abbé de Sainte Croix, who was Bishop Molé's brother, resigned almost immediately, even before having been consecrated.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

85 -

are you obliged to do so in the case of a diocese as neglected as the one to which I refer, whose needs are infinitely greater than I can describe to Your Majesty. I am acquainted with these conditions through the numerous missions I have had the privilege of conducting in many of the localities there, and through the sighs and complaints which are wrung from many souls moved by zeal for the glory of God, during a long succession of years, over such deplorable conditions. This knowledge, coupled with my ardent desire to see showered upon this State<sup>(3)</sup> and the sacred person of Your Majesty as many blessings as the misfortunes that a justly provoked heaven seems to be preparing for us, has given me the courage to cast myself at Your Majesty's feet, in the name of all the people of this diocese, even the least and unworthiest of them, to try to obtain from you, in your kindness, the consent to a request so important to the glory of God, so necessary to the salvation of the souls for whom He delivered His own Son to death, and to a death on the Cross, and so capable of loading Your Majesty and the sacred person of our incomparable Monarch, that admirable God-given one, with all sorts of prosperity. It would atone in one respect for the abuse to His glory in this diocese, while in other respects His enemies and yours, who are those of the State, are committing outrages against Him which can be expiated only in the fires of hell.

I implore God in His goodness, of which you will one day partake, Madame, to shower upon Your Majesty the plenitude of His graces necessary to lead you to the heavenly land.  
(3). The kingdom of France.

86-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 51

**To the Priests of the Seminary at Coutances.** *On the reopening of the chapel<sup>(1)</sup> of the Caen seminary.*

Caen, May 15, 1653 J. M. J.

My dearest and beloved brethren:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation." Alleluia! alleluia!

Our chapel is open and we are celebrating Mass in it.

Alleluia! alleluia! alleluia!

It was not opened until last Tuesday, but the affair was concluded and signed on Saturday, the feast of the Apparition of Our Risen Savior to His Most Holy Mother.



Alleluia! alleluia! alleluia!

It is a stroke of the incomparable power and ineffable goodness of our most bountiful Mother, who consented to defer the conclusion of this matter to the day of her greatest joy on earth, and who did so when we were no longer giving it much thought, after we and our friends had exerted all our efforts in vain.

Alleluia! alleluia! alleluia!

This Mother of mercy condescended to avail herself of the good Mother Superior of the Religious of Mercy in Paris<sup>(3)</sup> to grant us this favor in order to show us that it was a result of her boundless mercy, and that we are the Missionaries of Divine Mercy sent by the compassionate Father to distribute the treasures of His mercy to the wretched, that is, to sinners, and to deal with them in a spirit of mercy, compassion and meekness.

(1). The chapel of the Caen Seminary had been interdicted for two years and five months. See Letter 36, note 1.

(2). Cor. 1, 3-4.

(3). Mother Mary of the Holy Trinity, foundress of the Order of the sisters of Mercy, which Order was intended for girls of rank whom dowry was not sufficient for them to enter another Order.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

87 -

Alleluia! alleluia! alleluia! alleluia! alleluia!

How shall we repay this amiable Mother? And how shall we repay her beloved Son, through Whom the heavenly Father gives us all things? How shall we repay this divine Father Who is the primary source of all good?

Let all the angels and saints bless Jesus and Mary for evermore! May Jesus and Mary, together with the angels and saints, praise and glorify the eternal Father! May all the powers and perfections of the Divinity infinitely magnify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: "Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him: and his wonderful works to the children of men."<sup>(4)</sup> But that is not all; I implore you, my dear brethren:

1. In memory of and in thanksgiving for the infinite favor Our Lord has granted us, through the intercession of the Mother of mercy, in coming to visit and comfort us by His divine presence in the Blessed Sacrament, that we resolve to celebrate annually the feast of His apparition to His divine Mother and His first visit to her after the Resurrection.

2. All of you say a votive Mass in honor of this mystery, to be followed by seven additional Masses for a devotion of your own, to thank God and ask three things of Him: the first, for all those who have opposed us, that non illis imputetur;<sup>(5)</sup> the second, for all our friends, that Our Lord may repay them a hundredfold for their charity toward us; the third, for ourselves, that He may grant us the grace to make holy use of His favors and begin seriously to love and serve Him with the perfection He asks of us, that is to say, through the practice of true humility, strict obedience, sincere charity, intense fervor for the salvation of souls, a pure love for God, and above all, perfect submission and abandonment to His divine will.

3. In the salutation to the most Holy Heart of our Mother of mercy, that we add Ave Cor misericordissimum after Ave Cor beatissimum; and that, in the salutation Ave Maria, filia Dei Patris, we also add the verse Mater misericordiae after Ave Maria, Mater admirabilis. Likewise in

the litanies of Our Lady: after Mater admirabilis, let us say Mater  
(4). Ps. 106,8.  
(2) Tim. 4, 16.

88 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

*misericordiae* in memory of and in thanksgiving for the mercy that God has shown to us on this occasion through this Mother of grace and mercy, in order to offer Him and His Son, through her, all those who are in some spiritual or corporal distress, but especially those in the fearful calamity of sin; and to submit ourselves to the mercy of God, that He may animate us with His spirit toward all the wretched, enabling us to pity them and do all in our power to help and relieve them.

4. Since Our Lord has given us the grace to reenter His house, and because we have the happiness of possessing Him once more in the Blessed Eucharist, we must renew our desire to pay and have others pay Him all possible honor and respect in this sacrament. Let us conduct ourselves in church with the utmost modesty, reverence and piety, never speaking a word there except in case of necessity, and then very little, in low tones; never allowing children to play nor make noise in our churches or chapels; never permitting the poor to beg for alms in church, nor dogs to be seen there, nor people to talk, assume an unbecoming attitude nor behave irreverently there.

Give yourselves joyfully, all of you, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you may enter into these sentiments and put them into practice for the love of our most amiable Jesus and His most worthy Mother.

I embrace each of you individually in the sacred love of their most holy Heart, with a renewed desire to serve you in every way I can. Embrace one another in this same love, "with a great heart and a joyful spirit." I give myself wholly to them for your sake, and to you for their sake, as your most unworthy servant and devoted confrere,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest  
of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

89 -

### LETTER 52

**To Father Richard Le Mesle.(1) *On his persecutions.*(2)**

June 15, 1654

With all my heart I thank our most adorable Jesus and His most amiable Mother for the cross it has pleased them to send us. It is the single earthly treasure, the sovereign good of true children of Jesus and Mary, the source of all blessings, the glory and crown, the love and delight of true Christians. I speak with reference to the spirit, not the senses.

Therefore, dear brother, let us adore, bless, praise, glorify and love with all sincerity the most amiable will of our good Lord Who arranges all things for the best, and Who can gain glory from sin itself, the greatest of all evils. Let us say with all our souls: I will bless the *Lord* at all times?(3) *The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do unto me.*(4) It is true that if the Lord Himself does not build the house, those who wish to construct it work in vain; but it is just as

true that if the Lord Himself does not destroy the house, then those who wish to destroy it also work in vain. After all, God's will be done. He is the Lord; let what is pleasing to Him be accomplished ...

Furthermore, let us strengthen ourselves in the Lord and in the strength of His virtue, convinced that our work in Him is never useless. Let us place all our anxieties in His bosom, for He will take care of us. Those who thwart us are not dealing with us, but with the King and Queen of heaven and earth, who assuredly can frustrate all their designs when the proper time arrives. Nevertheless, we must do all in our power for the interests of our Master, and dwell in peace. Above all, let us not forget to pray for those whom God is pleased to use as instruments to chastise us, as for benefactors.

(1). Set Letter 14, note 1.

(2). This letter was occasioned by the hostile attitude which the Saint's enemies had succeeded in instilling in the mind of Bishop Francis Servien, then recently transferred from the see of Carcassonne to that of Bayeux.

(3). Ps. 33, 2.

(4). Ps. 117, 6.

90 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 53

**To the Community of Our Lady of Charity at Caen.** *On the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and zeal for the salvation of souls.*

(Before 1656) J. M. J.

My dearest Sisters and beloved daughters in the sacred love of the most holy Heart of Jesus and Mary:

May the grace, peace and love of this same Jesus be for ever yours.

Not having the happiness of being able to address you personally at this time, I am availing myself of this letter to invite and exhort you to make a good preparation for the solemn feast of the glorious Assumption of our admirable Mother. It is her greatest feast, the day of her triumph and grandeurs. It is the day which ends all her works and sufferings, and inaugurates her repose and eternal happiness. It is the day which establishes her upon the throne of glory and majesty that is due the dignity of the Mother of God. It is the day on which she can say, after the manner of her Son and by virtue of her dependence upon Him: *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.*<sup>(1)</sup> It is the day on which she is empowered to use the sovereignty that the most Holy Trinity has given her over heaven and earth, over hell and all things. For this reason all creatures are obliged to render her respect and homage, as to their Queen and Sovereign to whom they belong and upon whom they depend and will depend for all eternity.

But you are bound, in a very special manner, my dearest Sisters, to honor in every possible way this great Princess to whom you belong not only in the capacity of servants or slaves, as do most of the other creatures in her universal empire, but in your capacity as very dear and beloved daughters. Make ready, therefore, to fulfill your obligations to her on this great feast.

To that end, you must render her four tributes before she leaves this earth to ascend to heaven.

(1). Man. 28, 18.

If a great queen had come to visit you, what should you do when she was ready to depart for home? You would do four things:

1. You would thank her for the favor she had conferred on you.
2. You would make excuses and ask her pardon for not having received and entertained her in keeping with her station.
3. You would profess your service, respect and obedience to her.
4. If you knew that she desired something of you, such as a book of devotions, an image, a rosary or something similar, you would make her a present of it with all possible affection.

That is just what you should do with respect to the Queen of Heaven before she leaves this world. You owe her these four duties:

1. Thank her for all she has done and suffered here below, in cooperation with her Son, for our salvation and sanctification. Thank the most Holy Trinity, too, for having given her to us, and for all the graces we have received either directly from her or through her intercession.
2. Ask pardon of her and make honorable atonement for all the wrongs, offenses and outrages perpetrated against her on earth, for they occurred on our account and for our sake. As reparation and satisfaction, offer her the most amiable Heart of her Son so full of love for her, together with all the honor, glory and praises which have ever been, are now and shall yet be rendered to It in heaven and on earth.
3. Protest to her that you desire to serve, honor, love and obey her, and to imitate her virtues, and urge everyone as much as possible to do the same.
4. Consider what she asks of you, and what you can present to her that will please her; then make the offering with all your hearts.

After that, you should pray to her, as to your good Mother, to grant you her holy blessing, which she will surely do if you are firmly resolved to live as good daughters, to the best of your ability, through a conscientious imitation of her holiness.

Those are your duties on the eve of this feast.

On the day itself, there are five things you ought to do:

1. Give thanks to the most Holy Trinity and invite all the angels, saints and all creatures to give thanks with you for all the favors It has granted your most bountiful Mother during her life, at her death,

and in her resurrection and glorious Assumption into heaven, as well as for all the favors she will enjoy there throughout eternity.

2. Rejoice with her because of all the glory and happiness that is hers in heaven, and which will be hers for evermore.
3. Pay honor and respect to the moment of her establishment at the right hand of her Son, and of her appointment as sovereign Lady and Empress of the whole universe. Render her, in the name and on behalf of all creatures, the homage, respect and obedience, the offers and protestations of service, dependence and submission, which are her due; and unite yourselves to the praises given her by all the inhabitants of heaven, even to those of the King Himself.

4. Offer her your whole mind, your whole will and your whole person. Beseech her to separate and detach you from the things of earth and bear you with her to heaven; to impress upon you a lively realization of her new life there, one all-holy and celestial; and to unite and associate you with the love, glory, adoration and praise which she renders and will for ever render in heaven to the most Holy Trinity.

5. Strive to find means of increasing her joy and glory.

Here are four excellent methods:

The first is to implant deep within your hearts a firm resolution and fixed intention of seeking nothing in all your actions, mortifications and exercises save the glory of her Son and the accomplishment of His most adorable will.

The second is to be strict and faithful in the obedience you owe your good Mother Superioress, whom you should regard and honor as a representative of the most holy Virgin, your true Mother and first Superioress. Be obedient also to your Rules and Constitutions.

The third is to love and cherish one another with a sincere, simple, tender and cordial love which will banish from your thoughts, words and actions everything in the least contrary to it~ and will impel you to make prompt and efficacious reparation for the slightest sins you may commit against natural charity.

The fourth is to excite a fervent desire to attain the end for which your holy Order was founded, that of laboring by your prayers, examples, instructions and every manner prescribed for you by holy obedi

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

93 -

ence for the salvation of the lost souls whom divine Providence may send you.

This, my dearest Sisters, is the most fitting and powerful means of augmenting the glory, joys and even the domain of our great Queen. For the conversion of a soul affords her more happiness than any other good work that can be performed in this world, and from it she alone derives greater joy than all the rest of the inhabitants of heaven combined. To help snatch a soul from the tyranny of Satan in order to bring it within her empire is to render her a greater service than if one were to present her with an earthly kingdom. Hence it is the work closest to her Heart, the labor most pleasing to her. It is by this means, Therefore, that you can truly be daughters of her Heart, and that you will be associated with her in the same vocation.

Yes, my dearest daughters, you have in a manner but one and the same vocation with the Mother of God. For, just as God chose to form His Son within her, and through her agency, in the hearts of the faithful, so also has He called you to your holy Community to have His Son dwell within you, and through your labors, to restore Him to life again in sinful souls wherein He has died. God sent her upon earth and made her the Mother of His divine Son, giving her all the graces and qualities she possesses in behalf of sinners, without which she would be not at all what she is; in like manner and for the same end has He placed you in His holy house, with many graces in readiness for you. Ah, my dearest Sisters, how holy is your vocation! How advantageous is your state in life! How immense is the goodness of God toward you in having called you to a truly apostolic Order! Ah, how blameworthy would be your ingratitude if you did not recognize your inexpressible obligation to divine mercy on this account!

But remember that the evil spirit will not fail to tempt you in regard to your vocation, since this employment is singularly displeasing to him and he hates no one so much as those who labor for the salvation of souls.

He will remind you of the troubles and difficulties you must suffer, but remember, my dearest daughters, that there is no state in life exempt from work and suffering; that, if you do not suffer with Jesus, you

94 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

shall not reign with Him. Hence there is nothing you should fear so much as to be without a cross. Cast your eyes upon the crucifix and see what He suffered to save souls. Is it reasonable that you should be associated with Him in the greatest work for which He came into the world, which is to save sinners, which cost Him so dearly, and yet expect to be spared every trial? Alas! Where would you be, if His fear of suffering, which was so violent as to cause Him to sweat blood, had prevented Him from laboring for your salvation?

Consider, too, the sorrows, tears and anguish which the Blessed Virgin had to accept as her portion in order to cooperate with her Son in the redemption of lost souls.

Read the life of St. Catherine,<sup>(2)</sup> and you will see what frightful torments she suffered for the relief of the souls in purgatory. Remember, too, that to help one single soul to rid itself of a mortal sin, even though it were not to persevere in the state of grace, is nevertheless greater than to release all the souls in purgatory from their torments.

Place before your eyes those holy women who leave their country and cross the seas to Canada, where they live daily in the midst of a thousand dangers in order to win souls to God.

I know a person of your sex, a weak, timid, fragile girl<sup>(3)</sup> like you, who entreated God with incredible fervor, for many years, to let her suffer for a time the frightful pains of hell, that she might preserve some wicked souls from it for all eternity. God, on that account, caused her to suffer torments so incredible that no tongue or pen could ever begin to express them, and she has been enduring these tortures for more than forty years.

After that, my dearest Sisters, should we not die of shame at the sight of our own weaknesses and cowardice? The slightest difficulties dishearten us, the feeblest temptations overcome us, the most trifling troubles discourage us, molehills become mountains in our estimation. We are saddened by the things that should cause us to rejoice; we tremble when there is no reason for fear! We wish indeed to enjoy the advantages of our holy religion, but we want no share of its crosses;

(2). St. Catherine of Genes in her Treatise on Purgatory 6, 17 writes: "This P~ of purification to which I see the souls of Purgatory subjected, I feel within myself."

(3). Mary des Vallées. See Letter 17, note 3.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

95 -

we imagine that devotion consists of living an idle life of ease. Oh, how badly do we deceive ourselves! Any devotion which is not based on renunciation of self, of one's own will and gratification, and on bearing one's cross and following the path trodden by Jesus when He was seeking lost souls, is nothing more than pure illusion and fraud,

Do you not know, my dearest Sisters, that the broad road leading to heaven is the way of the cross, that it is the only one, and that the true and stable virtues necessary for us to be pleasing to God are acquired only through many trials, labors, mortifications and penances that must be self-imposed? Do you not understand when Our Lord tells us that because the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, only they, who do themselves violence can take it by force,<sup>(4)</sup> and that He Himself had to

undergo an infinite number of tribulations in order to enter into the glory(5) which is rightfully His by virtue of so many claims? How can you be numbered among His members and spouses if you do not desire to conform to Him? Do you wish to have another Gospel written for you, or do you want God to send you another Messiah-a Messiah of honey and roses? Should you prefer to go to paradise by a path other than that which the Mother of God and all the saints traveled to attain it, or else is it your wish to go there all alone and leave your poor sisters on the road to hell because you are so fastidious that you are afraid to take the trouble to lend them a helping hand?

Perhaps you may say that they are traveling along a very muddy road, and that you are afraid of soiling yourselves by snatching them back; the devil is cunning enough to offer you that temptation--one all the more dangerous because it is seemingly beautiful and convincing. But I tell you, my dearest daughters, that it is impossible for Our Lord to allow anyone to fall who, out of love for Him, helps others to rise. Purity, when it is allied with true charity, can never be sullied, any more than rays of sunlight can be contaminated by mud. Cast aside, then, these vain fears, and trust in Him Who has called you to this divine employment. If you mistrust yourselves and rely wholly on Him, He will not withdraw and allow you to fall.

Finally, my dearest daughters, if you desire to increase the joy and

(4). Matt. 11, 12.

(5). Luke 24, 26.

96 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

glory of our worthy Princess, be faithful to her Son in your vocation; close your ears to the whisperings of the serpent; do not be daughters of Eve who listened to him and allowed herself to be seduced, but daughters of Mary who vanquished him and trampled him underfoot. I beseech her with all my heart to crush him completely beneath your own feet, and to render you worthy of being true daughters of her Holy Heart all aflame with love and zeal for the salvation of sinful souls who cost her the precious blood of her Son Jesus.

It is in the sacred love of the most amiable Heart of the Son and the Mother that I am and ever will be, my dearest Sisters and beloved daughters,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest  
of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

## LETTER 54

**To His Lordship Francis de Champvallon,(1) Archbishop of Rouen. On  
the self-interest of bishops in protecting seminaries.**

(About 1655)

Indeed, my Lord, I make so bold as to state that this is the business of their Lordships the bishops, and that it is largely to their own interests to protect those engaged in the work of seminaries, since they are wholly subject to them. This is especially true of us, who profess in all sincerity to be absolutely at their service.

(1). Appointed to the See of Rouen in 1651 the Archbishop was a personal friend of St. John Eudes. At the end of 1655 Archbishop Harlay de Champvallon decided to open a Seminary in his archdiocese under the direction of the Eudist Fathers. Because of opposition on the part of the Chapter he was

unable to carry out the project until February 16, 1659. Boulay, op. cit., VOL 3, P. 240 ff.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

97 -

### LETTER 55

**To Father Thomas Manchon,(1) Superior of the Seminary at Lisieux.(2)**

*On the death of Sister Mary des Vallées.( 3 )*

Caen, March 2, 1656 J. M. J.

My dearest brother:

May Jesus, the most Holy Heart of Mary, be our consolation for ever.

It has pleased God to deprive us of the creature we held most dear on earth, our beloved Sister Mary. She passed away(4) last Friday, February 25, at a quarter past twelve.

Our deepest sorrow is that her body was taken from us for interment at St. Nicholas. Almost all the canons wanted her placed in the cathedral. Others wanted her to be buried at the Jacobins, in the Holy Rosary Chapel. But Mr. de la Foulery, who established a St. Joseph Chapel in the Church of St. Nicholas, arranged to have her interred there. He did this with the help of Mr. d'Urville, not wishing to act solely on his own responsibility. So we find ourselves deprived of this treasure, and all our brethren in Coutances and all our friends, those in that city as well as here, are sorely grieved about it. Madame de Saint Simon and Madame de Malherbe (formerly Mademoiselle de Pleimaret) did everything they could do under these circumstances, but in vain. Even the provost-marshal offered to use his influence to have the holy body taken by these persons and brought to our church, but we declined with thanks, fearing to create too much dissension. The same motive kept us from taking possession of her heart. It would have been quite easy for us to do this, and we are very sorry now for not having done so. But it is God Who has so arranged it, for reasons unknown to us.

(1). See Letter 13, note 2.

(2). The Lisieux Seminary was opened on January 11, 1654.

(3). She was, it would seem, a Dominican tertiary, hence the name «Sister». Cf. Joly, op. cit., P. 95.

(4). Mary des Vallées was sixty-six years of age.

98 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

For three months her death was foreshadowed and foretold in several ways. She died in great interior and exterior peace, without any inward disturbance or any outward effort or struggle.

The illness which caused her death lasted only twenty hours. During that time she enjoyed, almost to the end, the use of her mind, seldom speaking, and then saying nothing more than *yes, no* or *so be it*, to the things which were said to her, and uttering the holy name of Jesus almost continually. She received all the sacraments, and our brothers in Coutances and I never left her during those last twenty-four hours. We were all present around her bed at the time of her death, the room being filled with people.

I did not forget, my dear brother, to recommend you to her before her death, as well as all the rest of our brethren, and she assured me well that she will take care of you and never forsake you. I heard her confession three times in the course of her last week, painstakingly examining and searching into her whole life, but I can truthfully say that I did not discover the slightest venial sin



in all the sixty-seven years of her life. Nevertheless, we must not fail to have the usual prayers offered up for her, in accordance with the mandate of the Church. At our place<sup>(5)</sup> we have recited the entire Office for the Dead and have sung three Masses, namely: of the Holy Spirit, the *Beata* and the *Requiem*. We shall do the same here;<sup>(6)</sup> I pray you to do likewise. Besides that, we must say sixty-seven Masses in each of our houses for the following intentions: 1. in honor of all God's plans for Sister Mary and of everything He is in her; 2. in thanksgiving for all the favors He granted her and has granted us through her mediation; 3. in reparation for all our omissions in that respect; 4. for the accomplishment of all God's intents in this work; 5. to ask His Divine Majesty to let us partake of her spirit, that of extreme hatred for sin; purest love for God; complete detachment from self and all things; total submission to the most adorable will of God; burning love for the Cross; the utmost scorn of self; irreconcilable hatred for distinction; marked affection for contempt, confusion and ignominy; but most of all, incomparable charity, goodness, meekness, and forbearance toward one's neighbor,

(5). The Eudist Seminary in Coutances.

(6). The Caen Seminary.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

99 -

which impelled her to be extremely careful never to vex or anger anyone, but rather to please and gladden people as much as possible. It is particularly in this virtue, and in her humility, simplicity and sincerity, that we should try to imitate her. I implore all our dear brethren to be most diligent in asking God for these virtues and schooling themselves assiduously in their practice. Furthermore, the above intentions of these sixty-seven Masses will not preclude their being said also for the principal intentions which are given out from the sacristy.

I did not forget Mademoiselle Obègne<sup>(7)</sup> either.

Affectionate greetings to all our dear brethren whom I embrace with all my heart.

Please write to those in Coutances. I left them very much grieved, especially Father de Montaigu, but I was forced to come here on urgent and important business of which I shall write you, perhaps soon.

My most respectful and affectionate greetings to the Promoter.<sup>(8)</sup> I remain *corde magno*, dearest brother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. I forgot to tell you that nearly all the residents of Caen are openly proclaiming that Sister Mary is a saint, even those who held her in contempt during her lifetime.

(7). This should be Mademoiselle Obègne, a benefactress of the Lisieux Seminary. Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. 10, P. 405.

(8). Father Baslay, the pastor of Fontaines, promoter of Lisieux and benefactor of the Seminary.

100 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 56

**To the Community in Lisieux.** *On the death of Father James Le Duc.* ( 1 )

Lingèvres, April A, 1656

I am very deeply grieved by the death of our good and beloved brother, Father Le Duc, for a good priest is an inestimable treasure in the Church whose loss cannot be sufficiently lamented. He was an excellent laborer whom God had endowed with many fine qualities, and there are very few like him. But Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, who are the real superiors of our Congregation and are more concerned with it than we, are aware of all that. Yet it has pleased them to take him, and they can do nothing save for the best. What consoles me is that he died during the Jubilee, in Holy Week, while working for the salvation of souls.

(1). Father James Le Duc (1603-1656), originally from the parish of Fourneaux, in the diocese of Séez, and later the pastor of that parish, joined the Congregation in 1652 at the age of 49. He died at Lisieux on April 12, 1656. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. a, p. 9.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

101 -

### LETTER 57

**To Madame Blouet de Camilly.** *On the unexpected cure of Father Thomas Manchon, and various other matters ( 1 )*

1656 J. M. J.

My dearest daughter:

May Jesus, the most Holy Heart of Mary, be for ever ours!

Enclosed is a letter for Madame de la Croizette. (2) It is rather long but it comforted me in my troubles. I am trying to give her, insofar as I am able, some sound consolation in hers. I am sending you this letter unsealed. When you have read it, be kind enough to seal it and give it to that lady. Tell her, however, that I beg her to read it leisurely in her study, in the presence of God, so as to derive the most good from it.

Furthermore, my dear daughter, know that you are the mother of two good children; (3) they are surely angels. May God grant them constancy and perseverance.

Father Manchon continues to improve; he is now at the home of Mr.

(1). Several days before coming to Coutances, where he was to preach the octave of Corpus Christi, Father Manchon was obliged to make a business trip for the Congregation, during which he spent several days and nights without sleep. When the business was finished he departed hurriedly in order to reach Coutances on time; but on the way he was taken with a serious illness from which it was believed he would die. The sickness was violent and obstinate, and all were fearful of the outcome. The prayers offered up for him were more efficacious than all the remedies employed. St. John Eudes, who had come to preach in his place, prayed earnestly to God to restore his preacher to him. Never was a father more grief-stricken by the illness of his son. God Who in former times had prolonged the life of King Ezechias by fifteen years for the sake of his virtues, prayers and tears was also moved, in His goodness, by the lamentations offered Him for the sick priest who had been reduced to that condition only through his excessive zeal to gain glory for Him. His health was restored and he used it, as before, to labor for the conversion of sinners." Peter Hérabourg, *Vie du P. Eudes*, Vol. 1, Ch. 21. This incident occurred in 1656.

(2). Wife of the Governor of Caen.

(3). John James Blouet de Camilly entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and his sister,

Mademoiselle de Camilly, "the lovely lily-bud," became a Benedictine of Holy Trinity Monastery at Caen.

102-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

de Mémont(4). It is certain that but for a miracle he would have died. So true is this that the doctors had assured us he could not live through the third day of his illness, for it was violent and dangerous. That is what I told you and my brethren in Caen when I first heard about it, but I added repeatedly that without a miracle he would never recover, and I was not saying that at random or unthinkingly. I am telling you all this now, my dear daughter, not so that you will consider me a prophet, for you would be wrong, but in order that no one may mistake me for a false prophet. I want to testify to this truth in view of what you said in your last letter which, although written in jest, qualifies me as such. That is how most calumnies are invented; one retains part of a statement and forgets the rest, or else one gives it a different appearance, another meaning. It teaches us to be cautious indeed in believing disparaging things about our neighbor.

They write me from Burgundy, from Arnay-le-Duc and Dijon, that our dear Sister(5) is being discussed from very conflicting viewpoints. There are Jesuit Fathers who are publicizing and upholding her as a great saint; while other religious, the brethren of those who persecuted her here, are saying all around that she was a sorceress, and they are circulating astonishing things about Father Eudes, too, whom they believe to have been her spiritual adviser. I am deeply grateful to them for the honor they do me in joining my name with hers in their slanders.

They are saying many other things, but Our Lord can answer them when He deigns to do so. Do not mention anything about all this.

I embrace our spiritual brother.(6) We are praying for our eldest brother who is at Rouen. All your children in Coutances greet you most humbly and affectionately.

It is very necessary for me to see the Rector before he leaves, but I can do nothing without the advice of our dear Brother de Bernières.

I am with all sincerity, my dearest daughter,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(1). One of the benefactors of the Caen Seminary. Cf. Boulay, OP. cit., Vol. 2, P. 527.

(2). Mary des Vallées who died at Coutances on February 25, 1656.

(3). Madame de Camilly's husband.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

103-

### LETTER 58

**To Father Simon Mannoury, at Lisieux.** *On various matters concerning the college in Lisieux and the nuns of Our Lady of Charity.*

Coutances, July 29, 1656 My dearest brother:

May Jesus, the most holy Heart of Mary, be for ever ours!

I forwarded your letter to Father Manchon, asking him to send you a reply concerning the Promoter's last will and testament.(1) If he has not done so, it is my opinion that lawsuits should be shunned like the plague. It would be better to have less--indeed, to lose everything--rather than go to law, unless one enters a lawsuit incidentally and not as the principal party, and unless, in that case, one is perfectly sure of Success.

With regard to the college, here is my opinion: Father Marion(2) for the fifth class, Father de Longeval (3) for the fourth, Father Saché (4) for the third, Father Franco(5) for the first, Father Doucet,(6) prefect of boarders, Father Dudy,(7) prefect of the college; or else Father Yon(8) for the fifth class, Father Marion for the fourth and the rest as above, so that in this way we could take Father de la Haye(9) and Father de Longeval from the college to employ them otherwise. But do not say anything yet

(1). See Letter 55, note 8.

(2). Father Marion entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary about 1655. After teaching at Lisieux, he became one of the first directors of the Rouen Seminary. Cf. Boulay, *ibid.*, VOL 3, P. 275.

(3). Father John de Longeval later became superior at Lisieux. See Letter 121, note 1.

(4). See Letter 11 p note 2.

(5). Father Franco was probably a secular priest who helped the Eudists at Lisieux. Cf. Boulay, VOL 3, P. 102, who gives Francs, not Franco.

(6). Father John Doucet (1620-1654) entered the Congregation Of Jesus and Mary in 1654. He spent most of his life at the Lisieux College.

(7). Father Dudy became superior of Coutances Seminary, but later left the Congregation to take up parish work in the secular Clergy.

(8). Born at Montcuit in the diocese of Coutances, Father Yon joined the Congregation in 1654. He died on October 3, 1672.

(9). Francis de la Haye was later superior of the Caen and of the Evreux Seminary. He died in 1679.

104 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

about this latter plan. Just send me your opinion and I will confer with Father Manchon about it.

I am very sorry about Mr. de Langrie's dissatisfaction,(10) but what is there to be done about all that? If I allowed myself to follow my own inclination, I too should be strongly tempted to abandon that house; but we must forget ourselves and consider only Our Lord and His Holy Mother, doing everything for love of them. God permits all things out of goodness toward us in order to shield us from complacency and vanity, which perhaps would cause us to lose all the fruits of our labors.

I was never informed about the pastor of Saint Julian(11). That was done before I had heard anything about it. I am not sure whether he alone was responsible for it, or he and Mother together; but I do not think her daughters had anything to do with it. It is quite certain that the good Mother has not wanted anything of us for a long time. We must be patient, rely on divine Providence and travel our broad path, always serving our house to the best of our ability for the love of Our Lord and His most holy Mother. I told Mother, and also wrote her since my arrival here, that we must send a man purposely to Rome, but she has not answered me on that. There is no doubt that the course advocated by the pastor of Saint Julian is not a good one, and that it will not be successful. I am writing all these things to Mr. de Langrie, begging him to retain his goodwill. I hope to make a trip some time to Caen, where I shall see the parish priest of Saint Julian to state my reasons to him, and I shall ask him to call a meeting in order that we may decide what is best.

I am writing Mr. de Langrie that he should choose from our Sister Mary des Vallées, either some linen soaked in her blood or a medal that she wore for many years around her neck, or that be

should say what he wants and I will gladly give it to him if it be in my power.

(10). Mr. de Langrie was Royal Councillor and president of the Normandy parliament. He was also one of the benefactors of the Cam Seminary. When Bishop Francis Servien was appointed Bishop of Bayeux in 1654, he took the superiorship of the Order of Our Lady of Charity from St. John Eudes, the founder, and gave it to Father Le Grand, the parish priest of St. Julian's Church in Caen. This change did not please Mr. de Langrie and he threatened to withdraw his support. Cf. Matthew Russel, *Life of Blessed John Eudes*, p. 114.

(11). Father Le Grand. See preceding note.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

105-

You have been too strict with the poor child. There are many reasons why she can do that. I am writing to her so that she may do so without fear.

I embrace all our dear brethren and greet all our friends, particularly our good Mademoiselle Ozenne. With all my heart, my dearest brother, I am

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

### LETTER 59

**To Sister Mary of the Assumption Eustace.**(1) *The Saint assures her of his unchangeable charity toward the Community.*

Coutances, August 12, 1656 My dearest daughter:

May Jesus, the most Holy Heart of Mary, be for ever ours!

In the sacred love of this divine Heart, the furnace of immortal love, do I love unchangeably and equally, without preference, all my dearest Sisters, the beloved daughters of my most honored Mother.

What shall separate my heart from the holy love I should feel for the most cherished house of such a good Mother? Will it be tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or the sword, or any other thing? No, I am certain, with the help of the grace of God, Who has chosen me to take charge of it for Him, that neither the angels, nor the Principalities nor Virtues, nor the heights nor depths, nor life nor death, nor any creature, will ever be able to separate me from the charity I should have toward Our Lady of Charity, for I will always do with my whole heart whatever I can to serve that blessed house of my divine Mother. And no matter what happens, neither heaven nor earth, nor hell itself, shall ever hinder me from doing in its regard, as in all else, the most adorable will of my God, which alone is what I desire, aspire to and seek.

(1). See Letter 16, note 1.

106-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

I should like with all my heart to do what our good Mother and you and our dear Sisters wish, but just now I am suffering from a slight indisposition of such a nature that I cannot travel without the risk of becoming ill along the way, as happened to Father Manchon while coming here. I need urgently to take medicine but must wait until the dog days are over. So I do not think I shall be able to go to Caen until September, but at all events, I assure you that it will be as soon as possible, with the help of Our Lord.

Nevertheless, I will recommend both you and your interests to Him with all possible affection, as I do each day. Offer to Him and His holy Mother, on your part, him who is ever, in truth, in the love of their most amiable Heart, my dearest daughter,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. My very humble and cordial regards to our dearest Mother(2) and her good daughters, my beloved Sisters, one and all. I ask her to give you a penance for having written in a worldly fashion-a fashion which daughters of the most Holy Heart of Mary ought to abhor and shun more than the plague itself, as much in this instance as in everything else, since all worldly fashions are highly displeasing to her and her Son.

(2). Mother Margaret Frances Patin, superior of Our Lady of Charity of Caen.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

107 -

### LETTER 60

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *The Saint thanks her for her devotion to the work of Our Lady of Charity; he informs her that he has letters from the King (1) regarding their business at Rome; (2) and he instructs her how to act toward the sheriffs of Caen in a difficult situation where their opposition is feared (3).*

Paris, March 7, 1657

My dearest Mother, and, in truth, beloved in Him Who is eternal love: I thank Him with all my heart for having imbued your own with such great zeal and charity toward the house of His most Holy Mother, and with such great kindness toward one who is so unworthy of it as I am. And I thank you a thousand times, my dearest Mother, for your many testimonies of it in the cordial letters you write us. I can assure you, too, that Our Lord has given me sentiments in your regard which words alone cannot express.

I am very happy about what you wrote me concerning our dear Sisters, and I bless Our Lord and His most Holy Mother with my whole heart for all the graces they are bestowing on them. I beseech all my dear daughters to be most faithful to them, and to labor in competition with one another to imprint upon themselves a perfect likeness of their most adorable Father and most amiable Mother through a conscientious and continual imitation of their holy virtues, particularly their humility, obedience, charity, forbearance and overwhelming love for the Cross.

(1). Louis XIV of France.

(2). This pertained in the approbation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity.

(3). Toward the end of 1656 Mother Patin purchased some property along the wharves where she planned to establish the Community, then temporarily installed in a house belonging to Mr. de Langrie. When everything was ready for the installation of the Community, it was feared that the sheriffs of Caen might be opposed to the establishment. In perplexity, Mother Patin referred the matter to St. John Eudes, who replied to her from Paris on March 7, 1657 by the above letter. The affair was righted and the sisters were able to move into the property they had purchased. Later they built 2 spacious convent on the same site, where the Community of Caen was housed until the destruction, of their house in June, 1944. Cf. Ory, OP. cit., P. 98

Quite some time ago I procured letters from the King for our business at Rome. I hope, God willing, to bring them to you soon, for I am feeling much better, thank God, and am waiting only until I have regained sufficient strength for the journey.

Fear nothing, my dear Mother, for God is with you and on your side; and if He favors you, who can oppose you? Time and time again you have felt the effects of His protection of the little house of Our Lady of Charity. Why, then, are you afraid? Rest assured that He will finish what He has begun. It is true that we must always do, on our own part, what we can. Now of three things, it is possible to do one of them. The first is to proceed with such secrecy that you will be housed before it becomes known. The second is to have Mr. de Bernières write to Madame de Longueville<sup>(4)</sup> and ask her in turn to write to the sheriffs that they should not interfere with you on this occasion; or, if he thinks it timely, I can make this request of her on my way through Rouen, but I should have to have his opinion. The third is to speak to the sheriffs and those persons close to the King, beseeching them to consent to your taking possession of this house. Since this last method is one of submission and humility, God would bless it, and the outcome could not fail to be successful; if they refused, we could then have recourse to Madame de Longueville.

Nevertheless, do not be satisfied to accept my thoughts alone on the subject, but ask the friends of the house-- Mr. de Bernières, and Mr. and Madame de Camilly--to meet together and discuss the best way to proceed, for Our Lord will inspire them with His holy will.

In the sacred love of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary I greet our dearest Sisters, one and all. I remain, in truth, ever and unreservedly, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.  
(4). Wife of the governor of Normandy.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

109-

## LETTER 61

**To Mr. Augustine Le Haguais.**<sup>(1)</sup> *On submission to the will of God during a time of suffering.*

Caen, April 26, 1657 J. M. J.

Sir, our very honored and dear brother:

When I look upon you through human eyes in your present condition, I am indeed deeply moved to the point of great compassion. But when I consider you through the eyes of faith, I am prompted to bless and praise our divine Saviour for the singular effects of His infinite goodness toward you, for I see quite clearly that everything which is taking place is a command and inclination of His mercy in your regard. He wishes you to do penance for your sins in this world in order to pardon you in the next.

We are indebted to His divine justice for a hundred thousand bushels of wheat, and He lets us off for a portion of it. O great favor! We have merited eternal torments, and He is satisfied to let us suffer a few small temporal afflictions. I call them small, very small, in comparison with those our

offenses deserve. All, what goodness! What an obligation we have toward such goodness! What care should we take to make good use of our afflictions! That is what I exhort you with all my heart to do, my dearest brother, that you may not thwart His plans for you at this time. He intends for us to be cleansed and purified of the filth of our sins by that lye-bath of suffering which may seem very strong to us; but the stronger it is, the more will it whiten us and make us pure and pleasing in the sight of His Divine Majesty, provided we, on our part, cultivate the necessary dispositions which are chiefly these four:

The first is to accept our sufferings from the most adorable Trinity and the most amiable Heart of our heavenly Father Who chastises us, not as a harsh judge, according to our merits, but as a very kind Father, and infinitely less than we deserve. If we accept them as coming from

(1). Brother of Madame Blouet de Camilly and Counsellor of State.

110 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

the latter, we shall not attribute them in any way to our fellow creatures who are but the rods used by this good Father to punish us.

The second is to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, considering ourselves not as just and innocent, but as guilty criminals who time and time again have deserved the wrath of God and all His creatures. But let us be convinced that the humbler we become in our nothingness and lowliness, the more will God be exalted therein, and the more, too, will He take care to protect us and convert all things to our welfare.

The third disposition is to regard sin as the sole author of all our ills, and consequently to turn all our hatred, indignation and vengeance against this monster which is our only enemy; to employ all our forces to persecute and destroy sin by true penitence; and to banish it henceforth beyond the doors and avenues of our souls. Let us remove the cause, and the effect will cease.

The fourth is to guard well against allowing ourselves to subscribe to pagan sentiments, which are to hate those who hate us. Rather should we follow those of our gentle Leader Who gives us this commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you, and by that shall they know that ye are My disciples."

I implore you, my dearest brother, to consider all these things seriously in the presence of God, that you may savour them, impress them on your heart and put them into practice, with the help of His grace which He will not refuse you if you recognize your infinite need of it and sincerely ask it of Him.

It is what I do for you each day, with as much affection as I am, in truth, unreservedly and always, Sir, my very honored and dear brother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

111 -

## LETTER 62

**To the Professors of the College at Lisieux.**(1)*Advice concerning their employment and conduct.*



Caen, October 15, 1657.

May Jesus, the most Holy Heart of Mary, be your heart, your mind and your strength in the employment you are undertaking in the diocese of Lisieux for love of Him-employment of the greatest importance. It is the work of God and of Jesus Christ, because it concerns the salvation of souls! It is the work of the Mother of God, the Apostles and the greatest saints! It is a mission of very great consequence to which the Son of God, the sovereign Missionary, sends you with these words: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."(2)

You are going to perform this mission for children, in whom you must lay the foundations of God's reign and in whom there are generally far fewer obstacles to divine grace than in adults.

They are children who belong to God through baptism, who were redeemed by the blood of the Son of God and created to see the face of God, to possess and bless Him for all eternity; children who are so dear to the heavenly Father that He has given each of them a prince of His court to serve as guardian angel and, in a certain sense, as a servant. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"(3) Children, finally, for whom our good Jesus felt so much love and tenderness, and of whom He said: "Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such."(4)

(1). In 1652 the Bishop of Lisieux offered to entrust both a seminary and a college to the Eudist Fathers. St. John Eudes ardently desired the first of these foundations, but the second had no place in his plans. Because of the Bishop's insistence he accepted the college, and at once applied himself to make the best use of the gift, while assuring himself that in the future he would not accept any similar proposal. He no doubt was afraid lest he might follow the example of the Oratory, and allow the efforts of his Congregation to be diverted towards an object which was not that of the new Congregation.

(2). John 20, 21.

(3). Hebr. 1, 14.

(4). Matt 19, 14

112 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Weigh all these truths seriously, my dear brethren; they will lead you to thank God for the wonderful grace He has granted you in employing you in such a holy mission, and to search eagerly for and embrace all the means of which you can avail yourselves to do your task well.

To this end, you should:

1. Establish in your hearts a very pure intention to aspire to nothing, in all that you have to do, save the glory of God.

2. Make a firm resolution to be as diligent as possible in imparting to these children, first of all, a knowledge of salvation, and in the second place, education.

3. Take great care to preserve and increase in yourselves a spirit of piety and virtue, that you may avoid this reproach: "Thou therefore, that teachest another, teachest not thyself," (5) and imitate our Saviour while fulfilling in yourselves these words: "Jesus began to do and to teach." (6) I urge you, therefore, for the love of His most Holy Mother, to observe faithfully the following precepts:

Never fail to offer an hour of prayer together each morning before the Blessed Sacrament. The teachers and prefects, however, need make only a half-hour on class days and an hour on the other days.

The priests should celebrate Holy Mass daily, with preparation beforehand, strict attention and recollection while saying it, and an unhurried thanksgiving afterwards. Those who are not priests should hear or serve Mass every day with the proper interior and exterior dispositions.

Care should be taken to have Holy Communion distributed on the usual days.

Each one should always make his confession to the confessor assigned him.

The teachers should have the utmost respect and deference for the director assigned them, and he should exercise great charity, meekness and vigilance toward them.

Let everyone make a daily quarter-hour of spiritual reading from Holy Scripture, and then report on a passage during the evening conference.

(5). Rom. 2, 21.

(6). Acts, 1, 1.

## **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

113 -

Conferentia. Let the teachers do the same from the Gospel, that they may learn its chief maxims and implant them in the hearts of their pupils.

The spiritual conference and the humiliation<sup>(7)</sup> should be carried out weekly in the usual manner.

Every Saturday, in honor of the humility of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, two of you should go to the kitchen to wash some of the dishes.

Have some poor person dine each week with the Community.

Silence should be observed strictly in the places and at the times appointed.

Outside of recreation periods, you should not waste time in conversing with one another.

Do not go into another's room except with permission or through necessity; and no one should allow the students, either boarders or day pupils, to enter his.

You should never go outside the refectory, except in case of illness, nor outside of mealtime, save through necessity and with permission; very rarely in town, and then only with leave.

Uniformity should be very closely observed in food, drink, dress and everything else.

All peculiarities and individual characteristics should be banished from the Community as highly dangerous nuisances.

You should receive nothing from your students nor anyone else that you appropriate to yourselves, whether it be money for Masses, or linen, clothing, butter, fruit, etc. These things should be turned over at once to the superior or the bursar.

No one should either give away or lend anything that belongs to the Community except with the superior's permission, under pain of being punished for theft, as in the preceding instance.

Charity and fraternal cordiality should be carefully fostered, and each one should avoid violating it through speech or in any other way. If anything to the contrary should occur, the offender ought not to allow the day to pass without atoning for his error and becoming reconciled with his brother.

(7). In the Congregation of Jesus and Mary this is a community exercise at which the members accuse themselves of the faults committed against the constitutions and rules.

114 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

You should inform the superior, in a spirit of charity, of the shortcomings of individuals when there is no other way to remedy them; and you must be prepared to be told about your own and to accept the admonition in a spirit of humility and obedience, neither excusing nor justifying yourselves. Disputes ought to be shunned like the plague, and to that end you should all strive to renounce your own opinions.

As for the students, the teachers should make every effort to impress the following things upon them: 1. a deep respect for holy places, the sacraments and other things pertaining to religion; 2. an ardent love for Our Lord Jesus Christ; 3. a singular devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary; 4. perfect obedience to one's parents; 5. sincere charity toward one another; 6. a lively fear of vanity and pride, and an ardent love for humility; 7. extreme hatred for every kind of sin; 8. complete resignation to the most holy will of God in all things. I need not speak of the horror that must be instilled in them for everything offensive to purity, nor of the painstaking care that should be exercised in teaching them to serve Mass.

You should all honor your superiors as representatives of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and strive to make a more complete renunciation of your own wills than of all the demons in hell, that you may accept in all things and places the most adorable will of God which is made known to you through the voice of your superiors and the mandates of the Community.

But above all, strive to know yourselves, that you may learn to despise yourselves and be humble in all things, for there is nothing more important or necessary to please God, serve Him and arrive at perfection.

*De caetero, fratres, quaecumque vera, quaecumque pudica, quaecumque justa, quaecumque sancta, quaecumque amabilia, quaecumque bonae famae, si qua virtus, si qua laus disciplinae, haec cogitate . . . haec agite, et Deus pacis erit vobiscum.*(8)

(8). Phil. 4, 8-9

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

115 -

### LETTER 63

**To the Priests of his Congregation who were giving a mission at Honfleur.** *Thansgiving for the sanction of the seminary at Caen, granted on December 2, 1657 by His Lordship Francis Servien, Bishop of Bayeux.*

December 1657

His Lordship(1) drew up authentic letters patent confirming the letters of the King(2) and of Bishop d'Angennes(3) and he had them all recorded in his secretary's office in Bayeux, and in the registry of the ecclesiastical court of Caen and of the ecclesiastical insinuations. Then he ordered the

pastor of St. Julian's Church(4) in Caen to proclaim it publicly and to send notices last Sunday to all parish priests and preachers, so that they might announce to everyone that the establishment of the Bayeux seminary in our house had been confirmed, and that the ceremony would take place in our chapel on the same day with all possible solemnity. All of this was done. We sang a high Mass in the morning and vespers in the afternoon, both with great ceremony. The pastor of St. Peter's Church,(5) the canon of Bayeux, came expressly to say the Office after the Vicar-General and I had invited him to do so.

Father Larderat(6) had written me, on behalf of his Lordship, that I should invite the Abbé de Brissac to preach. The Abbé was unable to accept, but the rector of the Jesuits,(7) substituting for him, gave an excellent sermon, and so many people kept coming all day long that our chapel would have been filled even if it were as large as the church of the Abbey of St. Stephen. Blessed be Our Lord and His most holy Mother, who are the true and sole authors of this work. For we, on our

(1). Bishop Francis Services of Bayeux.

(2). Louis xiv.

(3). James d'Angennes was Bishop of Bayeux from 1606 to 1647.

(4). Reverend Father LeGrand for twenty years superior of the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge.

(5). Father Gabriel Jacques, rector of St. Peter's Church in Caen from 1624-1661.

(6). Bishop Services's secretary and a devoted friend of St. John Eudes.

(7). The rector of the Jesuits was Father Francis Pinchereau, who held that position in Caen from 1655 to 1658.

116 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

part, did nothing, either by ourselves or through others, to petition his Lordship of Bayeux. On the contrary, he had been strongly importuned by a congregation(8) to which he was bound for many years by the ties of a very special friendship. This congregation made every effort to prevent, as did other persons who offered him signal advantages for his seminary, and who overlooked nothing that could possibly be done by themselves as well as their friends, to persuade him to reject us and ally himself with them. Nevertheless, he elected to ignore all these solicitations, and after having broken with all the others, he chose poor nobodies like us to take charge of his seminary. "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble." (9)

It is true that Father Larderat and the pastor at Saint Julian worked hard in this affair, but that was through an inspiration instilled in them by God, and not through anyone's request.

Let us all, therefore, feel a profound humility at the sight of so many favors. Let us give sincere thanks to God, and proportionately to the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph and the other patrons of our Congregation, as well as to all the holy bishops of Bayeux.

For this purpose we have decided to choose the octave of Christmas for our thanksgiving, to expose the Blessed Sacrament in our chapel on the first three days, in accordance with permission granted us by the Vicar General, and to invite all our friends to adore and thank Our Lord with us.

During those eight days we shall say our Masses according to the order of the Church. In addition, we shall offer them on the first four days in honor of the Holy Trinity, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin; on the fifth, in honor of the holy angels; on the sixth, in honor of St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist, St. Joachim and St. Anne; on the seventh, in honor of the holy Apostles, martyrs, priests and Levites, virgins, innocents, bishops of Bayeux and all the saints; on the eighth, in honor of Our Lord and His most holy Mother.

To these we shall add three intentions: the first, for his Lordship of Bayeux and those others whom God used as instruments to accom

(1). The Congregation of the Oratory.

(2). Luke 1, 52.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

117 -

plish His holy will in this matter; the second, for all those who opposed it; and the third, to obtain all we need to do well what He asks of us.

We shall also say a daily rosary which will be divided among us, and every evening the *Te Deum* and a *Sub tuum praesidium*.

I leave it to you to choose your own devotions, but I should like very much to know what they are . . .

My third recommendation to you is that you convince yourselves that, in order to know what God demands of you on this occasion, you must be mindful that the Congregation has been established by God in His Church and that He has granted you the grace of calling you to join it for these three ends:

First, to give you the means of arriving at the perfection and sanctity compatible with the ecclesiastical state.

Secondly, to labor for the salvation of souls through missions and other sacerdotal functions, which is the work of the Apostles and Our Lord Himself; a work so great and divine that there would seem to be none greater nor more divine, *divinorum divinissimum*.

Nevertheless, there is one function which does surpass it, and this is to labor for the salvation and sanctification of ecclesiastics, which is to save the saviours, direct the directors, teach the doctors, feed the shepherds, enlighten those who are the light of the world, sanctify those who are the sanctification of the Church, and perform in the hierarchy of the Church what the seraphim and cherubim perform in the heavenly realm. That is the third end for which God has deigned to establish our little Congregation in the Church and for which He has summoned us to join it, through an incomprehensible mercy of which we are infinitely unworthy. He wishes to place in our keeping the most precious, the most illustrious portion of His Church, dearer to Him than the apple of His eye, which is the heart of His mystical body, that is to say, the ecclesiastics. It is the holy family whose care and guidance He wishes to entrust to us.

Judge from that, my dearest brethren, the extent of our obligations, and what perfection He asks of us. He wishes priests to serve as models and examples for the faithful, but He desires us to serve as models and patterns for the priests.

118 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Let us humble ourselves at the sight of all these considerations which are so weighty, acknowledging our unworthiness and infinite incapacity for such a task. Let us, finally, cultivate a great mistrust of ourselves, while preserving the utmost confidence in Him Who calls us, for He has extraordinary graces to bestow upon us which are in proportion to our vocation. With His grace there is nothing impossible for us. Let us, however, conceive an earnest desire to place no obstacle in its way, but rather to prepare ourselves to receive it. Then let us resolve anew, as we offer ourselves to

Him, to perform in a holy manner all our ecclesiastical functions, to carry out faithfully all our duties in the Community, to put all its orders into prompt execution, to obey our superiors to the letter, to love one another sincerely, and above all, to humble ourselves constantly in all things.

As for the ecclesiastics that God sends us, let us resolve to do three things: 1. to set them an outstanding example of piety, modesty and all the other virtues; 2. to receive and treat them with the utmost charity, sincerity, civility, courtesy, meekness and forbearance, omitting nothing we can do to help train and cultivate them in all that pertains to ecclesiastical life, customs and duties; 3. to pray a great deal for them, in our Masses and other prayers, that God may give them the true spirit of the priesthood.

That, my beloved brethren, is what God asks of us—great things which completely surpass our ability, but: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, do manfully." (10) "Be strengthened in the Lord and in the might of his power." (11)

I implore our most bountiful Jesus and His most worthy Mother to accomplish their all-holy wills perfectly in us.

In the sacred love of their most Holy Heart I remain sincerely, unreservedly and always, to each and every one of you, whom I embrace with all respect and affection, my very dear and honored brethren,

Your most unworthy servant,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest of the  
Congregation of the Seminaries of Jesus and Mary.  
(10). Cor. 16, 13  
(11). Eph. 6, 10.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

119 -

### LETTER 64

**To the Superior of one of his houses.** *On the value of humiliations, with respect to an ordination which had edified the entire city of Caen.*

1658

Among all these successes I clearly perceive that periods of humiliation, trouble, suffering and crosses are much more desirable, pleasing, advantageous, useful and precious than those of eulogy, exaltation and comfort. However, we must accept the one with the other from the hand of God, endeavoring thereby to accomplish His most holy will.

### LETTER 65

**To Madame de Bois-David de Soulbieu,** (1) then a Postulant at the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity at Caen.

1658 My dearest daughter:

May Jesus, the most Holy Heart of Mary, be ours for ever.

I thank you for your testimonies of sincere and cordial charity. I assure you, my dearest

daughter, that my heart is filled with charity for your soul, and that I desire most earnestly to serve you to the best of whatever ability it may please God to grant me. All that is happening with regard to your affairs is for the best; do not doubt that. For you have a Spouse and a Mother who are all-powerful in heaven and on earth, who love you more than you yourself do, and who are most wise and thoroughly capable of managing all things in the best possible manner. Take care then, my dearest daughter, not to allow yourself to become anxious, but trust fully in Our Lord and His Mother. Annihilate at their feet all your thoughts, plans, desires, inclinations and in

(1). Born at Montmartin, in the diocese of Coutances, of a most distinguished family, Madame married Simon de Bois-David, a Captain of the Guards. After the death of her husband, she entered the Monastery of our Lady of Charity and took the habit on April 29, 1658. She received the name of Sister Mary of the Infant Jesus. Ory, op. cit., p. 83.

120 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

tents, and resign yourself completely, sincerely and unreservedly to their most holy will, supplicating them to arrange all things in the way most pleasing to them. Remember that they will do everything that is useful and advantageous to you, beyond your fondest desires.

My most affectionate regards to our dearest Mother, together with all her daughters, my dearest~ Sisters. I remain, in the sacred love of the most holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my dearest daughter,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 66

**To Father John Dupont,(1) Superior of the Seminary at Coutances.** *The Saint reminds him that the occupations of the Community must be given preference over outside works, and admonishes him to place all his trust in Jesus and His most Holy Mother.*

1658

I will do what I can to send someone to help you with duties of the Community. However, with things in the condition that you describe to me, Father Yon' will have to remain at the house if he is needed there to help with confessions and in singing Vespers. For this is a maxim that must be observed: the interests of the Community have preference over anything that can be done outside of it. If you think, then, that he is needed in the house, have him give up his preaching elsewhere.

Your letter would grieve me if I did not know that we have a very good Father and Mother who have absolute power over all things in heaven and on earth. They have provided very charitably so far for all our needs and they will always do so if we try to serve them and place

(1). Father Dupont was born at Dieppe in 1619. He entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1658 and became superior of the Coutances Seminary in the spring of 1658. He died in 1685. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, pp. 98-103.

(1). See Letter 58, now 8

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

121 -

all our trust in them: "Casting all your care upon (them) for (they) have care of you." (3)

(3) 1 Peter 5, 7

## LETTER 67

**To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Coutances Seminary.**  
*On obedience.*

November 2, 1658

I am well aware of the prudence that God has given you, and of the sincerity and integrity of your intentions. But you and the other superiors of our houses must allow me to speak my thoughts to you on those occasions when I deem it necessary. If I suggest things to them which they find difficult, they may write me about it with simplicity and deference, but then they must give their attention to my next request in the matter without consulting this one or that one. Each one should feel free to write me whatever he thinks necessary for the good of the house.

## LETTER 68

**To Father John Dupont, Superior at Coutances.** *Concerning the acquisition of a site in the Place des Petits Prés(1) for the erection of the Caen seminary.*

December 16, 1658

The business regarding the *Place des Petits Prés* is all settled, thanks be to God. The contract is drawn up and signed by everyone concerned. And it is the almighty hand of Our Lord which has performed this wonder: "This is the Lord's doing: and it is wonderful in our eyes." (2) I entreat all our dear brethren to thank Him for it, as also His most

(1). Place des Petits Prés later became the Place Royale, and today is the Place de la *République* in Caen.

(2). Ps. 117, 23.

122 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Holy Mother, and to implore Him to raise up someone now who will build a church on this spot in honor of the most Holy Heart of the Blessed Mother of God.

## LETTER 69

**To the Priests of the Seminary at Lisieux.** *On their refusal to accept Father Anthony Bernard (1) as their superior. (2)*

January or February, 1659 My very dear and beloved brethren:

You are aware that all priests, especially missionaries, are obliged to practise all the virtues with a view to perfecting themselves as models of holiness for the faithful. You know, consequently, that their obedience for all the orders of their superiors must be unquestioning.

If you had practised it in that way, you would have done something very pleasing to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, very advantageous to your souls and very comforting to me. But if you did not have enough virtue for that, you should at least have been satisfied to acquaint me with your feelings in a spirit of humility and deference.

If I had sent you the lowliest of our lay brothers to govern you, you should have submitted to it



because for your sakes Our Lord was obedient to Herod, Pilate, the executioners who crucified Him, and the forces of darkness. I have sent you a man who is one of the first to have entered our Congregation, extremely wise, virtuous and charitable. Yet you scorn him, you reject him, thereby condemning the superior of your Congregation in the choice he has made and preferring your own judgment to his. But what is worse, one of you writes me for the

(1). Father Bernard, a former parish priest entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1652. He was Superior of the Lisieux Seminary for one year.

(2). At the time of the foundation of the Rouen seminary, Father Manchon, who was in charge of the Seminary at Lisieux, was summoned in take over its direction. St. John Eudes replaced him at Lisieux with Father Bernard, whose appointment dissatisfied the priests of the Lisieux seminary. It was then that the Saint wrote the letter we reproduce here. It was written near the end of 1658 or the beginning of 1659.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

123 -

others that this is a provocation not to be endured, that he is giving up his function as bursar and the others are threatening to withdraw from the Congregation. What sort of language is that? Is that the way for priests, missionary priests, to talk? Where is the humility, the obedience, the sacrifice of self, of one's own reasoning and will? Where are the fruits of so many meditations, spiritual readings and Masses?

Open your eyes, my dear brethren, and see the errors you have committed.

1. You have opposed the most holy will of God which was made known to you through him who acts in His place.

2. You have saddened and grieved your poor Father who loves you more than his own inmost parts.

3. You have scorned your brother and injured him immeasurably, for how will he be regarded henceforth in the Congregation? If I carried out your desires, he would be a man completely discredited and ruined, and that would be sufficient to force him to withdraw from the Congregation.

4. You have done incalculable injury to the Congregation through your very pernicious example, the aftermath of which is highly dangerous. For whenever the Superior of the Congregation sends a house a superior who is not acceptable to the bursar or someone else, they will have only to announce that they are resigning from their office and threaten to withdraw. In short, my dear brethren, it is like placing a dagger at my throat to force me to carry out your wishes. It is even like stabbing me in the heart, for it fills me with a most lively sorrow to see so little virtue among you, specially since I wrote you that it was to be only for a short time.

I hope that all these considerations may help you to recognize your errors, to humble yourselves and implore pardon of God for them, to resolve never to do such a thing again, and to submit yourselves willingly to the most adorable will of God which is made known to you by him who acts in His stead.

I am with all sincerity, my beloved brethren,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 70

**To Father Thomas Manchon, Superior at Rouen.** *On the conduct to follow with respect to the Jansenists.*

February to, 1659 My dearest brother:

I received two letters from Paris on the same day, from two eminent persons who are friends of ours.

One writes me that he was present at a very select gathering where two men of rank said that it was on our account that His Lordship of Rouen<sup>(1)</sup> issued his order for peace, meaning that we were inveighing too violently and indiscreetly against the Jansenists.

The other writes me as follows: "I shall tell you simply that the complaint was made to me in a well-known Paris residence that for some time now it has been noticed in Rouen that there is a great deal of communication between some of your Congregation and those who are only too justly associated with the group. This is particularly true of the one who is in charge of the house, whose virtue I myself do not question but who, apparently lacking sufficient firmness and vigor to oppose these people openly, might be capable, though quite unintentionally, of arousing marked prejudice against your seminary and preventing all the good that it could accomplish. He might prejudice even the subjects seeking to enter there, who would attribute such conduct to him who is in universal charge of the Congregation."

That is what they wrote me; it should teach us to keep careful watch over our conduct. I know no better secret than to follow our own broad path without becoming involved in anything save to keep the commandments of God and of the Church, follow the rules of our calling and urge everyone, in our private conversations as well as our sermons and exhortations, to do the same. Let us avoid as far as possible any mention of controversial questions of the day, whether they concern faith or morals, and especially in our sermons.

(1). Archbishop Harlay de Champvallon.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

125-

I also entreat you, my dearest brother: 1. to shun, whenever possible, the society of those who profess false doctrines: "Their speech spreadeth like a canker."<sup>(2)</sup> Our friendliness with them would cause us to be suspected and do us considerable harm; 2. always to evince the greatest possible charity and friendship for the Reverend Jesuit Fathers and all other religious.

(2). 2 Tim. 2, 17

## LETTER 71

**To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Coutances Seminary.** *On the opening of the seminary at Rouen. ( 1 )*

February 1659

After many trials and obstacles, not only from outsiders but even from our friends, the Rouen seminary was opened last Sunday on the octave of the feast of the Most Holy Heart of Our Bountiful

Mother. There was great solemnity and joy on the part of all our brethren and friends who, after having disagreed in this affair, became reconciled very admirably, according to what Father Manchon wrote me, so that everything is peaceful now. Help us to give thanks to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, as well as to all the angels and saints, and pray God to pardon those who opposed it and bless those who contributed to it, particularly Mr. de la Boissière.(2) It is to him, after God and our heavenly friends, that we are most highly obligated in this matter, since he worked on it for nine months with zeal, patience and wonderful perseverance.

(1). The Rouen Seminary was opened on February 8, 1659

(2). Mr. de la Motte-Lambert who, after having been of Parliament, became a priest and later, vicar apostolic in China with the title of the bishop of Berytus.

126 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 72

**To Father Thomas Manchon, Superior at Rouen. *On his difficulties.***

1659

Since God has chosen you to establish a seminary as important as the one in Rouen, you should consider these crosses and obstacles as a very precious gift from His divine bounty and thank Him as for a very special favor, for it is a sign that the seminary will yield great fruits.

If I beheld you surrounded by prosperity and contentment, I should fear greatly for you and the work entrusted to you; but seeing you afflicted with crosses and persecutions, I rejoice and give thanks to God that He is making you travel the road He traveled, and that He is building His house on the same foundations as those on which He established His Church.

Listen, my dearest brother, to these words of the Holy Spirit: "Looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame ... think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood . . ."(1)

In conclusion, my dear brother, "Believe firmly in God, and place yourself entirely in His hands." Those are the words of St. Augustine, to which I shall add these of the Church: "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."(2) Let us abandon ourselves to His divine will with full and complete resignation, having boundless confidence in His infinite goodness and in the unrivalled charity of our most bountiful Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

(1). Heb. 12, 2-4.

(2)PS. 54, 23.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

127 -

### LETTER 73

**To Father Thomas Manchon, Superior at Rouen. *On the poverty of his seminary.***

1659

"Do manfully and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord."(1) For he hath said: I will not leave thee: neither will I forsake thee"; (2) and He is faithful to His words and promises: "Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass."(3) "Casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you."(4)

Our Lord and His most holy Mother, Who had foretold the establishment at Rouen a long time before, and Who did so in such a wonderful way, will not abandon their work. They have not given their sons a house to lodge them without intending to furnish them with food; but they wish to afford us an opportunity to exercise patience, obedience to their most adorable will, love of poverty and trust in their great goodness.

We must guard well, my dearest brother, against losing that confidence which the Holy Spirit recommends so highly to us in Sacred Scripture, for it is very pleasing to His Divine Majesty. Distrust binds His hands and prevents Him from bestowing the fruits of His holy generosity.

In short, God never forsakes the needy, but He wants us to pray to Him with trust and perseverance. Make a novena, then, for that intention.

(1). Ps. 26, 14.

(2). Heb. 13, 5

(3). Matt 24, 35

(4). 1 Pet. 5, 7

128 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 74

**To Father Thomas Manchon.** *On another occasion.*

1659

I am constantly mindful of the needs of your house, but I cannot believe that our most bountiful Father and our admirable Mother will withhold their generosity in this urgent necessity. No, no, no, my dearest brother, they will not abandon their poor children, however unworthy and unfaithful; heaven and earth would sooner come to an end. What would become of those divine words: "Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever"?(1)

He Who lavishes His gifts on so many Turks, blasphemers, godless persons and atheists, will He forsake His own true children? It is impossible! It is utterly impossible! We have but one thing to fear, and that is to be too fearful and not have enough confidence.

The need is urgent, but I trust that help is not far distant. For my part, I am sparing no effort or endeavor to do all that I reasonably can in this matter, but, thank God, without haste or uneasiness, and without any reliance on what I am doing. Do as much on your own part.

But above all, I beseech you to see to it that God is well served and honored through faithful and literal obedience to all the orders and rules of the Congregation and all the things that God has been pleased to inspire me to establish in it. Know, my dearest brother, that by observing and having them observed as much as possible, you will be doing something very pleasing to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, and you will bring down their holy blessing upon us and our Community. "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." (2)

- (1). Ps. 135, 25.  
 (2). Psalm 54, 23

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

129 -

### LETTER 75

**To Mr. d'Omonville, Counsellor of the Parliament of Rouen.** *To persuade him to maintain the liberalities(1)pledged to the Rouen Seminary, which he mistakenly feared was being won over to Jansenism.*

1659

My dear Sir:

I must confess that it causes me a very bitter pang to see you withdraw your support from us. It is true that it would be better not to have any seminary at all than to see it managed and directed by Jansenists. But, thank God, the seminary at Rouen is certainly not in that state, for there is a great difference between a seminary which is under the authority of persons suspected of Jansenism and a seminary which is managed and directed by Jansenists. It is a fact that the seminary is under the authority of certain persons suspected of this pernicious doctrine; but it is under the immediate guidance and direction of persons who are as far removed from it as heaven is from hell.

If in breaking with us, my dear Sir, you were not doing something which will give the Jansenists what they want and which will be most prejudicial to Catholics, *gemenstacerem.*( 2 ) But consider, I beg of you, that as a result of this breach the seminary will no longer be ours, since all the conditions of the order of Parliament are by no means fulfilled. It will then fall into the hands of the Jansenists, which is precisely what they wish, and is the greatest misfortune that could happen to the city of Rouen and the entire province.

(1). As soon as the Rouen seminary was established, it was stipulated that the house was not to be supported by the diocese. Thanks to a donation of ten thousand livres pledged by Mr. d'Omonville, St. John Eudes had been able to assume this obligation. Abandoned now by Mr. d'Omonville, he found himself unable to meet it and forced, consequently, to give up the seminary, which would have allowed the Jansenists to take it over by supplying the necessary sum themselves. Cf. Costil, *Annales, de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 5, P. 337. Despite Mr. d'Omonville's donation, which the Saint succeeded in having maintained, the Rouen seminary passed through great financial smuts in its early days.

(2). Esther 6, 4.

130 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

If we are dependent on several suspected persons, that will induce us to keep guard over ourselves with increased effort and vigilance; but if the seminary falls into the hands of the Jansenists, who is going to answer to God for the great evils which will inevitably result, if not those who did not prevent the misfortune when they could have done so? One must always choose the lesser of two evils; now an evil that is neither present nor certain is incomparably smaller than one which is certain and inevitable. You fear that we are turning to Jansenism, although we are more opposed to it than fire is to water; but it is only too certain that if we do not keep the seminary, it will be entrusted to the Jansenists. That is why everyone who has heard this matter discussed cannot understand how it is possible to be in doubt about it, except a single individual from this district(3) who prefers his own opinion to that of all the directors, religious, and everyone else. Certainly such conduct is highly dangerous.

What likelihood is there, Sir, that one person who has some authority over us can pervert an entire Community which openly professes to wage war upon Jansenism? But were there such a danger, that same reason ought to induce our friends not to abandon us, especially at a time when there is no danger for them, since they are well aware that there is no malice in our ranks, thanks be to God.

Finally, my dear Sir, Jansenism is a very pernicious thing because it is a heresy *which destroys* faith. Schism and division among the servants of God, however, are no less dangerous, insofar as they destroy charity which is a virtue more excellent even than faith. "And now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity," (4) says the Holy Spirit.

Therefore I urge you, my dear brother, by the tenderest charity of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, not to withdraw your support from our brethren who love and honor you much more than can be expressed, and not to destroy such an important work in *which you* have helped serve as an instrument of God. I implore Him with all my strength to speak to your heart Himself and make you see the peril confronting you, not only because you are destroying the Rouen senti

(3). «That is to say, from Caen,» says Costil. Loc. cit.

(4). I Cor. 13, 13

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

131 -

nary, but also ruining our little Congregation which assuredly is a work from the hand of God, destined by Him to bring about the salvation of many souls. But men often upset His plans and works. I trust He will not allow that evil to befall us.

### LETTER 76(1)

**To His Lordship Claude Auvry, a former bishop of Coutances(2)** *The Saint urges him to accept the bishopric of Bayeux, left vacant by the death of Bishop Servien.*

Caen, June 1, 1659

Most illustrious and honored Lord:

Behold me at your feet to receive, may it please you, your holy blessing.

Mr. de Saint Hilaire was in the city yesterday evening. He brought me kindest regards from you, for which I thank you very much, my Lord, as also for your kindness toward our confrere, Father Blouet,(3) during the visit you graciously paid him, of which he wrote me in terms full of happiness and delight. For it is true that he entertains for you, my Lord, all the reverence and affection that the most dutiful son in the world could have for a very good father. And all our other confrères, thank God, share the same sentiments, which affords me no little satisfaction.

Mr. de Saint Hilaire told me something that would overwhelm me with joy if it came true. He assured me that Bishop Auvry was being mentioned for the bishopric of Bayeux, something which Mr. de Courmont had already told me six days ago. They have been talking about it in this city for a long time. O my Lord, if that came to pass, what

(1). Letter reproduced from the National Archives of Paris.

(2). In 1658 Bishop Auvry resigned from the bishopric of Coutances in favor of Bishop de Lesseville. He then withdrew to Paris, where Mazarin employed him in affairs of state.

(3). Father John James, Blouet de Camilly (1632-1711), eldest son of James Blouet and Anne Le Haguais. See Letter 11, note 2. Father Blouet entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary on February 8, 1655, at the age of 23. In 1680 he was elected superior general. Father Blouet died on August 11, 1711. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, P. 252.

132 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

rejoicing it would bring, not only to your most humble servants and unworthy children, but to this whole diocese, where I can assure you that you are greatly honored, loved and wanted. Indeed, I do not believe there could be another place so partial to you. But there is something else: these two gentlemen told me that only your consent is necessary to bring this about. Oh! how I do cast myself at your feet at this moment to implore you not to let this opportunity pass.

I shall perhaps be told that I am moved by self-interest to make this appeal to you. I confess that I am far from disinterested, but my sole interests are those of my God and His Church, and of your eternity, my Lord. Now, I see that if you were bishop of Bayeux and if God gave you the grace to reside there, as I believe you would plan to do, you would render Him invaluable services at little cost in this diocese. You would do great things for the welfare of that Church, and you would enrich your eternity with an infinite number of heavenly graces and blessings.

That is why, my Lord, I pray you, I implore you, I urge you, by all that you love and all that is lovable in heaven and on earth, to think earnestly and effectually about this matter, particularly for the love of the most holy Mother of God, patroness of this diocese as well as of that of Coutances. Since it has pleased God in His goodness to make you a bishop of His Church, please do not neglect the opportunity He gives you to be useful in episcopal duties which are so beautiful, so noble, so holy and divine. The episcopacy was instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ for the same end as the apostolate, namely, to carry on the work of the salvation of souls which the great Bishop of our souls, in the wording of Scripture, began on earth; the work of the Apostles, the work of the kings and princes of heaven, the work of all works, *omnium divinatorum divinissimum*. Your life, your time, your mind and all that you possess, my Lord could they be used more worthily and advantageously than in such a work? You can do a certain amount of good at the Court, but you would accomplish infinitely more by governing a great diocese like this one. Forgive me for speaking to you at such great length about this, but I am still saying too little on a subject of such importance.

Think about it, then, my Lord, I beg of you once more. I implore

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

133 -

Our Lord and His most Holy Mother to lead you to think about it, to direct this matter in accordance with their most holy will, and to grant me the grace to live and die in all the reverence and deference due you,

My most illustrious and honored Bishop, from your most obedient, grateful and faithful servant,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. I forgot to tell you, my Lord, that his Lordship of ... arrived in this city Monday evening. I did myself the honor to go at once to greet him, and he received me with great friendliness, for which I am grateful to you and thank you very humbly. I shall go this week, God willing, to Coutances, but shall remain there only six or seven days in order to leave to begin a mission on Corpus Christi Sunday at Vasteville, (4) in La Hague. If you do me the honor to write me, please address your letters

to me at our house in Caen, as if I were there, and they will be forwarded to me. What great happiness if I should learn that Bishop Auvry was appointed to the bishopric of Bayeux!  
(4). A village about six miles west of Cherbourg.

## LETTER 77

**To the bursar of the Rouen Seminary.**

1659

If I considered from a human point of view all that you write me of the needs of your house in Rouen, it would trouble me a great deal, but I look upon them as being in the province of God who manages all things in the best possible manner. It is usually His way to found His works on lowliness, humiliation, poverty and nothingness. "The base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that he might bring to nought things that are."  
(1)  
(1). I Cor. 1, 28.

134 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

That should not keep us from doing, on our part, all that we can, because that is His will; but let us take care not to lose confidence or allow ourselves to become distrustful, for thus do we bind the hands of divine Bounty. "Be strengthened in the Lord and in the might of his power." (2) If He is concerned *even about* the hairs of our heads, how much more about other things of greater importance! Let us be anxious only to please Him and accomplish faithfully what He asks of us, and He will take care of all that is necessary and expedient for us.  
(2). Eph. 6, 10.

## LETTER 78

**To Father John James Blouet de Camilly. *On the mission at Vasteville.***

Vasteville, July 9, 1659

... Thirty missionaries would not be enough, (1) so great are the crowds who come from all sides to hear the sermons. Sometimes these people, having been deeply moved, wait for a week around the confessionals before they can make their confessions. In short, God's blessings on this mission are very abundant.  
(1). St. John Eudes had with him twelve missionaries, seven from his own Congregation and five helpers. Boulay, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, P. 288.

## LETTER 79

**To Father John James Blouet de Camilly, in Paris. *On the success of the Vasteville mission, in the diocese of Coutances.***

Vasteville, July 23, 1659.

My dearest brother:



I cannot tell you what blessings God is bestowing on this mission. It is certainly wonderful.

I have not preached in the church for quite some time now, for al-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

135 -

though it is very large, it is nevertheless too small on this occasion. I can truthfully say that we have more than fifteen thousand people present on Sundays.

There are twelve confessors, but without exaggeration there is enough work for fifty. People come from a distance of eight or ten leagues, and their hearts are so touched that there is nothing to be seen but tears and nothing to be heard but laments from the poor penitent men and women. The results observed by the confessors in the tribunal are wonderful. But what grieves us is that we shall be able to confess only a fraction of these people. We are exhausted. The missionaries see some who have been waiting for a week without having been able to get to confession, and who cast themselves on their knees whenever they meet a priest, imploring him with suppliant hands and tears in their eyes to hear them. And yet this is already our sixth week (1) here.

What a great blessing the missions are! And how necessary! What a great evil it is to hinder them in any way! Oh, if those who have prevented us from giving several in this diocese only knew the harm they have done! "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (2)

Let us pray the Lord of the harvest, my dear brother, to send laborers for it, saying frequently to Him with all our hearts: "Lord of the harvest, send labourers into thy harvest." What are all those doctors and bachelors of arts doing in Paris, while souls are perishing by the thousand for want of someone to offer them a hand to withdraw them from perdition and preserve them from everlasting fire? Certainly, if I dared, I should go straight to Paris and cry out in the Sorbonne and the other colleges: Fire! Fire! The flames of hell are consuming the whole universe! Come, you doctors, bachelors and parish priests, come, all you ecclesiastics, and help to extinguish them! (3) ' (1). St. John Eudes and his assistants began the mission on June 15, the Sunday in the Octave of Corpus Christi and closed it in the first week of August.

(2). Luke 23, 34.

(3). This is perhaps a reminiscence of the beautiful words written by St. Francis Xavier a century earlier in one of his letters: "It often occurs to me," he said, "to go through the academics of Europe, principally the one in Paris, crying out with all my might to those who have more learning than charity: *Ah! how many ways lead heaven and are come into hell through your fault!*"»

136 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 80

**To a Confrere.** *On the benefits of missions.*

1659

I have never enjoyed more palpable consolations than here, where I see enormous crowds of people coming to the sermons and besieging our confessionals. If the priests who waste their time and talents had ever experienced one iota of these comforts and consolations, I can assure you that they would hasten to labor in the field of missions and offer us their services.

## LETTER 81

**To Father John James Blotter de Cantilly, in Paris. *On the Villedieu mission* ( 1 )**

Autumn of 1659

Here there are even greater crowds than at Vasteville.

We have fourteen confessors, but undoubtedly fifty would not suffice. It would cause your heart to break with pity to see so many poor people who come three and four leagues, notwithstanding the bad roads, asking us with tears in their eyes to hear their confessions. They wait for six or eight days without being able to be confessed, so great is the rush, and they sleep at night in doorways and marketplaces, despite the weather. «Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest.»(2)

(1). Villedieu is a town in the district of Avranches in Normandy. The mission began on September 1 and closed on November 1.

(2). Luke 10, 2.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

137 -

## LETTER 82

**To Father John James Blotter de Camilly. *On Mr. de Langrie's cure.*( 1 )**

1659

May Jesus be eternally blessed for the improved health of our dear Mr. de Langrie.

Your letters of today have given me renewed vigor. It is not that we have placed our trust and reliance in any creature. No, God forbid. But how is it possible not to feel the loss of such a good and sincere friend, whom God in His goodness has been pleased to give us? Nevertheless, whenever He deigns to deprive us of him and all the others, we shall try to say as best we can: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord so it is done. Blessed be the name of the Lord." ( 2 )

Please assure him that we are praying to God for him, but that we ask for nothing more than the accomplishment of His most adorable will in him.

(1). Mr. de Langrie was Royal Councillor and President of the Normandy Parliament. He was one of the benefactors of the Caen Chapel. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. 2, P. 329. Mr. de Langrie recovered and lived until 1663.

(2). Job 7, 2 1.

## LETTER 83

**To Father John James Blotter de Camilly. *Regarding the plan of the chapel at Caen, drawn up through the efforts of Father Mannoury.***

1659

If Father Mannoury has included anything superfluous and contrary to simplicity in his plan,

I shall certainly cross it out, for I am the sworn enemy of everything that violates this virtue and I will tolerate only what is necessary and without embellishment.

138 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 84

**To Father John James Blouet de Camilly, in Paris.** *On the edifying conduct of the candidates for ordination at the Rouen seminary.*

Rouen, December 15, 1659

It is true that our good God bestows great blessings upon us through His infinite mercy, and that He manifests Himself as the author and founder, the superior and protector of our little Congregation, for which may He be for ever blessed!

There are now almost a hundred of us in this house. Among this number are many candidates for ordination and several boarders or seminarians who afford us great satisfaction, through the grace of Our Lord, because for the most part they are very tractable and unassuming. The candidates will leave tomorrow. I have given them a daily exhortation and I hope that God will thereby be glorified.

### LETTER 85

**To Father John James Blouet de Camilly.** *On the calumnies ( 1 ) of which the Saint was a victim in 1659.*

Rouen, December 17, 1659

The big dogs(2) in this part of the country have neither bitten nor barked at the little white dog' with black cars, to the best of my know!

(1). After the death of Mr. John de Bernières on May 3, 1659, the members of the Hermitage in Caen proceeded to fight Jansenism, and anything that resembled it, with an imprudent zeal. They made demonstrations in the streets of Caen, that were not of a nature to attract the sympathy of intelligent men and women. The enemies of St. John Eudes now endeavored to attribute to him some of the responsibility of these silly proceedings. The Saint hastened to dissociate himself from them. Cf. Joly, Life of St. John Eudes, p. 134.

(2). These probably were the Jansenists.

(3). The Saint himself.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

139 -

edge. But in Caen they are biting and tearing him into bits, for the reason you well know. He belongs to a Master Who is certainly able to protect him if He so desires. If He finds pleasure in seeing him mauled and devoured, *fiat! fiat!* I hope, nevertheless, that He will defend His poor little dog and give him the strength to bite, strangle and kill his Master's enemies, which are the sins of man.

### LETTER 86

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.**(1) *On her spiritual state.*

Rouen, December 24, 1659

My very dear and good Mother:

May the divine Infant Jesus be the heart of our hearts and the spirit of our spirits.

All that you have written me of the condition and dispositions of your soul is indisputable proof that our most amiable Saviour has a very special love for you. There is nothing to fear, my dearest Mother; you are in a good state. Remain undisturbed and confident, abandoning all that you are, in time and in eternity, to the most adorable will of God, Who has established His reign in your heart and will reign there for ever in the blessed eternity. But I beseech you, my dearest Mother, not to allow yourself to believe that you can or ought to do now what you have done in the past. On the contrary, you should greatly moderate your mortifications, and give your body all the rest and care necessary to conserve your health. If you do that, I assure you that you will be doing something highly pleasing to God, and a great deal more pleasing than if you were to do otherwise.

My most cordial greetings to all our dear Sisters in general, and to each one individually. I implore them to carry out faithfully their daily obligations to the divine Infant, His Holy Mother and St. Joseph, and to strive in competition with one another to imitate the humility of this Infant Jesus, as also His simplicity, innocence, obedience, meek

(1). See Letter 48, note 1.

140 -

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

ness, tenderness, cordial charity and, above all, His great love for His most Blessed Mother; and not to forget to recommend to the Son and the Mother him who is, in the sacred love of their most Holy Hearts, my very dear and good Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

#### LETTER 87

**To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson, His Niece.** *The Saint testifies to his conformity to the will of God, and gives her spiritual counsel.*

Rouen, January 7, 1660 My dearest Sister:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.(1)

It is true that my months of absence are sometimes quite long, and longer than I am aware of, but not longer than I wish. For, through the mercy of my Lord, it seems to me that I desire nothing, either in this world or in the next, except to abandon myself entirely to the sweet possession of the most adorable will of my God, so that it may lead me wherever it pleases, and do with me, everywhere and at all times, whatever is most pleasing to it. Hence I cannot tell you yet when I shall return to Caen. I am well aware that, with the grace of Our Lord, it will be when I wish, but I do not know yet when I shall wish to do so; that is to say, I do not know when God desires it.

You describe your spiritual state very well to me, my dear Sister. I have nothing more to tell you on that subject, save that you should try not to worry about your poverty and wretchedness, but to dwell in peace, humility, patience, submission and abandonment to the divine will, remaining

obedient to your superioress, and faithful to the observance of your Rules.

Above all, my dear daughter, I recommend three things to you. The first is always to preserve in your heart a firm and generous resolution

(1). This is the first instance of the use of the salutation. See Letter 34, note 3.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

141 -

to overcome the shortcomings that you recognize in yourself. The second is to keep your intention pure and upright, protesting frequently to Our Lord that you wish to do nothing save for His glory and love, and to accomplish His most adorable will in all things. The third is to have a great love, meekness and cordiality in your heart toward all your Sisters, demonstrating it by your words and actions.

I implore the most amiable Infant Jesus to live and reign in your heart, and in the hearts of all our dear Sisters. I send my regards to them, one and all, with every possible token of affection, wishing them a thousand and more blessings and a great abundance of graces, that they may use this new year in a holy manner and in conformity with the most holy will of God.

I am delighted that your brother, (2) my nephew, is so close to the time when he is to consecrate himself to His Divine Majesty through the solemn vows of holy religion. I implore God in His infinite goodness to grant him whatever graces are necessary and desirable to perform this act well. When you write to him, please give him my kindest regards.

I remain with all my heart, my dearest niece, Sister, and daughter,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(1). Mary Herson had two brothers: John, born October 2, 1632, and Isaac, born May 3, 1638. Cf. Boulay, *Vie du P. Eudes*, Vol. 1, p. 17.

142 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 88

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *On the decease of Sister Mary of the Child Jesus de Bois-David*(1)

Rouen, February 1660

J.M.J. My dear good Mother:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

The decease of our dear Sister Mary of the Child Jesus surprised me a little at first; but having cast my eyes upon that most adorable will which arranges all things in the best possible way, my heart remained at peace and my lips could only utter: My God, "not my will but Thine be done!" (2) Ah it is well that way, my dear Mother, since such is the pleasure of the divine Child Jesus, Who willed to take this dear sister, consecrated to the Divine Childhood, at the very time which is dedicated to this great mystery. She has gone to take possession of heaven in the name of all the sisters and to begin an eternal establishment of the Community of Our Lady of Charity. She has

gone to paradise, there to adore, praise and love the most holy Trinity unceasingly and for all eternity, together with Jesus and Mary and all the blessed, in the name and on behalf of all her dear sisters. These are the first fruits of your house which you have offered to His Divine Majesty. It is your first sacrifice which must have been very pleasing before the throne of Almighty God.

But when I say that she has gone to heaven, I do not mean that she has arrived there yet, for sometimes one is a long time on the way. That is why we must pray a great deal for this dear sister. For my part, I will not fail to do so, with God's help.

I am afraid that the fervor of our good sisters and their desire to mortify themselves may impel them to endure excessive cold, which may cause illness among them. I pray you, my dear Mother, to take precautions against this.

With respect to Holy Communion for the sick, you may arrange for

- (1). Sister Mary of the Child Jesus died on January 3, 1660. See Letter 6, note 1.
- (2). Luke 22, 42.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

143 -

it according to your own judgment. I thank Our Lord and His most Holy Mother for having given you the Old Bank House.

Sincere greetings to all our dear sisters. I remain with all my heart, my dear good Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 89

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *The Saint congratulates her on having celebrated the feast of the Heart of Mary. Then he expresses fear of her being elected superior of the Visitation Convent at Saint-Lo, ( 1 ) and he outlines the course she should follow during Lent.*

Rouen, February 15, 1660 J.M.J.

My dear good Mother:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

I was very happy about what you wrote me concerning our dearest Sister Mary of the Child Jesus, and I thank Our Lord and His most Holy Mother infinitely for it! I will do whatever is necessary, after we have discussed it together.

You make me very happy, too, my dearest Mother, by telling me that you celebrated the feast of the most Holy Heart of our admirable Mother so well. I give infinite thanks to her and her beloved Son for all the graces they bestowed on you that day-both you and all our dear Sisters. I bless and praise them with all my heart, too, for guiding you, my dear Mother, along the road which they themselves traveled, the way of the Cross and desolation. It is a very great favor that they are conferring on you; have no doubt about it, my dearest Mother. Embrace your cross wholeheartedly for the love of our most amiable Crucified and His divine Mother, and abandon yourself entirely to the divine will.

Thursday I delivered a lengthy exhortation at the greater Visitation Monastery, and another yesterday at the smaller one, where I saw the  
(1). A town in the department of la Manche in Normandy.

144 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Mother Superiors of both places. I was highly gratified with them, especially with the superior of the first-mentioned monastery;(2) she is truly a holy nun. We spoke a great deal of Mother Margaret Frances Patin, for whom she shows a great affection. But she told me something that troubles me exceedingly: that it is to be feared that you may be elected to the foundation at Saint U, where Mother Chary was to go. I beseech you, my dearest Mother, to let me know as soon as possible if there is any likelihood of this, any reason to fear it, so that we may anticipate and try to avert this blow which would spell the ruin of the house of Our Lady of Charity. Please write me what you know about this, and your sincere opinion of it.

This good Mother also told me that she hopes soon to have copies of the *Lives* of your first Mothers, and that she will send them to you.

I greet our dear Sisters, one and all, in the sacred love of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, beseeching them not to fail to visit our most amiable Saviour in the desert each day during Lent, in the name of the whole human race, that they may prostrate themselves at His feet to adore Him in all that transpires within Him, both outwardly and inwardly. Let them also thank Him for all He is doing and suffering for them and for all mankind, ask pardon of Him for the many sins for which He is mortifying Himself so rigorously, give themselves to Him in order to be united with His holy dispositions in fasting, praying, and remaining in silence and solitude, and try to imitate Him in all these things. After that, they should also visit His most holy Mother, who is in a state conformable to that of her Son, that they may greet and honor her in this condition, thank her, unite themselves with her and pray to her.

I am with all my heart, speaking to the dearest Mother and her dear daughters, my beloved Sisters,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. Please have a few little prayers said in private, my dear Mother, for nine days, and have the Sisters receive Holy Communion in a body, for my intentions.

(2). The superior of the first monastery at Rouen was Mother Joan Mary de Raguemare. The superior and foundress of the second one was Mother Mary Frances Elias. Ory, op. cit., P. 103, note.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

145 -

### LETTER 90

**To Father John Dupont.**(1) *On the numerous crosses borne by the Saint.*

March 4, 1660

My dear brother, crosses come to me from all sides. If the good God did not sustain me, I should be overpowered by them. Lately my crosses are the heaviest and most painful that I have ever had to bear.

(1). See Letter 66, note i.

## LETTER 91

**To Father John James Blouet de Camilly.** *On the behavior of the candidates for ordination at the Rouen seminary, during the Lenten ordination of 1660.*

March 31, 1660

We were highly gratified with our candidates for ordination, who numbered one hundred twenty. God has singularly blessed us in them. His Lordship the Archbishop<sup>(1)</sup> ordered us to bring them in procession on Saturday, the ordination day, into Notre Dame Church, where he conferred Holy Orders on them. Then they returned as they had come, but with such great modesty, piety and recollection, both in entering and leaving, and during the ordination ceremonies, that everyone agreed it would be impossible to find humbler religious anywhere. All who saw them were greatly edified, and his Lordship the Archbishop evinced such great satisfaction over them that he insisted on telling everyone about it over and over again, and proclaiming his joy in his seminary. Give thanks to God and His most Holy Mother for all this, and communicate it to our dear brethren, whom I embrace with all my heart.

(1). Francis Harlay de Champvallon. See Letter 54.

146 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 92

**To a Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.** *On Father Nicholas Paillot<sup>(1)</sup>*

1660

This venerable priest is our good friend, or rather our beloved brother whom we love and consider as one of our own, and as belonging to our Congregation, because he really loves it as much as any one of us. For many years now he has been laboring with us on our missions with wonderful blessings and results, since God has endowed him with the true missionary spirit and all the qualities necessary for the perfect exercise of such functions.

(1). Father Paillot was not a Eudist, but spent several years on the missions with St. John Eudes and the first Eudist missionaries. He was an excellent catechism teacher and drew large crowds to his instructions. Cf. Boulay, OP. Cit., VOL 3, PP. 370-371.

## LETTER 93

**To the Community of Our Lady of Charity.** *On submission to the will of God.*

Paris, July 20, 1660

J.M. J. My dearest and beloved Sisters:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

I thank you with all my heart for your beautiful and cordial letter, which made me very happy indeed.



When I left Caen I expected to be away two months at the most, but my will was not in agreement with my thoughts, for it was my wish to be gone longer than eight months, but I was not aware that such was my will. I desired it, since God did, for His will is mine. I did not know then that I should have this intent, because I was ignorant of God's will in the matter, just as I do not know what He intends for the future. It is quite evident that His holy providence has brought

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

147 -

us here so that we may accomplish, worthless instruments that we are, what we can scarcely believe, but we do not know yet how He wishes to dispose of us later on. Pray, my dearest Sisters, that He will do whatever is most pleasing to Him solely for the glory of His Holy Name, without regard for our unworthiness and wretchedness.

It is true that I am not in the least worried in your regard, my beloved Sisters, for, aside from the great concern and ardent love that I know our admirable Mother has for the daughters of her Heart, I also know full well in whose protection I have left you. That does not prevent, however, my offering you daily to Our Lord Jesus Christ during the holy sacrifice of the Mass, nor from visiting you each day in spirit. I beseech you in turn, my dearest Sisters, to join us daily in our labors during this mission,<sup>(1)</sup> by your prayers and other pious exercises. You can do nothing more pleasing to His Divine Majesty.

I am very happy over the blessings which God in His infinite goodness is bestowing on your little Community. I implore Him most humbly to increase them more and more, and not to tolerate any hindrance on your part. That such a thing may not happen, my beloved Sisters, I entreat you to examine yourselves particularly on these three points, namely: humility, obedience, and mutual charity and cordiality. I remain, a great deal more than you can imagine or I can say, in the sacred love of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my dearest and beloved Sisters,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.  
(1). At the Church of Saint Germain-des-Prés in Paris.

148 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 94

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *On the Launay property<sup>(1)</sup> and other matters.*

(Paris, 1660) J. M. J.

My very dear and good Mother:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

I praised God with my whole heart for all the graces He is giving you and for the holy dispositions He is implanting in your soul. I thank Him, too, for increasing the ranks of our dearest Sisters, your good daughters. But particularly do I give thanks to Him for the goodwill He inspires in you toward my niece;<sup>(2)</sup> I am most grateful to you on that score, my dearest Mother, and thank you with all sincerity.

I was delighted at first to read in your letter that your business in Rome is progressing satisfactorily, but this example at Avignon<sup>(3)</sup> of which you speak worries me considerably, for I am afraid they wish to unite you with the religious of Avignon—a thing that must never

(1). The Launay estate, situated in the parish of Saint Aubin-de-la-Pierre, near Periers, had been sold to the Coutances seminary in 1655 by Anne Le Conte, who entered the novitiate of Our Lady of Charity that same year. She brought the Community, a dowry of eight thousand livres. Upon receiving the habit she took the name of Sister Mary of the Presentation. In 1678 the Launay home became the novitiate of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

(2). The reference here is to Frances Herson, sister of Mother Mary of the Nativity Herson. She took the habit on July 25, 1662 at the age of twenty-one, was professed as a lay sister on March 25, 1665 and died on March 26, 1733. She was known in religious life as Sister Mary of St. Francis. Entering the monastery in her youth, she suffered an injury to her arm at the hands of an unskillful surgeon, and for a long time it was feared that she might lose the use of her arm. Mother Patin allowed her to remain, nevertheless, out of respect to her uncle. The Saint alludes to these facts in this letter. Ory, op. cit., p. 110, note.

(3). In the Refuge of Avignon, the penitents were governed by former penitents who had become religious. St. John Eudes, on the contrary, wanted the administration of the religious of Our Lady of Charity always to be kept free from any hint of suspicion and thus he frowned upon allowing the penitents desirous of consecrating themselves to God to be professed in the Order; he preferred their being sent to other Communities. This fact explains why he opposed, at all costs, the union of the Refuge of Caen with the one at Avignon. Cf. Ory, *ibid.*, p. 110.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

149 -

be allowed to happen. Indeed, I should prefer instead to see the house utterly destroyed, but I trust that Our Lord and His most Holy Mother will provide. When Mr. de la Boissière arrives here, where he is expected, I shall know from his own lips just what he meant.

I saw our dearest Mother de Maupeou<sup>(4)</sup> and shall see her again, God willing, after the close of our mission here.

If I can locate the goldsmith, I will take care of your request.

That business about the Launay estate is giving me a great deal of trouble, for our brethren at Coutances write me that it will ruin our house if something is not done about it.

I beseech you, my dearest Mother, to consider that I undertook this transaction as a favor to your house, that I did so against the opinion of all our brethren, and that we purchased this estate when no one else wanted it. All that is incontestable, for the place was certainly not such a bargain that we were obliged to buy it. It is true that, after the deal had been closed, you or someone else told me that the pastor of Saint Nicolas Church was asking for the property, but at that time I had a verbal agreement with another person who was also making a bid for it. Even so, if the pastor of Saint Nicolas had come into possession of it, together with the same troubles in connection with it that we are having, he would not have failed to appeal to you for indemnity. Hence I am entreating you, my dearest Mother, to act in this case as you would have others act toward you under the same circumstances. It is a transaction in which we have been cheated, and if she who sold us this property were still in possession of her wealth, she would be obliged to indemnify us. Now it may be that it was largely a donation to you. That is why it is up to you to do what she would be obligated to do if the estate still belonged to her; such a course is only fair and equitable. But do not let me be the judge of it; I urge you, my dearest Mother, to forestall any offense against Christian charity by allowing yourself to be guided in this matter by what the Rules of the Visitation Order command you to do.

whenever any legal difficulty

(4). Magdalen Elizabeth de Maupeou, daughter of the Calvinist Giles de Maupeou, entered the Visitation Order at Paris in 1628. She was superior successively at Caen (1635-41), Bayonne and Paris, where she had been recalled. She died at the first Paris monastery on July 3, 1674 at the age of seventy-eight, after forty-five years of religious life. Cf. *Année sainte* of the Sisters of the Visitation, Vol. 7

150 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

arises, that is, to choose several mutual friends, well informed in business affairs, to whose judgment you may refer matters such as this one. It is the expedient which should be adopted, and I do not doubt that you will resort to it, since it is eminently fair, reasonable and Christian.

Meanwhile, I send my most cordial regards to our dear Sisters, one and all. Please tell them that I beseech them to help us on this mission, a highly important one, by their prayers.

I remain with all my heart, my very dear and good Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 95

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *On her spiritual disturbances, and the steps to take in obtaining the approbation of Rome for the Order.*

(1660) J. M. J.

My very dear and good Mother:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

I bless Our Lord with my whole heart for the favor He has granted you in having controlled the wind and tempest, and having filled your soul with calm and tranquility. But I thank Him even more for the grace He has given you in allowing you the sufferings which I perceive from your letter you have undergone. My dear Mother, how precious is the state of suffering! Ah, what a priceless gift from divine Bounty it is! How much more should we render thanks to God for such desolations than for all the consolations in the world! They are the greatest gifts that God can bestow on earth upon souls who are very dear to Him, and, were we to remain on our knees for a century in thanksgiving for the most trifling affliction possible, we still could not thank Him worthily, as He Himself said on one occasion to Blessed Henry Suze of the Order of St. Dominic. But, my dearest Mother, I beseech you to shun the thought that you have no vocation to the house

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

151 -

of our Lady of Charity. This idea does not proceed from God, since it is certainly contrary to the truth. Never have I known a vocation to be more obvious, indisputable and manifest than yours.

God grant that the news from Rome may be false, but I fear it is only too true, for Cardinal Anthony Barberini(1) to whom reference is made, and Cardinal Antonio are but one and the same person. It is true that we, on our part, have never spoken in Rome of the Daughters of the Heart of the

Most Holy Virgin, so I do not know where that could have originated.(2)

Be that as it may, we must be completely resigned to the most adorable will of God and trust that His infinite goodness will arrange everything in the manner most pleasing to Him; that, after all, is what we wish. Nevertheless, we should not become discouraged, but should do whatever we can to achieve our end.

I have always said to you, my dearest Mother, and I say again, that we must send a man to Rome expressly on our business, for the reasons I have already given you. It is my opinion that we should wait for further news; however, we must be prepared to send someone in case it becomes necessary. It is not nearly enough that the matter has been recommended to His Lordship of Le Puy;(3) it is still necessary for us to send an ecclesiastic to further the affair. I know one(4) in Paris who would be well qualified, and I do not think he would refuse me. I have written to Paris to find out when His Lordship of Le Puy plans to leave, so that I may meet him to discuss the matter with him at greater

(1). Cardinal Antonio Barberini (1607-1671), nephew of Pope Urban VIII, was created Cardinal in 1627.

(2). The Saint's enemies had probably succeeded in prejudicing Cardinal Barberini against the sisters because of their devotion of the Holy Heart of Mary, which was something new at that time, and it is in this regard that Mother Patin must have written the Saint. Cf. Ory, op. cit., p. 108.

(3). The Bishop of Le Puy, of whom mention is made here, was His Lordship Henry de Maupas. He was about to leave for Rome to urge, in the name of the French clergy, the canonization of the saintly Francis de Sales.

(4). The man referred to was Fr. Francis Louis Boniface, a Flemish priest, whom St. John Eudes met in Paris during the Mission at the hospital of the Quinze-Vingt in Paris. This sincere and worthy priest knew Italian and had a number of friends and acquaintances in the Eternal City. To him the Saint entrusted the negotiations for the approbation of his religious orders. Cf. de Montzey, Father Eudes, p. 185; Joly, Life of St. John Eudes, p. 150.

152 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

length, and contact this ecclesiastic. If His Lordship consented to accompany him on the trip, that would be satisfactory. At any rate, I am asking you, my dearest Mother, to have on hand the money that he will need, in case he agrees to go, and to have good legible copies made, as soon as possible, of Bishop Mole's letters, the last judgment of verification, and your Constitutions. This last, however, is not so pressing.

Most cordial regards to all our Sisters. I remain in all sincerity, my very dear and good Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 96

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *On her spiritual anxieties, and on sending a representative to Rome for the purpose of soliciting approbation for the Order.*

September 21, 1660 J. M. J.

My very dear and good Mother:  
May the divine will be our guide in all things.

If I were to speak according to the senses, I should indeed pity you for your sufferings, but speaking according to the spirit, I find you more worthy of envy than of pity. The greatest happiness that can befall you is to be in conformity with Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is our most adorable Master. Now, your present state of privation, death and annihilation is highly conformable to that endured by our most amiable Saviour here on earth. Therefore give yourself to Him, my dearest Mother, that you may suffer with Him in that condition and in His spirit, as He desires. Try to do these three things: 1. Strive not to become disheartened, guarding well against it. Surrender yourself to virtue and to divine strength, that they may sustain YOU. 2. Accept this state of death and annihilation, saying with the Son of God: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (1). Abandon yourself completely  
(2). Luke 23, 46.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

153 -

to the most holy will of God, repeating with Our Lord: «Not my will, but Thine be done.» (2)

I come now to your undertaking, my dearest Mother. A short time ago I saw several persons who recently had been in Rome on business of the same nature as yours, and they assured me that it will never receive attention unless you send a man expressly to advance it, for the same reasons that I have already mentioned and written to you so often.

Remember, too, that His Lordship of Le Puy (3) said this same thing to me on the subject, and that what you wrote me about Mother de Maupeou should not cause you the slightest hesitation, because I am quite sure that after I have explained things to her, she will agree with me.

I have also been informed by various persons who were recently in Rome what the approximate cost will be. They all tell me that a moderate expenditure will come to at least two hundred livres for the journey there and that much again for the return trip. While there, one cannot get along on less than four hundred livres a year; however, it will not take that long. In brief, while it is impossible to determine exactly what the entire cost will be, I think YOU Can manage on about six hundred livres. That sum, of course, is nothing in a matter of such great consequence. Have no regard for money, my dearest Mother, in this urgent necessity, lest Our Lord tell you some day what he told to St. Teresa on an occasion when she was having difficulty in deciding something regarding the establishment of one of her houses; she was hesitating because it would cost a great deal, whereupon the Son of God said to her: "Thou art therefore still mindful of money!"

The person who has made you an offer to go to Rome to transact your business for a hundred crowns is either joking or else he is planning to go there anyway and would like to make the trip at your expense. But has he all the qualifications necessary to handle this affair? If so, do as you please about it. But remember, my dearest Mother, what I have written you concerning the person (4) here who offers to go

(1). Luke 22, 42.

(2). Bishop Henry du Tour de Maupas. See Letter 95, note 2.

(3). Father Boniface. See Letter 95, note 4.

154 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

through pure and disinterested charity, and who is a very good man, learned, intelligent, courteous, with a knowledge of the Italian language and a number of friends and acquaintances in Rome.

Finally, the time to leave on this trip is drawing near. Let me know your final decision as soon

as possible, and in God's name have faith in one who loves the house of the Blessed Virgin as I do, and who speaks to you in all truth and sincerity. It is he who remains with all his heart, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

#### LETTER 97

**To Sister Mary of the Assumption Eustace de Taillefer.***(1) On conformity.  
to the will of God.*

(Paris, September-October 1660)

J. M. J.

A thousand thanks to you, my dearest daughter, and to all our dearest Sisters as well, for your charitable regards and sincere cordialities. I assure you that I am not forgetting you in God's presence, and that I bring you daily, each and every one of you, to the holy altar.

If I followed my own inclinations, I can assure you that I should prefer to be at Caen where I could speak to you sometimes about the incomparable goodness of our most bountiful and adorable Saviour, rather than be here to walk about the streets of Paris. But God keep us ever from doing our own will, and grant us the grace to acknowledge that we have no interest in this world save that of accomplishing His holy will, everywhere and in all things, "with a great heart and a willing mind!"<sup>(2)</sup> Ah, what a joy it is to know that this is our sole concern, and that all the powers of earth and hell cannot prevent us for a single moment, with the grace of God, from performing this one

(1). See Letter 16, now x.

(2). Mac. 1, 3

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

155 -

duty if we wish to do so; indeed, the more they strive to hinder us, the more they help us to accomplish it.

With all the love in my heart, or rather in the sacred love of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, I send greetings to our dearest Sisters, one and all, and particularly to our dear good Mother,<sup>(3)</sup> on whose word I rely completely.

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.  
(3). Mother Margaret Frances Patin, the Superior.

#### LETTER 98

**To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Coutances Seminary.***On the  
course to follow regarding the seminary at Valognes, (1) which was sus-  
pected of being tainted with Jansenism.*

(Paris, September 25, 1660)

I learned that a young man who had been sent by his father to our house in Coutances to determine his vocation, wishing to go to Valognes to study theology there, wrote his father that a close friendship exists between the latter seminary and the one at Coutances, and that you assured him there was absolutely no danger. This greatly surprised the father, in view of what is being said about the Valognes seminary.

If that was your counsel, it was given with good intent and because you do not know how that seminary is reputed to be a hotbed of Jansenism an opinion which is current here, and held by the Queen, (2) the Sorbonne and many others. What you said is capable, therefore, of doing us great harm and causing us to be considered something we are not, thank God.

I implore you, then, my dear brother, to make amends for this as best you can without telling anyone at all that I wrote you.

(1). Valognes is a town in the district of Cherbourg in Normandy. It was more important in the Saint's time than it is today.

(2). Anne of Austria. See Letter 50, note 1.

156 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 99

**To Father John Dupont. *On the Hermitage (1) at Caen.***

November 27, 1660

You did exceedingly well not to receive them (2) in your house; for our benefactors (3) have secretly put a pamphlet in circulation here which maliciously states that I was the spiritual director of the Hermitage, and others are saying that those who committed these follies in the streets of Caen and elsewhere were from our ranks . . . The source of such impostures is vanity, which, once it has taken root in the mind, can seldom be banished and then only with great difficulty. That is what a holy person (4) told Mr. de Bernières (5) several times—that as many souls as he started on the path of passive prayer (6) (for that is in God's province), he was starting on the road to hell.

(1). This reference is to several members of the Hermitage at Caen who had asked to enter the Coutances seminary. We know that Mr. de Bernières had grouped around him, at the Hermitage, some laymen and ecclesiastics who lived under his guidance in the practice of piety and good works. After his death (May 3, 1659), some of them indulged in demonstrations in the streets of Caen, and later in those of Argentan and Falaise, which met with diverse judgments. Cf. Boulay, *Vie du V- P.. Eudes*, Vol. 3, Ch. 20. Four who had taken part in the Caen demonstrations were condemned by the criminal prosecutor to pay a fine and suffer banishment from the city of Caen. Two of them, Dennis Roberge, valet to Mr. de Bernières, and John Dudouyt, went to join Bishop de Laval in Canada. Another, James Dudouyt, John's brother, entered the Congregation of Eudists, where he was known under the name of Jourdan. He died in the odor of sanctity at the seminary in Rennes. The Abbé Tresvaux has included quite a detailed account of him in Volume V of his edition of the *Vies des saints de Bretagne*, by Dom Lobineau. Cf. Costil, *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*; Souriau, *Le Mysticisme en Normandie au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Ch. V11 and V111.

(2). The persons who lived at the Hermitage.

(3). His enemies.

(4). Mary des Vallées. See Letter 17, note 3.

(5). See Letter 15, note 12.

(6) See "Introduction," p. xxvii.

## LETTER 100

**To the Priests of His Congregation.** *On his enforced stay in Paris.*

(1660)

I can assure you that I should be extremely weary of Paris, if I followed my natural inclinations, and should have left it a long time ago. But it is the divine will that keeps me here, and I have neither hands nor feet to protect myself against it. On the contrary, I allow myself to be bound to its most sweet hands, and its chains are so delightful to me that my captivity constitutes all my happiness and paradise. O my dear brother, how happy is the soul which is disengaged from everything and adheres only to the most lovable will of its God!

## LETTER 101

**To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Seminary at Coutances.** *On the practice of obedience.*

(1660)

Father Bernard (1) will soon make a trip to Coutances, but to my great regret it will be a short visit, so that he may return to Lisieux, because at present I have no one to replace him. It is a splendid opportunity for you to practice obedience ...

These past few days I have been seeing the Mother Superior (2) of the Visitation nuns in Caen, who came recently from Toulouse, that is to say, from a distance of two hundred fifty leagues. She told me that her chief incentive for willingly accepting this cross and all the worries and discomforts of such a long trip was the thought that such a wonderful opportunity for practising obedience might perhaps never again present

(1). See Letter 69, note 1.

(2). Mother Renée Faber, a professed nun of the Visitation Monastery at Annecy. *Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, 1. 4, n. 25.

158 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

itself. Ah! how her example will fill many ecclesiastics with confusion on the day of judgment, since they should possess all the virtues in a higher degree than nuns]

## LETTER 102

**To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Coutances Seminary.** *On complaints he had received from him.*

(About 1660)

You have no reason to complain (1) my dear brother, or to say that you are being nourished with gall. Those words are very bitter to the heart of one who tries in all things to keep the gall for himself and give the honey to others.



(1). Among other things, Father Dupont sometimes complained quite vigorously about the subjects St. John Eudes would send him, to such an extent that one day the Saint replied: "Henceforth I will send no one to you without first asking how you feel about him." *Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, '1.4, n. 24.

### LETTER 103-

**To the Priests of the Seminary at Caen.** *He reports what he said to the Queen Mother (1) in a sermon preached at the Benedictines of the Most Holy Sacrament in Paris, February 8, 1661, the day on which they were celebrating the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary.*

Paris, February 17, 1661

The Queen arrived toward the end of my sermon, and I told her many things with respect to the fire which burned a section of the Louvre(2). I began addressing her in this manner:

Madame, I have nothing to say to Your Majesty except to implore you most humbly, since His Divine Majesty has brought you here,

(1). Anne of Austria, who acted a regent under Mazarin.

(2). Royal palace at Paris.

### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

159-

never to forget the powerful sermon that God has preached to you and the King through the fire which destroyed part of the Louvre. You are well aware that for Christians nothing happens by chance, but that everything takes place through the providence and will of God. This fire, therefore, was the result of His mandate and it meant several things:

1. That it was strictly forbidden to work on Sundays and feast days;

2. That kings were allowed to build Louvres; but that God was ordering them to lighten the burden of their subjects, to take pity on so many widows, orphans and people overwhelmed by poverty;

3. That kings and princes were permitted to indulge in decent amusements; but to spend all their days, weeks, months, years and even a whole lifetime in doing so was not the road to paradise;

4. That Paris was full of atheists who trample God underfoot and do things to shock even the demons; and that, if their Majesties were aware of all this and refrained from using the royal authority to punish such horrible crimes, they would be held responsible for them before God and bring down His vengeance and curse upon their heads;

5. That, if temporal fire had not spared the royal house, the eternal fires would spare neither princes nor princesses, kings nor queens, unless they lived like Christians and took pity upon their subjects; and that, if this material fire had shown no respect for the portraits and likenesses of the kings which were in the palace that burned, neither would the fire of God's wrath spare the originals unless they used their authority to destroy the tyranny of the devil and sin, and to establish the kingdom of God in the souls of their subjects;

6. That my sole interest in saying these things was that of my Master and my God, as well as

that of the salvation of my King and Queen for whom I would lay down a thousand lives;

7. That it was indeed a pity that the great personages of this world were besieged by hordes of sycophants who were so poisoning and destroying them by their flatteries that they almost never heard the truth; that preachers were very culpable in the sight of God to suppress the truth unjustly, and that I should consider myself most guilty if I did not say all these things to her Majesty;

Finally, I entreated her to accept them as coming not from a man

160 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

but from God; that I was only a worthless creature and miserable sinner, but that in the place where I was standing and as a representative of God, I could say, like St. Paul and all who have the honor to preach the holy word of God: "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors." (3) I was fulfilling my duty as an ambassador of Jesus Christ in order to bring the words of the King of kings to a great queen, and that I implored her to accept them as such.

In conclusion, I entreated the nuns and the assistants, with whom the church was filled to overflowing, to address their prayers to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother to obtain from His Divine Majesty the grace for our most Christian King (4) and our Queens (5) to acknowledge so many favors and blessings which heaven had lavished on their royal persons, and to use their power to overthrow the tyranny of hell and establish the kingdom of God in the souls of their subjects.

That is what I said almost word for word. I am writing you this so that you and your friends may know the truth.

I have since learned from several persons who were with the Queen, and who left with her at that time, that she took it very well indeed, and that, when several flatterers had wanted to comment, she silenced them very conclusively.

His Lordship of Coutances, (6) who is at the Court and knows what is going on there, expressed great satisfaction to me over my sermon; and a number of other persons of quality sought me out to let me know how glad they were about it.

May God bestow His universal blessing, granting us the grace never to seek anything save to please Him, and to do and say what He asks of us.

(3). 2 Cor. 5, 20.

(4). Louis XIV (1638-1715)

(5). Anne of Austria the Queen Mother, and Mary Teresa, daughter of Philip IV of Spain, who married Louis XIV in 1660.

(6). His Lordship Claude Auvry, former bishop of Coutances.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

161 -

### LETTER 104

**To Father John Dupont, Superior of the Coutances Seminary. In answer to Father Dupont's letter claiming that God did not wish him to remain there.**

(1661) J. M. J.

*Peace to men of goodwill*, that is to say, peace to men who have made a complete renunciation of their own wills and have no other than God's, which is manifested to them through holy obedience.

O my dear brother, what a great delusion it is to maintain that one is quite certain that God does not desire something of him which obedience desires! Let us humble ourselves, my dear brother, and not misrepresent our own inclinations and feelings as the will of God when they are contrary to obedience, without which it is impossible to please His Divine Majesty, particularly in a Congregation of ecclesiastics who must serve as examples for all types of virtue.

You would be very fortunate even to die through obedience in your present employment. Let us ask Our Lord to make us participants in His divine obedience which caused His death on the Cross, and for our own part, let us strive to put our own wills to death and follow our most kind Father, if we wish to be numbered among His children. I implore Him with all my heart to grant us this grace. Nevertheless, since you constrain me to do so, I will shortly relieve you of your post at all costs, God willing.

I am, in truth, with all my heart,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

162-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 105

**To Father Thomas Hubert.**(1) *During an illness.*

(1661)

I am deeply moved by your illness. You have a quartan ague(2) in your body, and I have three in my heart: yours, that of our brother Father Jourdan and that of Brother Andre,(3) along with the tertian ague(4) of our beloved Father Blouet, and the ills of our very dear Father Le Mesle and all our other brethren.

(1). *Father Thomas Huhert* (1622-1674): Born in Bricqueville, in the diocese of Coutances, Father Hubert joined the Congregation in 1652 and was stationed at Lisieux in 1658. After the Versailles mission (1671) in which he had participated, Louis XIV requested, and obtained permission, to *keep him* at the Court to take charge of the palace chapel. He died at Versailles on March 20, 1674. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, P. 45.

(2). An intermittent fever which returns every fourth day that is, with two days' intermission between paroxysms.

(3). No information could be obtained in the present instance pertaining to Brother André.

(4). An intermittent fever which returns every other day.

### LETTER 106

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *On the measures to be taken in Rome, and on the guidance of the penitents*(1)

(Paris, summer of 1661) J. M. J.

My very dear and good Mother:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

Yesterday I forwarded to Father Boniface,(2) at his request, the affi-

(1). In the Order of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge and the Good Shepherd, name given to the group of girls and women who have led disorderly lives or who are in need of reform.

(2). See Letter 95, note 4.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

163 -

davits(3) you had sent me from the Vicars-General, together with several others from the Vicars-General of Paris. These affidavits concern the nuns of the Hotel Dieu, in Paris, who are constantly in the midst of numerous sick persons, convalescents, doctors, surgeons, apothecaries, hospital attendants and even fallen women who come there to be confined, and they also concern your own Visitation Sisters who stay at the Magdalen Asylum. Their purpose is to prove that both employments exist without giving rise to any disorder.

A long time ago I spoke about this matter to his Lordship of Bayeux, (4) telling him what was being done at Rome in that regard. He even wrote, at my request, to some of his friends there, asking them to help further our cause. I spoke to him about it again this week, and he assured me that when he is in Rome he will furnish his affidavit and have it presented by the proper persons, and that he will have recourse to all his influence and friends there in order to bring our business to a successful conclusion. He is expecting to receive his Bulls tomorrow. He will be consecrated as soon as possible, and he hopes then to be in his diocese by All Saints' Day. Hence I have written Father Boniface that, if he perceives any danger of failure, he should not continue to push the matter but rather delay it for the moment until he obtains his Lordship's help. I received some letters from him yesterday, in which he wrote that they are raising formidable objections over the danger which they believe results from having religious govern penitents; that some, nevertheless, are encouraging his hopes, and that he is working day and night to promote this affair, busying himself with it to the exclusion of everything else. He also wrote that, in order to overcome their objection, he has disclosed that the penitents are separated from the Sisters by a wall; that they have their own dormitory, refectory and chapel; that there is a door in the aforementioned wall through which two of the older Sisters, chosen by the superioress, enter the penitents' quarters and leave again in the evening; that during the

(1). Father Boniface arrived in Rome on May 17, 1661, and on the 30th he sent St. John Eudes an account of the steps he had taken. At the same time he requested several affidavits which the Saint hastened to send him. The above letter, in which he speaks of that consignment, must have been written from Paris during the summer of 1661.

(2). His Lordship Francis de Nesmond, who was appointed at the beginning of 1659, but was not consecrated until March 19, 1662. See Letter 120, note 1.

164 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

night the penitents are watched through a lattice; that there is always a lighted lamp in the center of their dormitory, before a statue of the Blessed Virgin; that those of the penitents who are recognized to be well grounded in the fear of God are put in charge of the others; that those who are capable of corrupting the others are placed under lock and key during the night; that no one is forced to enter the house, but, that only those accepted who, being moved by the grace of God, enter voluntarily to become converted and do penance.

He wrote me that he revealed all these things in order to overcome their objection, in the belief that they exist as he described them, and that I should inform you about it so that, if they are not exactly as he stated, you may put them into practice as soon as possible. For if it happens-as it will if he meets with success--that they write from Rome to the Nuncio, as is customary in such circumstances, requesting confirmation of these things, they must be found true. See to it then, my dearest Mother, if you please.

I wrote him that the penitents are not observed through a lattice, and that he should try to suppress this proposition, but that all the rest will be done. The Abbe Brisacier has contributed nothing whatsoever to our cause, and the banker<sup>(5)</sup> has served only to injure it. If a man like the one there now had been sent in the first place, the thing would have been accomplished a long time ago, and with less trouble and expense, which will be considerable now.

I have already seen our good Mother de Maupeou,<sup>(6)</sup> and I hope to see her again today.

I greet all our dear Sisters most cordially, each and every one of them. Please tell them that I recommend myself earnestly to their prayers. I remain, both to the Mother and her daughters, in the sacred love of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(5). After Father Mannoury's second trip to Rome, a banker was chosen by him to solicit approbation for Our Lady of Charity. Father Boniface conferred with him upon his arrival in Rome, without, however, being able, on the whole, to share his point of view.

(6). Mother Mary Elizabeth de Maupeou, who had been superior of the visitation Convent at Caen.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

165-

### LETTER 107

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *The Saint asks that a copy of the Rules for the Penitents be made in order to send them to Rome, and he prescribes the Articles for them.*

Paris, September to, 1661 J. M. J.

My dearest Mother:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

Enclosed is a letter from Father Boniface which I received yesterday and am forwarding to you, so that you can have the plan he requests drawn up, like the one he has made, or approximately so, and can send it to me as soon as possible.

It will not be necessary for you to send me all your Rules, but have those written out for me which concern the penitents and the manner in which they are governed, and have the following articles inserted:

1. That only those are received who, being called by God, voluntarily enter the house to do penance there.

2. That during the time they spend there, they remain perfectly cloistered.

3. That they never are received into this monastery to become nuns, but if they desire to be such, they are sent to the monasteries of converts in other cities, if they wish to go there.

4. That their dormitory, chapel and refectory are separate from those of the nuns.

5. That, if anyone proves to be incorrigible, she is made to leave.

6. That, although they live in the same monastery with the nuns, they are separated from them at least by a wall so that there may be no communication between them except by permission of the superior.

7. That there is a door in this wall, through which two nuns, by order of the superior, enter every morning to join the converts in order to be with them during the day, in a room where they are all together, that they may watch over their conduct, see that they pray, have some spiritual reading for them at appointed hours, and see that they are

166 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

working the rest of the time. In the evening, after prayers and self-examination, the converts retire to their cells and the two nuns rejoin the other religious. Then the door is locked and the key given to the Superior.

8. That those nuns who are oldest both in age and in manner are chosen to be sent during the day to remain with the penitents. The same ones are not always sent, however; sometimes one is changed, sometimes the other, for greater precaution.

9. If any one of the converts is under suspicion, she is locked in her cell at night.

10. During the night there is always a lighted lamp in the converts' dormitory, before an image of the Blessed Virgin. There is also a religious to watch them through the grills, which are arranged in such a way that the nun who is observing them cannot speak to any convert, lest she be heard by the other nuns around her.

11. No questionable outsider, whether man or woman, is permitted to speak with the converts, not even their own relatives.

All these things were set forth by Father Boniface and must be included in the Rules you are sending me, with the intent to keep them as long as possible or until they are no longer needed.

The word *converts* used in Father Boniface's letter is the name given them in that country instead of penitents or repentant women.

If Father Mannoury were with you, he would immediately put all these rules in good order and draw up the plan for you that Father Boniface requests, and he would do so properly and in conformity with your place;(1) but it would be necessary to send a man with a horse expressly to Lisieux to bring him back as soon as possible. However, I should not want him to lodge with us on account of the sickness there. I should prefer that you give him the Rules of the Penitents with this letter after he has conferred with you, my dear Mother, and seen your house, and that he go to Camilly for two days to do the task there. I am writing him to call on you for that purpose if you send

for him.

Send me at your earliest convenience the attestations of the cures and the chief personages of that city, such as you are able to procure,

(1). This phrase probably designates the division of Community quarters between the sisters and penitents.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

167 -

for his Lordship of Bayeux is still without his Bulls and is not leaving as yet for his diocese. Return Father Boniface's letter to me and address your letter to me at the Mazarin Palace in Paris. That is where I am lodging, since his Lordship of Coutances, who lives there, wanted me to have a room there and take a rest cure for an indisposition I have which is of very slight consequence.

I am with all sincerity, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

### LETTER 108

**To Madame Blouet de Camilly.** *On her husband's illness.* ( 1 )

Paris, October 18, 1661 J. M. J.

Godgrant, my dearest daughter, that on this occasion of our beloved brother's illness I may give you the same reply as that of Our Lord to St. Martha and St. Magdalen, who had told Him just what you write to me: *He whom Thou lovest is sick*(2) meaning their good brother St. Lazarus. God grant, I repeat, that I may reply to you: *This sickness is not unto death.* (3) But because these divine words would be ineffectual in my mouth, and since it is to Our Lord that you address yourself in saying to His representative, though an infinitely unworthy one: *He whom Thou lovest is sick*, I implore this most kind Saviour with all my heart, by the great goodness which prompted Him to make that reply to the sisters of Lazarus, to answer you in like manner with the words: *This sickness is not unto death.*

No matter what happens, my dear daughter, these words will always hold true of our dear patient, which is a wonderful cause for comfort, for there is no death for true children of God... *I am the*

(1). Reference is made here to James Blouet de Camilly. See Letter 15, note 1.

(2). John 11, 3.

(3). John 11, 4.

168 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

*resurrection and the life*, said the Son of God to St. Martha, *he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die for ever.* (4) Let us be comforted, my dearest daughter, by these great truths and by the recollection of what our good Saviour has said to us.

It is true, I must confess, that although these considerations do much to assuage my grief, my heart is nevertheless sorely afflicted by the knowledge that our poor dear spiritual brother, Mr. de Camilly, is in such a condition, and that you and all your loved ones, my dear daughter, are in your

*present anguish* and in danger of falling ill from this perilous sickness. I *beseech* my Jesus with all my heart to keep you safe. Not my will be done, however, but His.

I fancy that I see from your *letter* that this kind Saviour is implanting in your heart, my good daughter, the dispositions which should be there at this time, and that comforts me no little. I thank Him infinitely for it and implore Him to *preserve and* increase this spirit in you for His glory. *There is* never a time when He is so glorified in a soul as during a period of affliction, when one bears it in a Christian spirit. Let us try, *therefore*, to do so, my dearest daughter, accepting from His hand the trials He sends us and supporting them with all possible humility, resignation and love.

If you perceive that our dear brother is in any real danger, have recourse to the little book I have written entitled *Man's Contract with God* ( 5 ) You will find, about halfway through this book, several complete acts which embody the dispositions necessary for a Christian death, and at the beginning of these acts, the method of using them when assisting a sick person, that the patient may practise them without disturbing himself. I should like all who take care of the sick to have this book. It would also be well for you to consult the final pages of *Exercise in Preparation for Death*, ( 6 ) ' contained in *The Kingdom of Jesus*, at the end of the book.

Finally, my dearest daughter, I implore Our Lord Himself to be

(4). John 11, 25-26.

(5). A short work in which St. John Eudes summarizes the teaching of Sacred Scripture and of Tradition on the Sacrament of Baptism.

(6). See *The Kingdom of Jesus*, Part 7, P. 312 ff.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

169 -

your strength and guide, and to accomplish His holy will perfectly in you and all yours. I implore His most precious Mother to harbour and protect you in her motherly Heart, in whatever way is most pleasing to that divine will.

it is in the sacred love of this most kind Heart that I embrace our dear patient a thousandfold, and that I pronounce over him, you and all your loved ones these holy words: *Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria. Amen!* ( 7 )

JOHN EUDES

(7). Blessing used in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

## LETTER 109

**To Madame Blouet de Camilly.** *How to act in time of illness.*

Paris, October 25, 1661 J. M. J.

I cannot tell you too often, my dearest daughter, how distressed and grieved I am, for that is inexpressible. Certainly, I know well through experience that your griefs and sufferings are also mine.

I received your letters on Saturday, after the mail had gone Out, and that is why I could not write you until today; it added to my sorrow to have to go so long without giving you some small



comfort.(1)

O my dear daughter, how terrible is my grief and anguish that I cannot be near you now to weep with you and -help you in your present affliction. But it is the most adorable will of God which arranges it thus and does everything through infinite goodness toward us and for the best. Then let it be adored, blessed and praised through all eternity in all its decrees! Never before, my dearest daughter, have we had such a magnificent opportunity to glorify God and render ourselves pleasing to Him as on this occasion, and perhaps never again shall we have

(1). Mr. de Camilly died on October 18th. On Saturday, the 21st, the Saint learned simultaneously, through letters, of his friend's death and of Madame de Camilly's illness. Cf. Boulay, Op. Cit. VOL. 3, P. 320.

170 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

such an opportunity. Let us not allow it to pass, therefore, without making the holiest possible use of it. To that end:

1. Let us acknowledge that of ourselves we are thoroughly incapable of using it without a special grace from the goodness of God, and that we are infinitely unworthy to receive this grace; but let us ask for it, nevertheless, with confidence, and it will be given to us.

2. Let us humble ourselves beneath the almighty hand of God, acknowledging that the least of our sins deserves all the afflictions in this world, and let us accept those He sends us, and will send in the future, in honor of His divine justice and in reparation for our sins.

3. Let us adore the most holy will of God, submitting and abandoning ourselves wholly and unreservedly to whatever disposal it may please Him to make of us and what is ours.

4. Because sorrows are a gift from God far more precious and greater in this world than consolations, let us thank Him for them with all our hearts, as much as is in our power.

5. Let us offer our sorrows, griefs, sighs and tears to Our Lord Jesus and His most Holy Mother, in thanksgiving for their sorrows and griefs which were infinitely greater than ours, and for all their sighs and tears.

6. Let us embrace our crosses for love of our most amiable Crucified, Who bore such heavy sorrows for love of us.

7. Let us unite ourselves with our Holy Mother at the foot of the Cross of her beloved Son. Alas! She is completely overwhelmed with sorrows, and yet so imbued with obedience to God's holy will that, because such is the desire of that adorable will, she sacrifices to His Divine Majesty a Son Who is infinitely dear to her, Who is her Son, her Father, her Brother, her Spouse, her God, her All. Let us unite ourselves, my dear daughter, to these holy dispositions, that we may sacrifice with her and with Our Saviour the lives of all our dear ones, our own lives, and a hundred thousand worlds if we possessed them.

8. Let us offer all our griefs and afflictions to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, praying them to unite them with theirs and put them to the same use as they made of theirs, for the glory of the most holy Trinity.

9. For the same end, let us also offer them all the sorrows that have

ever been, are now and ever shall be in the universe, particularly those of persons who have not put them to good use; since all these things are ours, according to the divine Word, we should use them to glorify our heavenly Father, together with our most adorable Master, Jesus, Who employs all things for His Father's glory.

10. Let us pray to our guardian angels, all the angels and saints, and our good Sister(2) to do all the above things for us, as also the others that we ought to do, in order to give thanks to God for our debt to Him in time of trouble.

Do you not earnestly desire all these things, my dear daughter, as well as to unite yourself with those who are doing or will do them for you? Yes, beyond a doubt you do. Say, therefore, for this intention, with all your heart: *Amen, amen, fiat, fiat.*

If you are in danger of death, *here are* several things that I urge you to do, both *exteriorly and* interiorly.

Exteriorly: 1. Recall *whether you* owe anything to anyone, and have payment made for all your debts *immediately if* possible, without leaving that responsibility to others after your death. 2. If you have had any *disagreement with* anyone, become perfectly reconciled, doing whatever is necessary to that end; and even ask pardon of all your servants. 3. Give your blessing to all your children, in the name of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, entreating them to bless them in time and in eternity, and admonishing them to live in the fear of God and to love one another in charity. 4. If you can, have a donation given to the poor.

Interiorly: 1. Do not worry about making a general confession; that is not in the least necessary. But try to have general contrition, after having asked it of God. 2. Give yourself to Our Lord, in preparation for receiving Holy Viaticum, that you may receive Him in union with all the holy dispositions with which all the saints on earth received Him in their hour of death. 3. Do the same with regard to extreme unction, and do not wait to *receive it* until you no longer have the use of your sense'. 4. Have someone read you the acts contained in *Man's Contract with God through Holy Baptism*, which embody all the dispositions *necessary for* a Christian death; not all at one time, but first one, then  
(2). Mary da Vallées.

another; and likewise the last chapter of *The Kingdom of Jesus*. 5. Do not forget to try to gain the plenary indulgence for the hour of death, which is granted to those who belong to the Holy Rosary and have the medals that you have. 6. After all that, the best disposition for a Christian death is to give yourself entirely to Our Lord, that you may unite yourself with all the holy dispositions with which He, His most Holy Mother and all the saints died. Among these dispositions, there are three for which you should strive in particular: humility, trust, and abandonment to the divine will. 7. Have them entreat your good sister at the Abbey(3) and kind Mother Patin to have the exercises of the *Preparation for Death*, contained in *The Kingdom of Jesus*, said for you. 8. After you have done all that, be careful not to rely on it, but place all your reliance and trust purely in the mercy of Our Lord and in the intercession of His most Holy Mother.

In conclusion, my dear daughter, I wish to make you the finest gift within my power, and this

is it:

Yesterday and today I said holy Mass to supplicate Our Lord to grant you three things:

First, to bestow upon you, in whatever way He deems best and most pleasing to Him, all the graces and gifts He has deigned and shall deign to grant me in my lifetime, all the Masses I have said and will yet say, all my missions of the past and future, and in general, all that He has granted and shall grant me to think, say, do inwardly and outwardly, and suffer in His service.

Secondly, to bestow on you all the holy Masses, missions and all the goodworks in general which, through His grace, have been and shall ever be performed in our Congregation.

Thirdly, to grant you all the souls He has given and shall give me, in His great mercy, in all the missions I have conducted and will yet conduct, and in any other circumstances; and to grant you these three gifts in order to contribute to the accomplishment of His designs for you from all eternity, and that He may forever find as much glory in you as He desires.

And so that I may do what I can on my part to put you in possession

(3). Madame Le Haguais, sister Of Madame de Camilly and of Mr. Augustine Le Haguais, and a nun of the Abbey of the Holy Trinity in Caen.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

173 -

of these three gifts, after having adored the infinite love through which our Lord gave to His most holy Mother all that He received from His Father, and having thanked Him for it, I offered myself and am offering myself again to this divine love of Jesus for His dearest Mother, who is both His Mother and Daughter; and in union with this same love, I have given and am giving you for evermore, my dearest daughter, and irrevocably, the three aforesaid gifts, in the most perfect manner that I can confer them on you, in accordance with the most holy will of God, and that I may contribute all within my power to the perfect accomplishment of all the plans that His Divine Majesty has had for you from all eternity.

Will you not accept this gift, my dearest daughter, for this same intention? Then give thanks to Him Who is the sole source of all good, and not to him who is nothing and of himself can give rise to no good. I forgot to tell you that I prayed to the Blessed Virgin Mary, all our angels and saints, and our good Sister to implore Our Lord to ratify and confirm this gift.

I am asking three things of you, too, my dearest daughter:

1. That, if you have anything to tell me or recommend to me, you tell it to Father Dudy, and even request him to write it down in your presence, to make sure that he forgets nothing.

2. That you leave to our beloved brother, Father Blouet, your holy relics, and to me the holy rosary that you received from our Sister, (4) as also everything else that belonged to her, even her cane, and I will distribute them to whomever you wish; you can tell this also to Father Ducly. (5) Nevertheless, that you may act without any compulsion, I shall leave this entirely to your generosity. Leave me something, however, from among your devotional articles, whatever you wish.

Here is the third and principal thing I ask of you, my dearest daughter. It is that, when God has shown you mercy and this you can expect with confidence from His infinite goodness and the intercession of Our glorious Mother and our good Sister - you take our Congregation and the House of Our Lady of Charity under your special protection in heaven. To this end, dear daughter, I constitute

you to be henceforth,  
(4). Mary des Vallées.  
(5). See Letter 58, note 7

174 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

in the name of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, the solicitor and provider of all our spiritual and temporal affairs, that you may intercede and beg for us at the throne of God and with the Blessed Mother, our good Sister and all the angels and saints. Will you accept this position, my *dearest daughter*, and give yourself to the Son of God and His divine Mother in order to accomplish this carefully according to their most holy will, and to try to obtain for us now from the goodness of God these four things above all others? 1. Several good brothers and excellent workers to help us labor for the salvation of Souls. 2. The favor of building a church in Caen, in honor of the most holy Heart of our most Holy Mother. 3. A house in Paris, with a church or chapel, to celebrate therein the feast of this same Heart. 4. Success in Rome for the negotiations concerning our good sisters. In addition, as soon as you reach heaven, ask for the salvation of Mr. Le Haguais, your brother, and of your good daughter, Madame de Camilly, and all her children and yours.

I give you my daily blessing, and several times during holy Mass I entreat our good Jesus . . .

### LETTER 110

**To the Priests of his Congregation.** *On the death of Mr. Blouet, (1) Seigneur de Camilly, which occurred suddenly on October 18, 1661.*

(1661)

May the divine will be our sole consolation in our afflictions.

It does all things with such great wisdom and goodness that we have only to look upon it in all the misfortunes that befall us in order to be comforted.

I must confess, however, that this consolation does not prevent my suffering a great sorrow, according to the senses, because of the decease of our good Mr. de Camilly. We have lost a very sincere and faithful friend.

(1). Husband of Madame de Camilly and father of John James Blouet, a member of the Eudist Congregation.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

175 -

But I speak from the human viewpoint in saying that we have lost him, for, after all, who does not lose God loses nothing. Then too, we do not lose our friends when God takes them unto Himself. On the contrary, they are all the more ours, and they are more useful to us in heaven than on earth. But we must help them to reach heaven quickly, for it often happens that one is a long time in arriving there.

I entreat all our dear brethren to take care to render God what we owe Him in this hour of sorrow, by humbling ourselves under His almighty hand, adoring His divine will and submitting ourselves to it with all our hearts, thanking Him for the crosses that it pleases Him to send us, sacrificing to Him our lives and those of all our loved ones, and above all, trying to put ourselves in the state in which we should wish to be at the hour of death. To that end, let us renew our desire to

fulfil all our obligations with the utmost exactitude.

#### LETTER 111

**To Father Thomas Manchon.** *On the death of Father Richard Le Mesle,( 1 )which occurred on October 21, 1661.*

1661

I am suffering deeply from the death of our beloved Mr. de Camilly, and to an even greater degree from that of Father Le Mesle, who was one of our best members, one of the most useful to our Congregation and one most devoted to it.

(1). See Letter 14, note 1.

#### LETTER 112

**To Madame de Camilly.** *To comfort her on the death of her husband.*

Paris, November 1, 1661 J. M. J.

I give infinite thanks to Our Lord Jesus and His most precious Mother for your improved health, my very dear and good daughter; it

176-

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

affords me great consolation. Yes, my dearest and peerless daughter, I shall write you often, I assure you, and gladly; for your letters always console me, and I find comfort in writing you, too.

But what shall I say to you, my good daughter, to console you in your sorrow, the most grievous you have ever had and perhaps ever will have?

This is what I have to tell you, which is what I also tell myself. Is it not the most adorable will of God that regulates and ordains everything that happens here below? Yes, beyond a doubt. Is not this adorable Queen infinitely wise, powerful and good, in order to know, be able and desire to direct all that happens to us, even to the smallest things and most trifling circumstances, in the way most advantageous for the glory of God and our own good? Yes, certainly. That being the case, it is then an infallible conclusion that what has happened to you is for the greatest glory of God and to our advantage.

Well then, shall we grieve over an event by which God is glorified, which He has ordained out of infinite goodness toward you? Let us be comforted, therefore, my incomparable daughter, and let us not give way any longer to grief. Let us find consolation in our knowledge that our dearest spiritual brother, Mr. de Camilly, is now numbered among those who will see the face of the heavenly Father and will love and bless Him for all eternity.

Let us also rejoice, my dear good daughter, because this life is short and because soon, through divine mercy, we shall see this beloved brother and with him render eternal praise to God for all the favors He has granted us in His goodness. Let us obey the voice of the Holy Spirit which tells us: *Weep but a little for the dead*, (1) seeing that he is at rest. He is speaking of him who has lived in the fear of God, such as our own dear departed; for, in referring to the wicked, He says: *The mourning ... for a fool and an ungodly man is all the days of their life.* (2) Alas, yes, one must weep eternally, and tears

of blood, for those who have not lived as Christians; but with regard to him who lived and died in the way of Christ, we should do what God says: Weep but a little.

(1). Ecclus. 22, 11.

(2). Ecclus. 22, 13.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

177 -

I implore you, therefore, my dear good daughter, to moderate your tears and restrain your laments.

Let infidels and heretics, let the relatives and friends of bad Catholics, weep without consolation and unceasingly for the death of their departed ones; but we have no death to lament. Our beloved spiritual brother is not dead and will never die, but for all eternity he will live the life of the children of God, a life free from all evil and replete with every kind of blessing. In God's name, my incomparable daughter, do not give way to sadness any longer. Of what use would it be except to scandalize your neighbor and cause you some troublesome illness from which you might never recover?

It has pleased God to deprive you of your dear husband; yet you are not a widow, because Our Lord is your Spouse, for a long time ago he gave you the grace to be chosen by Him as His spouse. (3) Is He not worth more, this most amiable Jesus, than all the men in the universe? Well then, my good daughter, look upon this divine Saviour as your most lovable Spouse; thank Him for the infinite favor He bestowed upon you in granting you a place in the ranks of His spouses; give Him your whole heart and affection; strive earnestly to disengage yourself completely from this earth and all its creatures; and let your sole concern be henceforth to labor to make yourself pleasing to this divine Spouse, and so to prepare yourself for a good and holy death which wings its way toward us.

Since Jesus is your Spouse, my dear daughter, the Mother of Jesus is your mother; therefore cast yourself at her feet to greet and honor her as such, to offer yourself to her, to protest to her that you wish to serve, love and follow her as your most bountiful Mother; and entreat her to protect, bless and guide you as her daughter. Say to her, for these intentions, with all your heart: *Monstra te esse Matrem* ... three times, and *Sub tuum* ...

The best things you can do for our dear departed one are to say the holy rosary, offer to God your Holy Communion and the Masses that You hear for him, and above all, have as many Masses said as possible.

(3). After having given birth to four children, three boys and a girl, Madame de Camilly made a vow of perpetual chastity, under the guidance of St. John Eudes and with her husband's consent, and signed the agreement with her blood. Hérembourg, 1, Ch. 13.

178 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

All mine will be for him and for our dear brother, Father Le Mesle, whenever I can do so. They will share them between them.

Cordial greetings to all the family.

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 113

To Madame de Camilly. *On the same subject.*

Paris, November 8, 1661 J. M. J.

What are you doing, my poor dear afflicted child? What are you doing? In what condition are you at this moment? Are you not making any attempt to moderate your grief? Write me a little about your feelings, my dear good daughter. It seems to me that I have not received a letter from you for a long time. I think of you constantly, my incomparable daughter, and your sorrows are always in my heart.

But if we are not masters of our senses in such bitter anguish, let us try, my beloved daughter, frequently to raise our minds to the heavenly Father, saying to Him these holy words which His Son Jesus, our most adorable Master, addressed to Him in the most poignant and overwhelming grief that ever was or will be, that we may acquire the spirit of obedience, resignation and love with which this divine Saviour uttered them: "Father, not my will, but thine be done." (1) Let us repeat those sacred words over and over again, and these, too, which also emanated from the all-loving Heart and adorable lips of this same Jesus: "Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight." (2) Yes, my most kind Father, Thou Who dost all things with infinite wisdom and goodness, I wish all that Thou dost wish, and because such is Thy desire. It is Thou Who didst give me this dear husband, it is Thou Who hast deprived me of him; blessed be Thy name! I sacrifice

(1). Luke, 22, 42.

(2). Matt 11, 26.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

179 -

him to Thee to the fullest extent of my will, despite all the feelings and reluctance of human nature, and I wish to repeat what one of Thy handmaids once said on a like occasion: that, because it hath pleased Thee to take him unto Thyself, if it needed but a single hair of my head to restore him to life, I would not give it, with the help of Thy grace. No, my God, for nothing in the world would I wish to do the slightest thing contrary to Thy most adorable will.

O my Jesus, Who hast sacrificed for me, with an infinite love, a life of which one moment was worth more than all the lives of men and angels, I give myself to that incomprehensible love with which Thou didst make this great sacrifice, and in union with this same love, I sacrifice to Thee with all my heart, not only the life of this dear husband whom Thou didst give me, but also my own life and those of all my children, my father, brother, and all my loved ones. And if I possessed all the lives of angels and men, with the help of Thy holy grace, my Saviour, I should want to sacrifice them all to Thee in thanksgiving for the sacrifice Thou didst make of Thine, through such a frightful death, for the glory of Thy Father and the salvation of all mankind.

O Mother of Jesus, I honor thee at the foot of the Cross of thy Son, doing in union with Him what He is doing, that is to say, offering and sacrificing Him to His Father, even as He offers and sacrifices Himself. I give myself to Him and to thee, that I may unite myself with the holy dispositions with which thou didst make this sacrifice; and in union with these same dispositions, I wish to immolate for my God, with my Jesus and thee, all that is most precious to me, all that I am, all my capabilities, and a hundred worlds if I possessed them. Compensate for my shortcomings, O my gracious Mother, and do for me in thine own way, that is, most perfectly, what I can do but very imperfectly. I give thee my heart and my will for that purpose, and I consent most willingly to

whatever thou mayest do in my name.

O all ye angels and saints of Jesus, help me, I implore, to make this sacrifice.

That, my beloved daughter, is what I urge you to say and do as best you can, every day from now on; and then make a firm resolution to live henceforth like a true spouse of Jesus, giving Him without reservation your heart, all your affection, your time, and whatever is left of

180 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

your life, of which but little remains. These are the principal fruits that He wishes you to gather from your grief, and He desires you to belong wholly to Him. I beseech Him to exert His all-powerful goodness to take complete possession of you.

I am, in the sacred love of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my beloved daughter,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 114

**To the Community of Our Lady of Charity.** *On the observance of the Rules, and the practice of certain virtues.*

Paris, December 3, 1661 J. M. J.

My dearest Sisters:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

I give infinite thanks to our most bountiful Jesus and his most Holy Mother for the great blessings they are showering upon your Community. I supplicate them to increase the blessings more and more, and to grant you the grace to make the holy use of them that Jesus and Mary ask of you. To this end I beseech you, my dearest Sisters, to be very faithful and exacting in the observance of your Rules and Constitutions, and in the practice of all the holy virtues, especially humility, obedience, mutual charity, zeal for the salvation of souls, submission to the most holy will of God, pure love for Jesus and a special devotion to His Blessed Mother. That is what your good Mother teaches you daily by her words and example; it is what I have always preached to you, my *dearest Sisters*, and will preach to you all my life, for our sole occupation in this world is to strive to please God, and that is the only way to do so. Lastly, I thank you, my dearest Sisters, for your charitable regards; please continue to send them, and rest assured that I never forget you at the holy altar, for, in truth, you are dearer to me in the presence of God than I can tell you.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

181 -

If I did not consider the most adorable will of God, I should be very weary of Paris, but it is His will that is keeping me here on necessary business, yours being the most important; if I had no other concern, that alone would detain me. Pray to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother for me, my dearest Sisters, that they may grant me the grace to do, *everywhere and* in all things, and at no matter what cost, whatever is most pleasing to them, for I assure you that that is my sole desire. I implore them to dispose of all of you, both the Mother and her daughters, according to their Heart. In this most Sacred Heart I am and will ever be, my dearest Sisters,



Devotedly yours, JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

**LETTER 115**

**To a Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. On the death of  
Father Peter Jourdan, (1)which occurred on December 27, 1661.**

[December 1661]

May the divine will be our guide in all things, and our sole comfort in all our afflictions.

Here is one which is very painful to me and has caused me unwonted sorrow: it is the death of our most kind and lovable brother, Father Jourdan. But it is only just, my dear brother, that God be the master and that His most adorable will prevail over ours. If I indulged my feelings, I should cry aloud with grief and tears: "Doth bitter death separate in this manner?" (2) But when I consider the most holy, wise and bountiful will of God, I cry out from the depths of my heart: "*Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight.*"(3)

(1). Father Jourdan (1608-1661), priest of the diocese of Coutances in Normandy, was one of the first five companions of St. John Eudes. For eighteen years he labored in the Caen Seminary and on the missions. St. John Eudes had great confidence in his wisdom and prudence as a spiritual director and entrusted to his guidance the soul of Madame de Budos, abbess of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity at Caen. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congregation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, P. 13

(2). I Kings 15, 32

(3). Matt 11, 26.

182-

**LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

**LETTER 116**

***Permission Granted to Father Peter de Sesseval (1)for the Foreign Missions.***

[1661]

From John Eudes, missionary priest, the superior of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, greetings to whom it may concern:

According to information given us by our beloved brother, Peter Sesseval, a missionary priest of our Congregation, an almost countless number of souls are being lost in the kingdom of China and neighboring countries because of a shortage of evangelical laborers to help snatch them from perdition and place them on the road to salvation. He has, in consequence thereof, conceived a very ardent desire to join several other ecclesiastics who are about to set out for these regions, but, because he wishes to do nothing without the perfection of perfect obedience to the superiors whom God has placed over him, he has entreated us to look with favor upon this project and to give it our approval and consent.

After having carefully recommended the matter to God and contacted some of the heads of our Congregation, and being desirous of cooperating in such a holy work for which, with the help of divine grace, we should willingly sacrifice a hundred thousand lives if we had as many, we did and do now consent most willingly by these presents that the aforesaid Peter Sesseval carry out his pious and praiseworthy desire, in our knowledge of his piety, prudence, ability, and other virtues and good qualities which God has given him.

Yes, my dearest brother, with all our hearts we approve of your holy undertaking for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Go then in the name of the Blessed Trinity, to make It known and adored in places where It is neither known nor adored.

(1). Father Peter de Sasseval (1632-1663) was stationed at the Rouen Seminary when he was requested by His Lordship Francis de la Palue, Bishop of Heliopolis, to labor in the mission fields of China. Despite the shortage of priests in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, St. John Eudes granted permission to Father de Sasseval to accompany the Bishop of Heliopolis. Father de Sasseval died on December 8, 1663 before reaching his destination. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

183 -

Go in the name of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, to bring to souls the fruits of His precious blood which He shed for them.

Go under the protection and in the safe-keeping of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to imbue those hearts with the respect and veneration due her, and under the guidance of blessed St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, your guardian angel, and the holy apostles of the places where you are going, to work with them for the salvation of lost and abandoned souls.

Go in the name and on behalf of our little Congregation, to accomplish in China and the other places where Providence directs you what we should like to do throughout the whole world, even to the shedding of our last drop of blood: destroy Satan's tyranny there and establish the kingdom of God.

But remember that, because this work is entirely an apostolic mission, you must have a very pure intention of seeking therein only the glory of God, and a most profound humility and mistrust of self, boundless confidence in His infinite goodness, complete submission to His most adorable will and that of the prelates placed over you in His stead, unconquerable patience in your labors, an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, and a most sincere charity toward other ecclesiastics, particularly the religious of the holy Society of Jesus, with whom we importune you always to live in perfect union and understanding. Meditate frequently on these virtues, earnestly ask God for them, and try to practise them faithfully. May God in His goodness deign to grant you them in their perfection, together with all the other graces necessary and expedient to accomplish perfectly His most holy will, and to conduct yourself everywhere both as a true missionary of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, and as a true child of their most amiable Heart.

May Jesus and Mary grant you their holy blessing for that purpose. May it remain always with you and precede, accompany and follow you everywhere and in all things.

With this wish do we pronounce over you, in the name of Jesus and Mary, and in the sacred love of their most charitable Heart, these precious words of Holy Mother Church: *Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria.*

184 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 117

To Madame Blouet de Camilly. On various subjects. Contemplated

*establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in Paris.*

Paris, January 3, 1662 J. M. J.

My very dear and good daughter:

May the divine will be our guide in all things, and our sole comfort in all our afflictions.

This is a sorrow which is most painful to me and causes me extraordinary sorrow; (1) but I adore, bless and love with all my heart the most adorable and amiable will of my God, which should be infinitely dearer and more precious to us than all the lives of men and angels, if they were ours.

The condition of our dear brother, Father Blouet, is still another grief which weighs heavily upon me. I urge him to do all he can to improve his health; but, my dear daughter, be careful, too, not to physic him too much for fear of injuring his stomach, which is somewhat delicate.

When I see Mr. La Huguais, (2) I will not fail to tell him what you want, though I do not think that is necessary, because I believe he is not giving it the least thought, unless he has changed his mind since I saw him about two or three weeks ago. I do not often see him, since it is quite a distance from here to his house, with the days being extremely short now and the roads bad. But please do not think, my dear good daughter, that I tell him everything you write me. No, I can assure you that I tell him nothing except the things you want me to tell him, or those you have already told him yourself in your letters. Know once and for all, dearest daughter, that your interests mean more to me, and always will, than those of anyone else whomsoever.

Excuse me, my good daughter; I do think about returning, and every

(1). Allusion to the death of Father Jourdan. See Letter 115.

(2). See Letter 61, note z.

**LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

185-

day I importune God to take me away from this place which wearies me exceedingly, but I am here on very important business for the general good of our Congregation. It concerns not only an establishment in Paris, (3) but something else of even greater importance which will, however, soon be concluded. I hope that Lent will not find me still in Paris.

My most humble and affectionate greetings to the family in general and each member individually, particularly to Mr. de Camilly, (4) whom I thank with all my heart for his kind and beautiful letter. To him and all the others I wish every manner of blessings for the New Year and all the years to follow, and afterwards the blessed eternal years.

I am, in the sacred love of the most holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my very dear and good daughter,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(3). An establishment at Mont Valérien Was being considered at that time, but this project did not materialize. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., VOL 3, P. 376.

(4). Reference is made here to Mr. Augustine de Camilly, her third son.

## LETTER 118

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *On her negotiations in Rome.*

[Beginning of 1662) J. M. J.

My dearest Mother:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

I received a letter this week from Father Boniface, who writes me that your cause is constantly gaining favor, thank God, and that this is the time to redouble your prayers, for the affair, he says, is now coming to a head.

He also writes that he has been informed that the rate of exchange, that is to say, what must be paid to bring money into Rome, will soon be increased by five per cent; thus, instead of ten francs per hundred, the fee will amount to fifteen. This is because of the large sums of money

186 -

### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

it will be necessary to take out of Paris when the Ambassador and Cardinal de Retz,<sup>(1)</sup> who will soon leave here for Rome, arrive there. Hence he will soon be out of funds, since he now has but about a hundred crowns. His expenses come to about ten crowns a month, and his room costs three crowns, not counting laundry, fuel and candles. Upon his arrival in Rome he had to spend more than a hundred crowns on clothing and linen, for he left here with badly worn garments, fearing that he might be robbed along the way. He said that wearing apparel is very expensive in Rome and of poor quality, making it necessary for him to buy serge garments for the winter, but that he still needs a summer-weight cassock and cloak, which will cost twenty crowns. It is impossible for him, he writes, as active as he is, to keep himself in clothing on less than sixty or eighty crowns a year. He says, too, that it will cost him a great deal to have several papers copied, and much more besides for presents that he is obliged to give to various persons, for one gets nowhere in that country without them. Lastly, he writes that I shall be amazed when he shows me his accounts.

That is what his letter says, and he is a very sincere and truthful man, who would spend no money except on necessities. We are very fortunate to have found someone so generous with his time and efforts, which are considerable, for he is working very hard in your interests, sparing no trouble or endeavor, and he is doing nothing else except that. Therefore I am asking you, my dearest Mother, to give the order that money be provided to send him.

I wrote you that I sent him five hundred livres in September, and that it cost me fifty livres more to have them delivered. Since I had the money then, and he had written me that he needed it, I did not wish to importune you at that time. If I had more, I should send it to him as gladly as I did the other time, confident that you would repay me, but I have none. Please get some, therefore, and send it to me as soon as possible, for the rate of exchange will soon be higher; then too, I shall be here only a short time. Without it, my dearest Mother, your business would come to a standstill, and Father Boniface would have to abandon it at that point. After so much effort and expense, we must not leave it in mid-air. One should not complain about money where

(1). Paul de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris from 1654 to 1662.

the affairs of God are concerned. If you have none, you should borrow it or take it out of your revenues. Do not send less than four or five hundred livres; it will cost far more for the Bulls, and you shall receive an account of everything. Do this as soon as possible, my dearest Mother, if you please.

My most cordial greetings to all our dear Sisters. I remain most sincerely, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. Here is a Collect for the Office and Mass of your Blessed Father(2) which Mother de Monçon sent me for you to keep. It was composed by our Holy Father the Pope(3).

(2). St. Francis de Sales, beatified by Pope Alexander VII on December 28, 1661. In the decree of beatification the Pope observes that he celebrated the Mass of the new Blessed with a Collect which served also for the Office. The rest of the Mass and Office was taken from the Common of a Confessor Bishop.

(3). Alexander VII (1655-1667)

### LETTER 119

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *The Saint urges her to supply Father Boniface with the money needed in working to obtain the probation of the Order from Rome.*

[Beginning of 1662] J. M. J.

My dearest Mother:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

If I yielded to purely human sentiments, your illness would move me deeply, but, aside from hoping that Our Lord will restore your health, I am obliged by the sight of His most adorable will to say but one thing: "Yea, Father: for so bath it seemed good in thy sight." (1)

I beseech you, my dearest Mother, to take a little better care of your  
(1). Mart. 11, 26.

health, and to accept the doctor's judgment in all things that can contribute to your recovery.

But on what account, my dear Mother, do you write me what you have done concerning your undertaking? Do you wish to abandon it, now that it is so far advanced and progressing so well? Do you think that anything can be accomplished in Rome without money, or that Father Boniface can live there and support himself without it? Is it not enough that he is giving you his time and efforts? I have assured you, and do assure you again, that he is a most virtuous ecclesiastic, a very good man, who undertook this business solely because of his zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of Souls,

and purely through charity, since he has a means of support without it. Do you take me for a liar and a cheat? Do you believe that he is squandering your money, or rather mine? Should you like to repay all his efforts in such coin?

But you say that your close friends are astonished that a man should be so long in Rome to transact your business, and business such as that. Would to God that these friends of yours might consent to replace Father Boniface! They would see how things are done in Rome, and how the smallest transactions consume both time and patience. Remember, my dear Mother, that if Father Boniface had pushed this matter too vigorously before he was in possession of the last affidavits that were sent him, he would have failed irreparably, because without them our cause would have been rejected a second time, after which all hope would have had to be abandoned.

Remember, too, you and your good friends, that this is one of the most difficult affairs that can be dealt with in Rome. First of all, those in Rome look upon our institute as an innovation, and consequently as one of the most important and complex things that can be discussed there. Secondly, they see that it is an Order and a Community composed of virtuous women who are to devote themselves to the direction and guidance of girls and women of low morals. This situation creates a difficulty which no one has yet been able to surmount in Rome, because it is believed there that it is impossible for virtuous women to associate with these others without real danger to their own morals. And to show you that no one has thus far been able to overcome this objection, you must know that the Sisters of Refuge at Nancy, who have

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

189-

houses also at Avignon, Dijon and Rouen, have not yet succeeded in obtaining Bulls from our Holy Father the Pope, despite all their efforts; and yet, their affair is not so difficult as ours because, in the first place, their Community is composed of penitent women who are not in any danger from their contact with the penitents, as virtuous women might be; and secondly, they have been received and approved at Avignon by the papal legate. And nevertheless, they still have not been accorded approbation from Rome, although they have a man there who has been working on it for them longer than Father Boniface has been there, and he is a very influential person who is highly esteemed in Rome. Father Boniface talked things over with him, and he writes me that this man agrees with him and has decided to await the outcome of your affair to see what course it takes and what comes of it, so that afterwards he may act accordingly in advancing the cause of the Sisters of Nancy. Thereupon I wrote to Father Boniface that I was very pleased that this gentleman had taken this resolution; for, if his business had come up for consideration before ours, it would have met either with success or failure. If the latter had happened, there would no longer have been any hope for our cause; but had it been successful, and then yours had been proposed later, you would have been obliged to join the other Sisters and adopt their Rules. You can judge from all this, therefore, that a transaction like yours is not so simple as your close friends seem to think it is.

But there is still a third thing that makes it very difficult, which is that your cause has already been once rejected.

Please tell all these things to your friends, and they will change their mind, or else they are not good friends of your house.

Tell them also, and believe it yourself, my dearest Mother, for it is true-tell them that they should not, in a matter of consequence like this, form groundless judgments that are prejudicial to the charity we owe our neighbor, lest they mortally offend God. I have already told you repeatedly, and I say it again, that Father Boniface has no interests in Rome except yours. So true is this that I

even refrained from asking him to procure indulgences for us, or anything else whatsoever, in order not to distract him in the least or make it possible for you to say that he was handling other affairs besides your own.

190 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Should he remain even a day longer in Rome after the negotiations are accomplished, rest assured that it will not be at your expense, and that he will render you a strict account of your money, together with that which I sent him for you. Do not wait for me, however, to forward more money to him. And if you fail to send him any, understand that, when he has spent the remainder of what he still has, to the exclusion of what he will need for the return trip, he will abandon your cause and leave Rome, and thus it will have come to nothing. All your efforts on behalf of the house of Our Lady of Charity will have been nullified, for without Bulls from our Holy Father the Pope it will not be possible for it to subsist, because the very first Sister who is tempted against her vocation will easily be persuaded that her vows are invalid, since her Community lacks the Pope's approval. Then she will withdraw, the whole structure will collapse, and the blame will be attributed, before God and man, to good Mother Margaret Patin, who would not furnish what was necessary to obtain the Bulls of approbation.

O my dear Mother, the saints have never spared money when it was needed for the affairs of God. You were able to procure enough to purchase the Old Bank House, for which you had a liking, although you did not actually need it. Would you stint money now for something which will be the very foundation of your Community, and without which it cannot subsist? In God's name, my dearest Mother, lay aside your mistrust and ill-founded suspicions as something unworthy of such a saint as Mother Patin, and do not listen to these good friends of whom you write me, to the extent that you do not believe a word of what is said to you by one who has more esteem and affection for you, and more zeal for the good of your house, than anyone else in the world.

It is he who remains, in the sacred love of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTERS AND SHORT WORKS

191 -

### LETTER 120

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *Renewed entreaties to persuade her to supply Father Boniface with the money he needed.* ( 1 )

[March 1662] J. M. J.

My dear good Mother:

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

I give infinite thanks to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother for your improved health. I implore them to preserve and strengthen it, and to make you entirely well and holy for their glory and the sanctification of the most cherished house of their divine charity.

Many thanks to you, too, my dearest Mother, for the consolation you afford me in writing that you have received my little niece; but I am amazed that I was not informed sooner, either by you or others, of something I had been wanting for such a long time.

In this I am comforted; but allow me to tell you, my dearest Mother, that it grieves me exceedingly to see you abandon your transaction in Rome, just when it is progressing so well. I also received a letter this week from Father Boniface to the effect that it looks very favorable indeed. You inform me that you cannot send any money, that you have no assurance that the cause will succeed. Is it possible that Mother Patin, who is so virtuous and reasonable, should make such a proposal? Do you wish to deal with Father Boniface, who has made such a long trip and is going to so much trouble for us, through mere charity, as if you were a money-agent? Do you want him to return to you what he will have spent for his necessities while in your service? If you were employing him as a valet, he would not have to do that. Is it not enough that he has promised to render you an exact account of his expenses?

You say that I wrote you that divine Providence would provide. That  
(1). This letter was written from Paris during the week preceding the consecration of His Lordship Francis de Nesmond, Bishop of Bayeux, which took place in Paris on March 19, 1662.

192 -

#### LETTERS AND SHORT WORKS

is true, but are you implying that I am obliged by these words to furnish the money needed? If I had it, I should gladly advance it for that purpose; but I have already contributed to it all that I had, besides having borrowed a considerable sum. It is quite true that I have spent more than six hundred livres in this transaction, including the money I had as well as what I borrowed. Nevertheless, if you guaranteed to repay me, I would see if I could borrow more. But you would have to send me your written assurance of this in Thursday's or Friday's mail, at the latest, for, God willing, I shall soon leave here. But I shall not be immediately in Caen, for I am stopping off a few days in Rouen and Lisieux. If you allow me to leave here without sending me any mandate in this matter, what will become of it? And what about Father Boniface, to whom I shall be obliged to write, before my departure, that you wish to send him nothing except instructions to drop the whole matter and return? And how shall we answer to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother for having thus abandoned their project—a project so vital to their service and the salvation of souls? Do not cast the blame on anyone else, my dearest Mother, for I am quite certain that the whole thing depends on you.

In God's name, my good Mother, do not economize in a thing which is the very foundation of the House of Our Lady of Charity. You have worked and suffered so much for it up to this time, and without it the house is in obvious danger of ruin. If you have no money, send me a written promise to repay it to me, and I will do everything in my power to raise it.

Most cordial *greetings* to all our dear sisters. I am with all sincerity, my dear good Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. I recommend that you and your dear daughters pray for his Lordship of Bayeux, who will be consecrated next Sunday.



## LETTER 121

**To Father John de Longeval,(1) Priest of the Seminary of Rouen.** *On the Archbishop's manifestations of his satisfaction with that seminary.*

Paris, March 10, 1662

*Wherever he goes*, the Archbishop speaks of the work accomplished by the Rouen seminary, and his enormous satisfaction in the modesty and piety so visibly reflected in the faces of those on whom he conferred Holy Orders in Pontoise.(2)

It is a source of great joy to me to witness the blessing that God is *pleased to bestow* on the labors of my dear brethren; may He be eternally blessed for it!

Oh, how pleasing is this work to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother! What happiness it affords the angels and saints! How wonderful are the benefits accruing from it to the Church! How many souls will be saved through this means! What gratitude do we owe the goodness of God for having chosen us, unworthy as we are, for such a holy task-the most necessary, worthy and fruitful of all the tasks in God's Church! Blessed are they who persevere in such a holy work and ignore the sensibilities of a corrupt nature which seeks only its own satisfaction. Blessed are they who renounce the case that self-love craves, that they may labor in imitation and for love of our divine Master, Who never enjoyed rest in this world and Whose whole happiness consisted in doing the most holy will of His Father. *Blessed are* they who labor with Him, for soon their work shall be finished and they shall enjoy eternal rest with Him. Therefore: "In doing good, let us not fail. For in due time we shall reap, not failing." (3)

(1). Father de Longeval's name is mentioned in a letter written to Father Mannoury, Superior of the Lisieux College, in 1656. (See Letter 58) Father de Longeval succeeded Father Mannoury in 1662 as Superior at Lisieux. Cf. Boulay, *Op. cit.*, VOL 4, P. 11. No other details could be found in the reference books on the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

(2). A town about 22 miles north of Versailles.

(3). Gal. 6, 9.

## LETTER 122

**To Mother Mary of the Nativity Herson.** *The Saint assures her that he willingly forgets certain past grievances.(1)*

[1662]

J. M. J.

My dearest niece and beloved daughter:

I read your letter with great joy and consolation, and with all my heart do I forgive and forget entirely all that has taken place. I ask but one thing of you, that you faithfully serve our most benign Saviour and His most beautiful Mother, and that you love them with your whole heart.

Most cordial greetings to your good Mother Superior and all my dearest daughters.  
If they wish to gratify me and make me very happy, they should welcome back the poor orphan whom they sent away.

Live Jesus and Mary.

JOHN EUDES,  
Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

(1). The grievances in question here were probably those arising from Mother Patin's refusal to furnish Father Boniface with money. In that case, this letter, which carries no date, would have been written in 1662.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

195 -

### LETTER 123

**To Father Louis Faucon,(1) known as de Sainte Marie, successor to  
Father Thomas Manchon as Superior of the Rouen Seminary. *On the  
poverty of his house.***

[1663]

Our Lord makes us poor in order to grant us the grace to be in conformity with Him, and to give us an opportunity to humble ourselves, become submissive to His most holy will and place all our trust in Him. Therefore, let us trust in Him without reservation, my dear brother, and also in our most Holy Mother. She is the one who gave us the house in Rouen; there is no likelihood of her having placed us in a house to allow us to perish there of hunger. She is too good for that, and she certainly does not lack power, since she is very powerful in heaven and on earth. Then have recourse to her; nevertheless, do not fail to do, for your own part, whatever you can.

(1). Born at Aulnay in the diocese of Bayeux in Normandy, Father Faucon (1624-1675) entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1653. He labored in the Coutances and Evreux Seminaries up to the time he was appointed superior of the Rouen Seminary, in 1663. Father Faucon died on March 16, 1675. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus, et Marie*, Vol. 1, P. 47

196 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 124

**Father John Avenel's Appointment to Lisieux.**

J. M. J.

November 14, 1663.

Our dearest brother Father Avenel(1) will live in our house in Lisieux, where he will teach the fourth or fifth class, according to the decision of the superior.

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest  
of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

(1). This letter was written the year Father John Avenel (1638-1684) entered the Congregation of Jesu and Mary. After teaching at Lisieux College he was appointed bursar of the Evreux Seminary in

1675. He died on July 3, 1684. Cf. *Fleurs*, Vol. X, P. 89.

#### **LETTER 125(1)**

**To Cardinal Grimaldi,(2) Archbishop of Aix.** *On the organization of the  
Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*

[January or February 1664] My Lord:

I cast myself at your Eminence's feet to beg your holy blessing and to thank you infinitely for the favor you did us in writing to Rome. I also beg you in all humility to continue to honor us with your goodwill and protection, since it is true that, through the grace of God, we seek only the glory of His Divine Majesty and the salvation of souls.

(1). This letter was written from Meaux, at the conclusion of the mission preached there by St. John Eudes in 1664. It began on the least of the Epiphany and closed at the end of the first week in Lent.

(2). The Cardinal (1597-1695), wrote in the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda requesting wider faculties for St. John Eudes and his missionaries. The request was not granted. Cf. Boulay, Op. cit, Vol. 3, PP. 438-448,

#### **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

197 -

To broach the main subject at once, I shall state the following facts, in compliance with your Eminence's order to me:

1. Our four houses (in Caen, Coutances, Lisieux and Rouen) are united in a single Congregation under the same rule and guidance. No detriment results from the dependence of each upon its own prelate, who exercises over it the same authority that he has over all other persons and places under his episcopal jurisdiction in that diocese.

2. The superior of each house is chosen by the superior general of the Congregation and presented to the bishop of that particular diocese for his approval and confirmation, if he finds him acceptable; if not, another must then be presented to him.

3. Everyone in the house, our own members as well as the seminarians, is under the direction of the superior of that particular house.

4. We have sufficient funds only for the support of our own members, and until God inspires our prelates with the will to do what your Eminence has done for your seminary, or provides in another way, the seminarians must pay their own room and board, which in Coutances amounts to two hundred livres; in Caen and Lisieux, where living is not so cheap, two hundred fifty livres; and in Rouen, where expenses are still higher, three hundred livres.

5. Since our houses form a Congregation which is under the guidance of one superior, its members are sent from one house to another, as in other congregations-a practice which is necessary and most useful for several reasons. They are also taken from all the houses to participate in the missions, according as they are needed, for some of them grow weary of being constantly in one place; they dislike listening always to the same preachers; some form dangerous attachments; and frequently differences of disposition make these changes imperative. It is necessary for all these reasons that the seminaries be united and under a single direction, in order to insure their subsistence and their usefulness to the Church. It was for this reason that St. Charles established the Congregation of the Oblates to which he entrusted the direction of his seminaries.

I do not have at hand the rules of our seminaries. However, these are the principal ones: Rising is at 4:30, and prayer begins at 5:00, continuing until 6:00. Then the Little Hours are recited by the whole

198 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Community, after which, three times a week, an account of the morning meditation is given. Then each one retires to his room.

From 10:00 to 11:45 a class in theology is taught.

At 11:45, the litany and examination of conscience take place, followed by dinner.

After dinner there is recreation until 1:30, and then liturgy or chant class.

At 2:00 are Vespers and Compline; from 3:00 to 4:00, theology for the ordinands.

From 4:00 to 5:00 there is a lecture on the *Manual*, given to the cures.

At 5:45 are Matins and Lauds, and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; then supper and recreation, which continues until 8:00.

At 8:00 cases of conscience are propounded for half an hour; then night prayers are said and the subject for meditation is read.

The signal for retiring is given at 9:30, and everyone goes to bed.

High Masses are sung twice a week, and Vespers on all Sundays and feast days.

A spiritual conference is given once a week, and Saturday evenings there is a meditation on the Sunday Gospel, instead of the cases of conscience.

We are bringing to a close this mission [at Meaux] on which God has showered wonderful blessings. His Lordship of Châlons, in Champagne, is asking us to give one in that city at the beginning of next October, but I do not know yet whether we shall be able to undertake it. I am returning to Caen to give a mission, after Easter, in Le Cotentin.(3).

(3). At Ravenoville in the peninsula of Lower Normandy called Le Cotentin.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

199 -

### LETTER 126

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond.(1) On the Cretteville (2) mission, in the diocese of Coutances.**

[Autumn of 1664]

We are giving a mission now in Le Cotentin, in the parish of Cretteville-en-Beauputois, where President de Franctot is spending the vacation, and God is lavishing extraordinary blessings on it. Although it has rained almost constantly during our six weeks here, and despite floods on all sides and extremely bad roads, there are nevertheless large crowds in attendance at the sermons and other

exercises of the mission. The rush to the confessionals is so great that many persons from four and five leagues distant are seen to remain three or four days at the feet of the confessors, from morning until night, without eating or drinking, and so moved to contrition that those who hear their confessions have no trouble at all in influencing them to renounce their bad habits, all the occasions of sin and every other obstacle to salvation. They say, consequently, that they have never seen a mission wherein graces from heaven were so abundant. It should encourage us to labor for the salvation of so many poor souls who perish daily. Help us, too, my dear brother, to bless Our Lord and His most Holy Mother for all the favors they are conferring on our little Congregation; they are surely very great.

(1). Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond (1634-1711), joined the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1658. He was superior of Rouen in 1666 and of Caen in 1670. Three years later he left for Rome where he tried in vain to obtain the approbation of the Congregation. St. John Eudes appointed Father de Bonnefond his vicar in 1679. He died on August 22, 1711 at the age of 78 years. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, P. 287.

(2). A village in the district of Coutances in Normandy.

200 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 127

**To One of His Spiritual Children, After an Illness. On obedience to the divine will.**

Help me to thank Our Lord and His Holy Mother for having delivered me from a severe illness-it was pleurisy- which lasted only a week. Help me also to ask them to give me to the divine will so completely that I may never use a single moment of the life it has granted me except to do everywhere and in all things what is most pleasing to it. I am most edified \*and comforted by your obedience to that adorable will. Remain firm in this holy disposition. I entreat Our Lord to strengthen and increase it in you more and more.

### LETTER 128

**To the Priests of the Rouen Seminary. To announce to them the nomination of their new superior, Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond.**

[1665]

After praying intensely that I might receive the grace to know the adorable will of God with regard to the superior whom I had to send you, I decided that there was no one better fitted than our dear confrere Father de Bonnefond. He ranks high in virtue and piety, he is very wise and prudent, he has learning, and he has served as bursar, which makes him better qualified to be superior. He is extremely reluctant to accept, but his reluctance is joined with obedience, which are two indications of his capacity for this position. For it is a maxim that whoever cannot obey is not fit to give orders. Furthermore, he has no failing to prevent him from giving good example. Finally, he knows how to get along with people. Thus he has all the qualities necessary in a superior, which are very rarely found in one person.

## LETTER 129

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, Superior of the Rouen Seminary.** *On the mission at Châlons-sur-Marne.( 1 )*

Châlons, May 22, 1665

This mission is beginning where the others end, that is to say, with great fervor. The church, a very large one, is always filled for our sermons, as on Good Friday. We are hopeful of great fruits; they are already abundantly in evidence. I have as much strength again to preach as I ever had, thank God; so far I have preached almost every day. Our two brothers, Father Blouet and Father Yon, are beginning to relieve me on the days when I give lectures to large groups of ecclesiastics and religious; for his Lordship. of Châlons(2) is seeing that all the Orders are represented there-the Augustinians, Benedictines, I]Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits.

(1). Capital of the Marne Department, thirty miles south of Rheims.

(2). Bishop Felix Vialart de Herse.

## LETTER 130

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *She had informed him of the apostolic approbation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity.*

Paris, October 11, 1665. J. M. J.

I thank you with all my heart, my dearest Mother, for the wonderful news you sent me; my joy is too great for words. Infinite thanks be for ever rendered to the most Blessed Trinity and our most amiable Jesus! Eternal thanks to His most Holy Mother, who is also ours! Immortal thanks to our honored Sister Mary des Vallées, who contributed so much to this splendid success! Immortal thanks to all the angels and

saints, particularly St. Francis de Sales! Blessing after blessing upon everyone who labored to achieve it!

Let us rejoice in Our Lord, my dearest Mother; let us rejoice, my dearest Sisters. May these favors from heaven animate us to love our most bountiful Jesus and our amiable Mother more fervently, as well as to serve them more faithfully, through the practice of sound virtues, especially humility, obedience, charity, and above and beyond all else, zeal for the salvation of lost and abandoned souls. It is in this that you can manifest still more the love you bear Him Who sacrificed Himself for their sake, as also your desire to please His most charitable Mother.

In conclusion, I am sure that you have sung our holy *Alleluia*. Ah, how I should like to sing it with you, my dearest Mother and daughters, and to bring you a sacred relic of the holy martyrs who were the companions of St. Dionysius, one that I obtained for you from Madame de Montmartre.(1) I have not forgotten you, my dearest Sisters, although you appear to have forgotten me entirely, inasmuch as I have had no word from you since I left Caen. I assure you that each day I bring you upon

my shoulders to the holy altar as my poor lambs, and in my heart as my dear daughters, that I may sacrifice you, one and all, with our adorable Host to the praise and glory of the most Holy Trinity, and do a number of other things for you which would take too long to write,

Please read this letter, my dearest Mother, to all our Sisters, and do not forget in your prayers one who is truly, in the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(1). Frances Renée de Lorraine, Abbess of the Benedictine Monastery of Montmartre. See Letter 149.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

203 -

### LETTER 131

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *The Saint recommends some pious practices with respect to the dying.*

[1666] J. M. J.

My dearest Mother:

I am very sorry to learn about the illness of our dear Sisters, especially my dear Sister Mary of the Holy Spirit; but the most adorable will of God be done everywhere and in all things. Please assure her, my dear Mother, that I am particularly mindful of her at the holy altar, where I am not forgetting any of the other sisters either.

Whenever one of our Sisters is in danger of death, it would be well to have some of the others divide among themselves the exercises in preparation for death which are contained in Part Seven of *The Kingdom of Jesus*, in order to say them for the sick person, who should be told what is being done so that she may agree to it and unite herself with the exercises in heart and in will. I beg you, my dear Mother, to tell this to all our Sisters, that they may keep it in mind.

My most cordial regards to all of them, and many thanks for their prayers for this mission, upon which God is lavishing such abundant blessings.

I am with my whole heart, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

204 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 132

**To Mr. Augustine Le Haguais.**(1) *On the mission at St. Peter's Church in Caen, and the course to follow in his adversities.*

April 1, 1666  
Sir, our dearest and beloved brother:

It is true that God in His goodness has liberally showered a great abundance of graces on our

mission, contrary to the expectations and opinions of our friends and ourselves, who would never have dared to hope for what we have witnessed. To God alone be the honor, glory and eternal praises for it, and to the Mother of grace who, after God, is its primary source. Let thanks be rendered also to her dearest Son Who has contributed greatly to it by His blessings. You have good cause, my dear brother, to rejoice over it and to help us thank divine mercy, since we share alike the good and the evil.

Yes, indeed, the good and the evil. For, if our benefits and blessings afford you joy, your troubles and persecutions grieve me, and more deeply than I can tell you. But it is a great comfort to me, my dear brother, to see the graces that God is granting you in the midst of your misfortunes. May He be eternally blessed for His Courage, rejoice, my beloved brother; all your afflictions are beautiful broad fields given you by our heavenly Father, the revenue from which will soon make you very rich, provided you try to turn your land to good profit.

To this end, three principal things are necessary: 1. to fertilize it well, 2. to irrigate it, 3. to sow it with seed. To fertilize it with humility, by humbling ourselves a great deal, according as God gives us the grace to do so; to irrigate it with the tears of deep contrition for our sins; to sow it with the divine seed of God's word, which we must implant in our hearts and meditate on frequently, particularly on the following words taken from various parts of Sacred Scripture: "But thy providence, O Father, governeth it." (2)

There you have the divine seed with which we must sow our land.

(1). Brother of Madame de Camilly. See Letter 6 1, note 1.

(2). Wis 14, 3.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

205 -

In conclusion, my dear brother, with reference to the last item in your letter, I have nothing more to say to you except that I am entirely of your opinion, as are also those of our dear flock. Nevertheless, ask Madame Talon to hurry this matter along as much as possible and bring it to a happy conclusion. Urge her also to take pity on that poor child. It is what I shall beg of her with all my heart, as well as to do me the favor of showing you with what affection and ardor I am, in truth, Sir, my dearest brother,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 133

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *On drawing up the Constitutions.*

Evreux, November 12, 1666 J. M. J.

My dearest Mother:

You will do well to put the *Directory* at the end of the *Constitutions*, and to add to these *Constitutions* the three following chapters: *i. On the Reception of Postulants; 2. On the Entrance of Novices; 3. On the Obligation of the Rules.* But in the second Article of the first chapter, I should like these words to be omitted: "They shall be detained a few days as outsiders," for it seems to me that this cannot be put into practice. Furthermore, be careful to insert these first two chapters in the



proper places in your *Constitutions*. With regard to the third, it should be placed at the end.

As for the *Ceremonial*, we shall see to it, God willing, at some future time.

A thousand thanks, my dearest Mother, to you and all our dear Sisters for your prayers for the mission, on which God is bestowing great blessings. May He be eternally blessed for them, as also His Holy Mother.

Most cordial greetings to all my dear Sisters. With my whole heart I remain, my dearest Mother,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

206 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 134

**To Mother Margaret Frances Patin.** *On various subjects.*

Evreux, January 13, 1668 J. M. J.

My dearest Mother:

Your beautiful long letter, so full of kindness, charity and friendliness, filled my heart with an altogether singular joy and comfort, and I thank you a thousand times for it, my dearest Mother. Let me assure you that my own heart is overflowing with affection and tenderness for you and all my dear daughters, and that I make it a special point to offer the Mother and her daughters daily to Our Lord, during the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and to pray for all their spiritual and corporal needs.

I return infinite thanks to our most adorable Saviour and His most amiable Mother for all the favors they have bestowed on Mr. de Bellecourt's daughter, and I beseech them to make her a worthy daughter of their most Holy Heart, Whose feast is now established in six different churches in this city.

We have come to the close of our mission, on which God lavished extraordinary blessings. I beg of you, my dearest Mother, and of all our dear sisters, to help us thank Him and His most Holy Mother for it, as well as for the new cross they have placed on my weak shoulders - the establishment of a new house, toward which we are now working.

In conclusion, my dearest Mother, his Lordship acknowledges and loves you as one of his dearest daughters, and as such he sends you his holy blessing. I shall be here another eight or ten days, after which I am obliged to go to Rouen to begin a new mission. I shall have great need of your prayers for it, my dearest Mother, and of those of all our dear sisters. I should like so much to pay you a visit first, if time allowed, but it is too short.

Adieu then, my dearest Mother. I will never forget you in my prayers; do not forget me, either. With all my heart I remain, both to you and to all my dear daughters,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 135

**To a Nun.** *On the death of Father John Doucet.*( 1 )

[1668]

It has pleased Our Lord to call unto Himself one of our clerical brothers. He was a man of great virtue, but the time in purgatory is long, especially for ecclesiastics, priests and nuns.

(1). See Letter 58, note 6.

## LETTER 136

**To His Lordship Henry de Maupas du Tour, Bishop of Evreux.**(1) *To request him to dismiss the canons of Evreux from boarding at the seminary.*

[About 1668]

I should certainly prefer peace to all the imaginable payments for room and board. We get along very well without them in our other seminaries and still manage, thank God, to perform all our duties, for divine Providence has never abandoned us. Therefore, my Lord, I beseech your Grace with all my heart, by all the kindness you have always shown your unworthy servants, that you consent to our withdrawing room and board from the canons of Evreux. We shall all be most grateful to you for this favor.

(1). A city in the department of L'Eure, about 68 miles northwest of Paris.

208 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 137

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, Superior of the Rouen Seminary.** *On the precautions to be taken against the plague.*

September 14, 1668

Every day I have been waiting to hear from you, my dearest Brother, for I am extremely worried about you and all our dear brethren, from the highest to the humblest. We are saying daily prayers and Masses for you, and I have written all our houses to do likewise in order to place you under the protection of the Blessed Virgin.

I beg of you to make a novena of Masses in honor of her maternal Heart, and another in honor of St. Charles to implore him to intercede for us with this most charitable Heart, not only to place you under its protection, but first and foremost for all those who are victims of the plague or in danger of it.

I likewise entreat all our dear brethren, on this occasion, to render to God all the honor we owe Him; and, in order to use this circumstance as He would have us do, let us also:

1. Adore His divine justice and humble ourselves for our sins, in the name of all the people.

2. Give thanks to Him for this scourge, beholding in it not only a manifestation of His justice, but even more of His mercy which chastises us that we may be reformed and saved, not lost.

3. Adore the divine will in its intents for us, and abandon ourselves wholly to its operations in order that it may do with us what is most pleasing to God. It is an incontrovertible fact that this plague was brought on by our sins. Let us all, therefore, make a careful self-examination to determine those sins which could have contributed to it, then humble ourselves and make amends for them, trying to place ourselves in the state in which we should like to be at the hour of death, for there is no time for such preparation when one is ill.

4. Adore Our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross and in the infinite love with which He bore so many sufferings for our sake, offering

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

209 -

ourselves to Him to suffer all the crosses it may please Him to send us, in thanksgiving for His.

5. Offer Him all the stricken people and implore Him to grant them the grace to use their affliction to good advantage.

6. Recommend them to her whom we call *Consolatrix afflictorum*.

7. Give ourselves to that immense love through which our most lovable Saviour took upon Himself all the sins of the world and offered Himself to His Father to atone for them, that we may immolate ourselves to divine justice as offerings for the sins of our brethren and sisters, as well as for our own sins, and that we may assist the plague stricken people, if it please Him, in union with the charity which brought Him upon earth to assist and succour the victims of the plague, that is to say, sinners.

Finally, let us pray our Holy Mother, our angels and saints to accomplish all these things for us.

## LETTER 138

**To Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre, (1)Elected Superior of  
Our Lady of Charity after the Death of Mother Margaret Frances  
Patin.(2) On the fulfillment of her duties.**

Paris, January 9, 1669 J. M. J.

My dearest daughter:

With all my heart do I give thanks to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother for having chosen you to take charge of their house. I say charge, for you will do well, my dearest daughter, not to consider it an honor or advantage, but rather a cross and very weighty burden, since superiors must answer to God for the salvation of the souls whom God has entrusted to them.

(1). Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre entered the Order of Our Lady of Charity in 1655. She was elected superior on December 22, 1664 and again in 1672. Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament died on January 26, 1678. Cf. Ory, *The Origin Of the Order of Our Lady of Charity* p. 159, 183 and 194.

(2). Mother Patin died on October 31, 1668 at the age of 68 years.

Then too, you should not look upon yourself as a superior, for the true superior is the most Holy Mother of God. You are only her vicar, or substitute, and therefore you should frequently cast yourself at her feet, particularly whenever you have to perform some action as superior. There at her feet, make an act of self-renunciation, give yourself to her and implore her to annihilate your own spirit within you and grant you hers, which is that of her Son, so that you may guide your Sisters in the spirit of their Spouse and their Mother.

To that end, there are four things you should do, my dearest daughter:

The first is to speak to your Sisters more by deed than by word, while assuming the lead in all things and endeavoring through your behavior to be a model of all the virtues.

The second is to guide them with great charity, meekness and kindness, anticipating all their spiritual and material needs, and demonstrating in all things that you have truly a motherly heart full of concern, tenderness and cordiality in their regard.

The third is to see that your Rules and Constitutions are strictly and carefully observed, and to that end you yourself should study them diligently, especially those that concern you.

The fourth is to take special care of the penitents and to overlook nothing you can do to perfect their conversion, for the house was established for that purpose; thus all the graces that God may deign to grant it depend on that. As long as the duties belonging to this institute are properly fulfilled, God will abundantly shower His blessings on your Community, but as soon as they are neglected, He will abandon you, and the whole structure, spiritual as well as material, will collapse.

I trust, God willing, that I shall soon be able to answer the rest of your letter in person. You must not be in too great a haste, for a number of reasons, to write the biography of a person who has just died.

I send my most cordial regards to all my dear daughters. I have always felt and will continue to feel toward them a truly paternal affection. I am, in truth, my dearest daughter,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

### LETTER 139

**To Bishop de la Vieuville of Rennes.(1)** *The celebration of the jubilee is not favorable to giving a mission.*

[1669] I beg of you, my Lord, to consider that the jubilee will either precede, coincide with or follow the mission.

If the jubilee precedes it, the mission will no longer be seasonable, since each one will already have gained his Jubilee indulgence.

If it coincides with the mission, it will render our work useless for two reasons: 1. With the

fruits of the mission depending on good confessors, the people will avoid the missionary confessors who are more strict, and will go to others who are less exacting, since the Jubilee Bull grants each one the privilege of choosing his own confessor. 2. Should everyone go to the missionaries, the Jubilee will not last longer than two weeks. Now in order that a mission produce some change in morals and destroy vice and bad habits, it must last at least seven or eight weeks. Even those that we preach in the smallest country parishes continue for not less than six weeks.(2) Otherwise one simply puts a plaster on the sore but does not heal it. Weeds are cut down but not uprooted. A noise is made, but there is little result.

If the jubilee follows the mission, everyone will desert our exercises in order to attend the jubilee. All that I am telling you, my Lord, I have learned from experience gained by preaching missions during other Jubilees. I am observing these very things now in a mission that we began three weeks ago in the diocese of Bayeux. So long as there was no talk of a Jubilee, it was bringing wonderful results, but ever since news of it began to spread, we have been accomplishing nothing. It is of the greatest importance to choose a suitable time to give this mission, since it is to be preached in your cathedral and will be our first effort in your diocese.

(1). A city of Brittany in the department of Ille-et-Vilaine, about 260 miles west of Paris.

(2). It is interesting to note the length of missions in the Seventeenth Century. The Saint give, his reasons why the mission should last at least a month and a half. It is probable that missions were not given so frequently then as at the present time.

212-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 140

**To the Superior at Rouen.** The Saint requests him to send Father Thomas Vaguel(1) to him.

[Before 1670]

... It is not by my authority as your superior that I am asking you to send Father Vaguel. I am requesting it of you as a brother who entreates you to lend him to us for a little while, or rather, to give him to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother. I hope you will not refuse them.

(1). Father Vaguel (1624-1674), a native of Caen, joined the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1647. After reaching at the Lisieux College, he was appointed superior of the Rouen Seminary and law of the Evreux Seminary. He was an excellent missionary and spent the last years of his life in the work of the missions. He died on March 10, 1674. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, P. 43.

### LETTER 141

**To Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre.** On the establishment at Rennes, and the zeal that ought to be manifested on such occasions.

Rennes, January 19, 1670 J. M. J.

I received the copies you sent me, my dear daughter, but the judgment of verification from the Parliament is missing. There is one, to be sure, but it is a judgment which orders only that Caen be informed of the conveniences or inconveniences of the city. We have no need of that one, but of a different one in your possession, issued after the other, which orders that your letters patent from the King be registered. Please have a copy of it made as soon as possible and send it to me without

delay, for his Lordship of Rennes wishes to see it.

I am surprised at your writing me that it is impossible to send any of our Sisters here so soon. What is the meaning of that, my dear daughter? Is it because there are none who wish to come? I cannot believe that the Daughters of Charity could have so little love for God

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

213 -

and so little charity toward souls who have been redeemed by the precious blood of His Son.

Is it because they hold some grievance against the superior here?(1) But she is all charity, meekness and kindness.

Is it because you think that you shall be asked for a dowry, or room and board, or the expenses of the trip made by those who come? But I give you my word that none of these things shall be demanded of you. One of our presidents has offered to have them brought here in her carriage.(2) If they do not like it after they arrive, they will be privileged to leave. Then too, as long as they remain, your house will be relieved of the support of two girls. It will also be strengthened by the union which will be formed with this house, and it will furnish an example for other establishments of your Order.

Lastly, I do not know the origin of this hindrance and delay, but I do know that the devil, who is enraged at the Communities which labor for the salvation of souls, will do all in his power to prevent this plan and postpone its execution, because he knows only too well that, when we have left here, it will be easy for him to create obstacles.

But why, my dear daughter, are you so reserved toward me, who have no intent other than the glory of God, the salvation of souls and the advantage of your house? Why do you not simply tell me what the trouble is, so that I may try to remedy it? You can let me know as safely in writing as by word of mouth, for letters are never lost in the mail.

Most cordial regards to all my dear daughters. I beseech them to have a very special devotion to the divine Infant Jesus and His most Holy Mother.

In the love of the most Holy Heart of the Son and the Mother I remain, both to you and to them, my dearest daughter,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

(1). Mother Mary of the Trinity Heurtaut. She had taken the habit of Our Lady of Charity at Caen and had made a fervent novitiate there. But because her parents had refused to give her a dowry, she was not allowed to make her profession and was obliged to return to the outside world.

(2). Madame d'Argouge, who founded the house.

214-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 142

**To Sister Mary of St. Agnes des Champs,(1) in Caen. On the love of Jesus and Mary, and union with the dispositions with which they died.**

Evreux, October 12, 1670

J. M. J.

I thank you with all my heart, my dearest daughter, for your letter so full of charity and friendliness, and I give infinite thanks to our most benign Saviour and His most amiable Mother for the holy dispositions which they are implanting in your soul. It is a very special grace which proceeds from their purest goodness. I implore them to strengthen and increase it more and more. And in order to cooperate on your part, try to cultivate love for the Son and His Mother. Offer yourself frequently to them, beseeching them to immerse, engulf, lose and consume you in the sacred flames of the fiery furnace of their most amiable Heart. Always unite this love with humility, as well as with trust and complete abandonment of your whole self to the divine will. Finally, my dearest daughter, give yourself repeatedly to Jesus in order to unite yourself with the holy dispositions with which He and His most Holy Mother died. I beseech them very humbly and earnestly to grant you their holy blessing all the moments of your life, particularly in the last one, to assist you during that final passing, and to receive and harbor your soul for ever in their most benign Heart. I have the greatest confidence in the incomparable goodness of this admirable Heart of Jesus, the Son of Mary, and of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, that they will grant you this grace.

(1). Father Joseph Mary Ory, author of *The origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, says very little about Sister Mary of St. Agnes. He merely mentions the fact that she had been brought up in the Caen Monastery and had been tormented with interior trials. The Saint often came to console her, and when he was unable to visit wrote encouraging letters such as the one given here. Cf. Ory, op. cit., p. 174.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

215 -

This is what I shall earnestly beg of them. In the sacred love of that divine Heart, my dearest daughter, I am

Devotedly yours,  
JOAN EUDES, missionary priest.

P. S. Most cordial greetings to all my dear daughters.

### LETTER 143

**To Mother St. Gabriel,(1) Religious of Montmartre. Concerning the Saint's zeal for missions.**

[1670]

God has given me so much strength on this mission(2) that I have preached almost every day for twelve weeks to an enormous audience in the cathedral, with as much vigor as I had at the age of thirty. That is why I have resolved to spend the rest of my life in this work. After the summer missions, we have promised to give one at Clermont,(3) in Auvergne, on All Saints' Day.

(1). A Benedictine nun of the Montmartre Monastery in Paris.

(2). The mission at Rennes.

(3). Former capital of Auvergne in the department of Puy-de Dôme, about 250 miles south of Paris.

## LETTER 144

**To Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament, Superior of Our Lady of Charity.** *On spending the new year well.*

Paris, January 14, 1671 J. M. J.

I thank you, my dearest daughter, for your charitable letter. I have too much affection for you and your Community to forget you in my prayers; that is something I am not doing, nor will I ever do so. I always

216 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

remember you and my other dear daughters at the holy altar and in all my worthless prayers. *Please assure* them of this. My greetings to them, one and all. I implore Our Lord and His most Holy Mother to lavish their most holy blessings upon you, and to grant us the grace to use this new year as if it were to be the last one of our lives in which to love our most amiable Jesus and His dearest Mother, who is also ours, and to atone in their love and service for all our shortcomings of the past.

I shall not forget the persons you have recommended to me. I pray you, too, my dear daughter, to have the Community make a novena in honor of the most Holy Heart of Our Lord and His gracious Mother, for my intentions.

In the sacred love of their most Holy Heart I remain to all, and to you in particular, my dearest daughter,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 145

**To Sister Mary of the Assumption Le Grand.**<sup>(1)</sup> *On various subjects.*

Vernon,<sup>(2)</sup> July 19, 1671 J. M. J.

I am very grateful to you, my dearest daughter, for your letter telling me of the joy our good Saviour has granted you by admitting you to the ranks of His spouses and of the daughters of the most Holy Heart of His dear Mother. I give infinite thanks to Him, imploring Him most humbly to grant you all the virtues proper to such a holy state in life.

I have waited a long time to answer your letter, but I have been so busy now for nearly a month with a mission that I am giving for a community of nuns, at the command of his Lordship of Evreux, that I really have had no leisure to write you sooner.

(1). Niece of Reverend Father Le Grand, pastor of St. Julian's Church in Caen and ecclesiastical superior of the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity. Cf. Ory, *ibid.*, p. 172

(2). A city in the district of Evreux on the Seine River.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

217 -

My most cordial greetings to all my dear daughters, from the first to the last.



When you see your uncle again, please give him my most respectful regards.

My two dear nieces know, too, that I have for them the affection both of an uncle and a father.

Do not forget in your prayers, my *dearest daughter*, one who never forgets you, and who is, in the charity of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my dearest daughter,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

#### LETTER 146

**To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson, his niece.** *On the death of her sister-in-law.*

Evreux, September 27, 1671 J. M. J.

I deeply regret the great affliction, my dearest niece, that has befallen your poor brother. We must pray earnestly that God may grant him the grace to make good use of his sorrow, and recommend his children to the Blessed Virgin Mary, supplicating her to be their mother. I wrote to him as consolingly as I could and said Mass for the deceased, as also for him and his children, which I will do again. Ah, how fortunate we are, and how advantageous is our state in life compared with the most favorable situations of our time! How much are we bound to bless, love and faithfully serve Our Lord and His most Holy Mother for having withdrawn us from the inferno of the outside world and placed us instead in the paradise of their holy house! Ah, how gladly should we embrace all the duties of our state in life!

I am leaving here Tuesday, Godwilling, to go to Lisieux, where I shall remain for two or three weeks. Then I am proceeding to Caen, and I will not fail to call on you there.

218 -

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Most cordial greetings to all my dear daughters. I am with my whole heart,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest  
of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

#### LETTER 147

**To a Religious of Montmartre.** *On submission to the will of God.*

[1671]

Tell the good Mother that she should resign herself without reservation to the most adorable will of God, neither desiring nor asking for anything save what is pleasing to Him. That is the secret of obtaining from God everything we wish, for in all things we should have no will other than His, especially since we are well aware that He desires only what is for our greatest good. Oh, how pleasing to His Divine Majesty is one soul! What wonderful peace the soul enjoys when it has wholly,

annihilated its own will and all its inclinations, and has sacrificed all its desires, interests and satisfactions to God, neither wishing nor asking for anything, at any time, except what is most pleasing to its God, professing to desire no happiness other than the happiness of its most kind Father! No matter what happens, nor in what state it is, the soul is always very happy because God is, too. One must indeed be hard to satisfy if he is not made happy by the happiness of God. This is the way, therefore, in which one obtains from God all that he requests of Him, because he asks for nothing that is not pleasing to Him. It is paradise on earth. Ask Him for this grace for me, my dearest daughter, and I will do the same for you, that you may thus be in complete conformity with the Heart of Jesus and Mary.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

219 -

### LETTER 148

**To Mother St. Gabriel.** *On the mission preached by the Saint to the religious of Our Lady of Vernon.*

September 25, 1671

I am back again at Évreux, my dearest daughter. I was away giving a mission for the nuns which lasted for quite some time, and I worked very hard. It pleased our most benign Saviour and His most kind Mother to manifest their admirable power and incomparable goodness on this occasion, and to bestow on my work the most wonderful success that could have been desired. This is all I can tell you about it in writing. I beseech you, my dear daughter, to help me give thanks to the Son and the Mother for the great favor they have conferred upon these good religious. It is one of the most palpable consolations I have ever experienced in my whole life.

### LETTER 149

**To Mother St. Gabriel.** *On the occasion of an illness of Madame de Lorraine, (1) the abbess of Montmartre.*

[1671]

Above all, keep me informed of the health of our good Mother, whom, in truth, I respect beyond all power of expression, and for whom I frequently pray to God with a very special affection. (1). Frances Renée de Lorraine, abbess of the Benedictine Monastery of Montmartre in Paris.

220 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 150

**To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson.** *On the guidance of the penitents, and the proper preparation for the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary.*

[Paris, beginning of 1672] J. M. J.

I was just on the point of going to see you and the other Sisters, my dearest niece and daughter, when our dear brother Father Hubert came expressly to Caen from Paris to take me back with him. I am there now in my desire to obey the divine will wherever it may be pleased to send me. Pray that I may be granted the grace to die rather than deviate ever so slightly from its commands.

It is that divine will which has placed you in charge of our sister penitents. It is the holiest of any employment you could undertake in this world. Apply yourself to it with all possible diligence, charity and fidelity.

My most cordial regards to them, as well as to my dear daughters. God bless them all, particularly my dearest daughter Mary of the Child Jesus, whom I desire with my whole heart to be professed.

Here are three ways in which to prepare for the feast of the Most Holy Heart of Mary: 1. Humble yourselves and ask pardon for your past sins; 2. Conceive an ardent desire to impress upon your hearts a perfect likeness of the virtues of the Holy Heart, and strive unceasingly toward that end; 3. Give yourselves to the infinite love of the divine Heart of Jesus for the Holy Heart of Mary, that He may prepare you for this feast.

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

221 -

### LETTER 151

**To Sister Mary of the Child Jesus de Bois-David,(1)** the second of that name. *On the subject of her profession.*

Caen, February A, 1672

J. M. J.

A thousand thanks, my dear good daughter, for your most cordial and sincere letter, with its many indications of your true charity in my behalf. I thank my dearest daughters, too, whose names were mentioned in your letter, for their charitable regards. If all the others shared this same spirit, they would be daughters of Our Lady of Charity in the true sense.

I feel it very keenly that I cannot attend the ceremony(2) of your profession, my dearest daughter. I will be present in spirit, however; and I intend to sacrifice you together with my Saviour in the great sacrifice which I am going to offer for you, that I may supplicate Him, as well as His most Holy Mother, to take my place at your holy profession and to render you entirely conformable to their divine Heart.

It is in this most amiable Heart that I will remain eternally to you and all my true daughters, despite hell itself,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest  
of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

(1). See Letter 65, note 1. The religious to whom this letter was written entered the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity as a boarder when her holy mother became a postulant. In obedience to her mother's last request she joined the Order and took the name in religion. That is why she is referred to as Sister Mary of the Child Jesus, the second of the name. Cf. Ory, *The Origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, P. 173.

(2). We are unable to say why the Saint did not assist at the profession. His letter shows traces of a deep-seated sorrow. Cf. Ory, *ibid.*, p. 173.

## LETTER 152

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, the superior of the Caen Seminary.** *On the registration of letters patent obtained in view of an establishment at Paris.* ( 1 )

[Spring of 1672]

We have not yet presented our letters patent to the Parliament. We are engaged in paving the way for success in this, which we hope to receive from above. Have prayers said for this affair and recommend it to God. I think we shall embark on it next week. I should like the matter to be taken to Our Lady of Deliverance. (2) "For many dogs have encompassed me;" (3) but, after God, all my trust rests in our most powerful and bountiful Mother. No matter what happens, I shall always be happy, God willing, and I shall always benefit from it, for I desire no happiness or benefit other than that of my God.

(1). In 1671 a lady by the name of Madame Pétau gave to St. John Eudes, by a deed of gift between living persons, two-thirds of a home that she owned in Paris, near St. Josse Church, as a home for the students of his Congregation. In the event that the Saint was evicted from this house, Madame Nun wanted him to be given the price required for the purchase of another house to be used for the same purpose. The execution of this contract gave rise to great difficulties. The pastor and the church wardens of St. Josse opposed it, offering to give St. John Eudes the price of the house in question. The Saint, perceiving their opposition, resolved to take advantage of the benevolence of the King, whom he had just won over during a mission preached at Versailles, to solicit letters patent which would permit him to execute this contract, as soon as the opportunity presented itself. He obtained them in March, 1672, but it still remained to have them registered in Parliament. The Saint feared new opposition from this direction, and it did not fail to materialize.

(2). The Saint asks Father de la Haye de Bonnefond to pray at the shrine of our Lady for the success of the undertaking. See Letter 37, note 2.

(3). PS. 21, 17.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

223 -

## LETTER 153

**To Sister Mary of St. Agnes des Champs.** *The Saint comforts her in her trials.*

[1672] J. M. J.

Your letter in which you describe your sufferings, my dearest daughter, touches me more deeply than I can say. Nevertheless, do not allow yourself to become discouraged, but place your trust in our most benign Saviour and in His holy and most bountiful Mother, who is also ours. They love you infinitely and can gain their greatest glory, as well as your utmost good, from all things. I beseech them, now and always, to do so, and to grant you their holy blessing at all times. To this end I repeat seven or eight times daily, for you and all my dear daughters who are known to God: *Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria*. I send my regards to one and all, recommending myself most earnestly to their fervent prayers, since I am obliged to leave for Paris as soon as possible. Live Jesus and Mary.

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 154

**To Sister of the Nativity Herson.** *On her position as Mistress of Penitents,( 1)and on the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary.*

Paris, May 26, 1672 J. M. J.

Thank you, my dear child, for the news of yourself; and infinite thanks to my dearest Jesus and my most Holy Mother for the incon-

(1). In the convents of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge and of the Good Shepherd the religious in charge of the repentant women and girls.

224 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

ceivable favor they are conferring on you by employing you in the work which is the most pleasing on earth to them, that is to say, the great work of the salvation of souls. Ah, think what it cost the Saviour to rescue our souls from eternal damnation! Then do not be astonished, my dear daughter, if you encounter trials and crosses while doing God's work; that is the best part of your task. But bear in mind the charity, patience, meekness and other virtues which our most benign Saviour practised while accomplishing His Father's work on earth.

Infinite thanks to His immense bounty, and to the incomparable graciousness of His most Holy Mother, for having at last given you the feast of her most amiable Heart! May God make a great saint of his Lordship of Bayeux for having granted you permission for it. I assure you that it is a cause of great joy to me. *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

It is up to all of you now to strive to acquire all the virtues necessary to be true daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, especially humility, patience, love, charity and zeal for the salvation of souls.

In the holy love of this divine Heart I remain, my dearest daughter,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 155

**To Sister Mary of Jesus Allain.(1)** *On the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary, and some virtues to be practised.*

[1672] J. M. J.

God bless you, my dearest child. If you have the affection of a daughter for me, I assure you that I feel the love of a father for you, with a heart full of tenderness and cordiality, as it is indeed for all my

(1). Sister Mary of Jesus Allain de Barbières was brought up by Madame de Camilly, her relative and godmother. She took the habit of the Order of Our Lady of Charity and made her profession when she was seventeen years of age. Deeply imbued with the spirit of the Order she rendered inestimable services in her offices as assistant and councillor. Cf. Ory, *ibid.*, p. 175.

true daughters, whom I cast daily into the fiery furnace of the Heart of Jesus and Mary so worthy of love.

Thank you, my dearest daughter, for the joyous news you wrote me about the permission granted you by his Lordship of Bayeux to celebrate the feast of the Holy Heart of our divine Mother. May He make a great saint of this good prelate. *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

I beseech you, my dear child, and all my other dear daughters as well, to strive to acquire all the virtues you need in order to be true daughters of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, especially humility, obedience, love, charity and zeal for the salvation of souls.

Most cordial greetings to our dearest Mother and all my dear daughters. *Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria. Amen.*

I thank our dear Mother for the little picture of the Holy Ghost that she sent me. I will take care of your indulgences; leave it all to me without troubling yourselves in the least about it.

#### LETTER 156

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Caen. *On the contemplated establishment in Paris.***

[July 9, 1672]

The Parliament has handed down a decision, but the magistrates are demanding so many things that I am singularly discouraged and almost persuaded to drop the whole matter, for I am wondering if it is God's will that we proceed any farther with it. Have prayers said for this affair.

226 -

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

#### LETTER 157(1)

**To the Priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. *On the establishment of the least of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.***

Paris, July 29, 1672.

J.M.J.

My dearest and beloved brethren:

It is an inexplicable grace which our most amiable Saviour has accorded us in giving our Congregation the admirable Heart of His most Holy Mother. But not being content, in His infinite goodness, to stop there, He has gone even further in giving us His Own Heart, along with the Heart of His glorious Mother, to be the founder and superior, the beginning and end, the heart and life, of this Congregation.

He conferred this great gift upon us at the birth of our Congregation, for, although we have heretofore celebrated one special and particular feast of the adorable Heart of Jesus, nevertheless we never intended to separate two hearts which God has so closely joined together, the most august Heart of the Son of God and that of His Blessed Mother. On the contrary, from the very beginning of our

Congregation it has been our intention to regard and honor these two Hearts as one, in unity of spirit, feeling and affection, as is clearly indicated in the Salutation to the Divine Heart of Jesus and Mary that we recite each day, as well as in the prayer and in several portions of the Office and Mass which we celebrate on the feast of the Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin.

But divine Providence, which guides all things with marvelous wisdom, has willed to introduce the feast of the Heart of the Mother before that of the Heart of her Son, in order to prepare the hearts of the faithful for the veneration of His adorable Heart, and to dispose them to obtain from heaven the grace of this second feast by the great devotion they have shown in celebrating the first. Although the latter has

(1). This circular letter is an important historical document on the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In it the Saint enjoins his spiritual sons to celebrate a solemn feast on October 20. He sent them for the occasion a special office and Mass, which he had composed two years before. Cf. *The Sacred Heart of Jesus* (New York, 1946), p. 136.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

227 -

been attacked, first of all, by the spirit of the world, which never fails to oppose whatever proceeds from the spirit of God, nevertheless, as soon as it became known to those who profess to pay special honor to the most Holy Mother of God, they looked upon it with joy and embraced it with ardor. For several years now they have celebrated it with great fervor, and today it is solemnized everywhere in France, and in several religious orders and congregations, with such abundant blessings that there is reason to hope that some day it will be celebrated throughout the universe.

It is this ardent devotion of the true children of the Heart of the Mother of love which has obliged her to obtain from her beloved Son this signal favor which He has accorded His Church, that of granting her the feast of His royal Heart which will be a fresh source of an infinity of blessings for those who are disposed to celebrate it holily.

But who indeed would not do that? What solemnity is more worthy, more holy and more excellent than this one, the fountain-head of everything great, holy and venerable in all other feasts? What heart is there more adorable, admirable and worthy of love than the Heart of this God-Man whose name is Jesus? What honor is not due this divine Heart which has ever rendered and will eternally render God more glory and love, at every moment, than all the hearts of men and angels can render Him in a whole eternity? What zeal should not be ours to honor this august Heart which is the source of our salvation, the origin of all the joys of heaven and earth, an immense furnace of love for us, which thinks of nothing, day and night, save to confer on us an infinity of blessings, which, finally, was broken with grief on the Cross for our sake, as the Son of God and His most Holy Mother declared to St. Bridget, according to an excellent doctor, Father Bail.

Should the objection be raised that the feast is an innovation, I shall reply that innovation in matters of faith is indeed pernicious, but that it is good in matters of piety. Otherwise one would have to frown upon all the feasts in the Church, since they also were new when they were first celebrated, particularly those most recently established, such as the feasts of Corpus Christi, the Holy Name of Jesus, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Name of Mary, her Grandeurs, Our Lady of Compassion, of Hope, of Victory (in the

228 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

diocese of Paris) and many others, as well as a considerable number of new saints' feasts which have been added to the Roman Breviary. If they answer that these things were done on the authority of our

Holy Father the Pope, I shall reply, as did St. Francis de Sales and a great many very illustrious and learned prelates and doctors, that each bishop in his own diocese, notably in France, has the same power in this regard as that of the Sovereign Pontiff in the entire Church.

Then let us acknowledge, my dearest brethren, the infinite grace and incomprehensible favor with which our most bountiful Saviour has honored our Congregation in giving it His own most adorable Heart, together with the most amiable Heart of His Holy Mother. They are two inestimable treasures which contain an enormity of heavenly blessings and eternal riches, and He has made our Congregation their depository, that through it they may then be implanted in the hearts of the faithful.

Let us humble ourselves infinitely at the sight of our own infinite unworthiness in the face of such tremendous considerations. Let us be deeply grateful for the ineffable bounty of our most benign Saviour and the incomparable charity of His dearest Mother, who is also ours. Let us never cease to bless, praise and glorify them, nor to invite all the saints and all creatures to bless and thank them with us. Let us joyfully and jubilantly embrace the solemnity of the divine Heart of our most amiable Jesus.

I am enclosing herewith the Office and Mass of this feast, approved by all our prelates. Use them with all possible care, diligence and fervor in order to celebrate it worthily.

To that end: 1. Invite all our friends and all devout persons to join with you in doing so.

2. If you receive this package in time, have the feast proclaimed. If there were time, there would have to be a sermon.

3. Fast on the vigil of the feast.

4. Have twelve poor persons dine in the refectory on the eve of the feast or the day before.

The octave is not yet printed and ready to be sent to you.

In a word, my dearest brethren, I beseech you to celebrate this feast with all possible devotion and solemnity, and then write me all about

## **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

229 -

it afterwards. You will thereby greatly rejoice him who desires for you the holiest blessings of our most bountiful Saviour and His sweet Mother, and who is, in the sacred love of His divine Heart, my dearest brethren,

Your unworthy servant,  
JOHN EUDES, priest of the  
Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

## **LETTER 158**

**To Archbishop de Médevy of Rouen.** *In justification of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

[About 1672]



It is true, my Lord, that any innovation in matters of faith is extremely pernicious and utterly damnable. But I beg of you to consider, my Lord, that it is not the same thing in matters of devotion, for there are many feasts in the Church which were not established at the outset and are new ... Certainly if those innovations were bad, the Church would not allow them.

Please consider, too, that all our prelates have given us their approbation and permission in this matter. That is why I beseech you very humbly, by this most adorable Heart which is the source of everything holy and venerable in all the feasts which the Church celebrates, by the love with which It is inflamed for you, and by all the effects of that love which you have experienced and want to experience at the hour of your death, not to prevent this feast from being celebrated in your seminary as it is celebrated in others. If you refuse me this favor, which I request of you with all possible respect and submission, I must confess that I shall be deeply pained; but should you grant it to me, as I trust you will, in your kindness, you will afford me much joy and infinite gratification. Do not, then, reject this most humble and earnest prayer addressed to you by one who is, in truth, with all his heart, and with deepest respect....

230 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 159

**To An Unidentified Person.** *On the plan of His Lordship Henry de Maupas du Tour, Bishop of Evreux, to appoint St. John Eudes his coadjutor with right of future succession.*

[1672]

I do not even presume to write to his Lordship, for I am so filled with astonishment, confusion and fear, in view of the frightful danger confronting me, that I do not know where I stand. I feel like one who has lost his mind and power of speech, except that, if I dared, I should cry out that I desire no benefice save the one my Saviour chose for Himself, which is the Cross. My only consolation is that I have an enormous confidence in the incomparable goodness of my most amiable Jesus, and of His most bountiful Mother and mine, that they will direct all things in the manner most pleasing to them. That is my only prayer to them, save that they grant me the grace to do their most holy will everywhere and in all things. I see all that our dear Mr. de... fears for me, and it causes one's nature to shudder and tremble. But my spirit embraces all for the love of our adorable crucified Saviour and in reparation for my sins, the least of which merits infinitely worse, for I have the greatest confidence that my good Mother will not abandon me.

### LETTER 160

**To The Same Person.** *On the same subject.*

[1672]

The fear I have had up to now of resisting the will of God in that matter of which you are aware, Sir, obliged me to endure what was being said and done to further it; but at last the crystal-clear view I have of my great, my very great, my almost infinite unworthiness, and the fear of seeing myself compelled to answer to God for the salvation of so many souls, oblige me to tell you, sir, that I declare openly and from the bottom of my heart that I want no benefice other than the

one my Saviour chose for Himself, that is, the Cross. This is the benefice I desire, that I embrace and love with all my heart for the love of my most amiable Crucified Saviour, Who loved and preferred it to all that the world loves and esteems more highly. I want no other, unless God absolutely wills it. I implore you to read this letter to his Lordship and to the vicar-generals, as well as to Monsignor de ...

## LETTER 161

**To Father Simon Mannoury.** *On the request of His Lordship Henry de Maupas, Bishop of Evreux, to make him his coadjutor.*

[September 1672]

This news has not caused me the slightest disturbance, both because I am quite certain that, no matter what may be said, nothing will come of these proposals, and because, if it did happen, it would assuredly be God Who had so willed it. Tell his Lordship of Evreux plainly that I desire no benefice save the one chosen by my Saviour Jesus Christ for Himself, that is, His Cross. So far I have had all manner of them, and by the grace of God I have not bent beneath their burden; but as for this new cross which threatens me, I have no fears at all. I know men, and I feel quite sure that this is the cross they will most willingly spare me.

## LETTER 162

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond.** *On the same subject.*

September 17, 1672

Here is still another matter that I urge you to keep very secret: his Lordship of Evreux wishes to have the nonentity of nonentities as his coadjutor. He has consulted several bishops and doctors about it, and other religious of outstanding piety, as well as his two vicar-generals,

232 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

all of whom have encouraged him in it ... He has drawn up a petition to present to the King and has written in this regard to Father Ferrier.<sup>(1)</sup> Monday he is to send Father du Vaucel, his vicar-general, to Paris, and he, accompanied by Father Cyprien, a Discalced Carmelite, will call on Father Ferrier to request him to present the petition to the King.

Since I learned this piece of news, which is known only to Father Mannoury, I have not troubled myself about it, as much because I believe that the whole project will go up in smoke, as because I am afraid of resisting the divine will, in case this affair is proceeding from God. But as soon as I learned of the disclosure of his Lordship of Evreux, I wrote to Father Mannoury that I desired no other benefice except that chosen by my Saviour for Himself, that is, His Cross; that this was the sole cross I was seeking, which I embraced and loved for the love of this most amiable Redeemer Who preferred it to all that the world most loves and esteems; and that I begged him to make that avowal to his Lordship of Evreux and his vicar-generals. I see nothing but crosses heaped upon my head if this does not succeed. As for the others, that is, those who are connected with such a high place, I do not fear them so much because I cannot convince myself that the thing will happen.

(1). A Jesuit, the King's confessor.

## LETTER 163

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond.** *On the same subject.*

October 18, 1672

Father du Vaucel, Vicar General of Evreux, will arrive in Paris to-morrow for the affair we have been discussing, my dearest brother. It makes me tremble and would cause me to die of fright if it were not for my great confidence in the incomparable goodness of my most benign Saviour and my most bountiful Mother.

I beg of you, my dearest brother, to have a novena of Masses said at

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

233 -

our house in honor of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, but for this novena have no other Mass said save that of the Divine Heart of Jesus. Then please write for me to Coutances, Rennes and Lisieux, telling them to do the same; and to Rouen, that they should make a novena of Masses to St. Joseph, all for my intentions. Ask our Carmelites also to make a novena of their own chosen devotion, in honor of the Blessed Virgin and St. Teresa.

## LETTER 164

**To Sister Mary of St. Agnes des Champs.** *On her convalescence.*

Paris, October 23, 1672

J. M. J.

I give infinite thanks to our most adorable Saviour and His most amiable Mother for the solace they have granted you, my dearest daughter. There is no credit due me, for nothing can be expected from one who is merely a nonentity. It is solely an effect of their bounty; may they be eternally praised and blessed for it.

Give yourself to them with your whole heart, my dear daughter, in order to serve and honor them with joy, love and confidence. Be very careful to suppress all thoughts that can trouble you, and to appeal to the most bountiful Virgin in all our trials, as a daughter having recourse to her most sweet mother. She has never yet rejected anyone, and she will not do so the first time in your case.

Be satisfied to make your confession as usual during your retreat. Then too, do not speak to his Lordship of Bayeux about it; it is your superior who should settle these things. My most cordial greetings to her, as also to her niece, Sister Mary of the Nativity and to your brother. I remain with all my heart, in Jesus and Mary, my dearest daughter,

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 165

**To Sister Mary of St. Agnes des Champs.** *The Saint encourages her to put her trust in the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

J. M. J.

I am extremely sorry, my dearest daughter, that I cannot go to see you, but have recourse to our Holy Mother. She has never rejected anyone, and you need not fear that she will do so in your case. She is all mercy, charity, goodness, meekness and kindness. You are her daughter, and she is your Mother—a mother who loves you so much that, if the love of all the mothers who ever existed, are now living and will yet be, were gathered into a single heart, it would form only a tiny spark in comparison with her love for you. Then go to her with full and complete confidence. Implore her aid with all earnestness, and you will feel the effects of her incomprehensible goodness.

With my whole heart do I beseech her and her beloved Son to grant you their holy blessing.

*Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria.*

Live Jesus and Mary.

My most cordial regards to the whole Community.

## LETTER 166

**To Mother St. Gabriel, a Religious of Montmartre.** *On the death of Father Blouet de Than, ( 1 ) the founder of the Caen seminary.*

Caen, January 19, 1673

We are about to bury a manifest angel. He was one of our dearest brethren, the founder of this house, who lived like an angel and died

(1). Father Blouet de Than (1628-1673) was a nephew of Mr. Blouet de Camilly. He donated an annual income of 4,000 livres and 3,000 livres, of arrears for the founding of the Caen Seminary. On August 15, 1644 he entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. For more than twenty years he was in failing health and could leave his room only to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He died on January 14, 1673. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, 1, 36; Georges, *Saint Jean Eudes*, p. 85.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

yesterday as an angel might die if he were subject to the law of death. We must not neglect to pray for him, however, as we should do for anyone else. I am asking you, my dear daughter, to communicate this to Madame. (2) He had an unparalleled devotion for the Blessed Virgin, from whom he received extraordinary favors. He suffered for more than twenty years, and during that time he never left his room except to say Holy Mass, spending all his time in prayer, in having Sacred Scripture and the holy Fathers read to him, and in making collections of all their beautiful sayings in praise of the incomparable Mother of God, with which he filled several huge hand-written volumes. Help us, my dearest daughter, to thank our most amiable Mother for the many graces she obtained for him from her beloved Son.

(2). Madame de Lorraine. See Letter 149, note 1.

## LETTER 167

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Caen.** *On the mission at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, ( 1 ) given at the command of Louis XIV.*

Saint-Germain-en-Laye, April 2, 1673

Immediately upon my arrival I greeted their Majesties, (2) his Lordship the Dauphin(3) and Monsieur, the King's brother,(4) all of whom received me very graciously.

Father Blouet and Father de Launay(5) preach in the morning at 6:00, and at 2:00 Father Paillot conducts the catechism instruction, which the Queen herself attended on one occasion. As for myself, I have been preaching every evening, with as much strength as ever, on very moving topics. Everyone gives evidence of being highly gratified with our

(1). This city is in the district of Versailles. The royal palace there was then the usual residence of the King and Court.

(2). King Louis XIV and Queen Mary Teresa.

(3). Louis, son of Louis XIV (1661-1711).

(4). Philip I of Orleans (1640-1701).

(5). Father John Baptist de Launay was a secular priest of the diocese of Bayeux, who assisted the Saint in his missions. He later became vicar general of the Bayeux diocese.

236-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

work, thanks be to God, and all assure me that their Majesties share the same sentiments. The Queen told me yesterday that I should continue to preach all the remaining days of this week. In short, everyone tells us that the King and Queen are well pleased.

## LETTER 168

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond.** *On the mission at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.*

Paris, April 21, 1673

Yesterday the Queen called on the Carmelite nuns here while I was at Montmartre. She evinced such great satisfaction over the mission and the preachers that it defies expression. She said that other sermons were only speeches, but that ours penetrated the depths of the heart, that everyone was moved by them, and that she could see a change in the King's behavior. Beg God to bless our small efforts. Finally, she demonstrated such enormous benevolence, such enormous friendship (those are the words of our good Sister Teresa, who made the account as glowing as possible), toward the nonentity of nonentities that it is impossible to imagine. And she earnestly enjoined Sister Teresa not to allow the day to pass without telling me all these things. Blessed are they who are loved by the Queen of Heaven!

## LETTER 169

**To Mother St. Henry, a Religious of Montmartre.** *On a marvelous occurrence which took place during the mission at Elbeuf.(1)*

[June or July 1673]

I am now conducting a large mission in which Our Lord Himself deigned to deliver the third

sermon by a fearful clap of thunder ... I cannot tell you what marvelous effects were wrought in the hearts of those present by this manner of preaching.

(1). A small town on the Seine in the diocese of Evreux.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

237 -

### LETTER 170

**To Mother St. Gabriel, a religious of Montmartre.** *Concerning his ardent desire to see Jesus and Mary live and reign in the hearts of the abbess and her daughters.*

[1673]

I implore our Blessed Mother to impress a perfect image of her most amiable Heart on the heart of her beloved daughter, Frances de Lorraine, and on all the hearts of her dear daughters of Our Lady of Montmartre, at whose feet my mind and heart will always remain, crying out unceasingly: Live Jesus and Mary in the hearts of my dear daughters! May they and they alone for ever dwell therein, and may they inflame and consume their hearts completely in the sacred flames of their divine love!

Once again I send my greetings to our good, our excellent Madame, whom I pray God to preserve, bless, sanctify and make as great a saint as I should like her to be. I beseech this of Him now and for the rest of my life. Oh, how ardently do I wish her in the utmost depths of the sacred furnace of the divine Heart of Jesus and Mary, together with all her daughters!

### LETTER 171

**To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson.** *On the government of the House of the Charity Sisters of Bayeux.* (1)

[1673] J. M. J.

Enclosed, my dearest and beloved daughter, are two books for you which have been most useful to me. Please read them carefully and put them even more diligently into practice, particularly their teaching.

(1). This community was founded by Margaret Morin when she left the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity in 1644. See Letter 16, note 2. When the foundress died on October 1, 1657, the Religious of the Hotel Dieu of Caen took over the government of the Community. Sister Mary of the Nativity succeeded the Hotel Dieu Sisters.

238 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

ings concerning meekness, for a hard, harsh, dry, haughty and domineering disposition serves only to spoil everything, ruining the filial affection, confidence and tenderness which should be *present in* the hearts of those in our charge, and tends to fill them instead with fear, terror, contempt, aversion and hatred. In a word, it is good only for destroying a Community and putting the head of the superior on the block. I do not think, my dearest daughter, that you are behaving in this way, nor has anyone said so to me, but since I know from experience that being a superior ruins many persons by giving them that haughty, domineering, hard, bitter, dry and harsh spirit, I am always afraid. Strive, therefore, I entreat you, to guide your daughters with all possible gentleness, kindness, cordiality and tenderness. It is the spirit of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother; pray to them frequently to

grant it to you and me, and ask one of the Sisters to tell you of your shortcomings in this respect.

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

## LETTER 172

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Rome.** *On the difficulties he was encountering in his efforts to obtain approbation of the Congregation.*

[1673]

I always implore God in His goodness to destroy our little Congregation completely if it does not exist for His greatest glory, and I embrace with my whole heart all the mortifications and humiliations which would consequently be mine. Thanks to my Saviour, it *seems to me* that I have no desire in the depths of my soul save that of seeking in all things what is most pleasing to Him. Let us take courage and rejoice in two things which ought to cause us to die of joy:

First, that all the enemies of our great God can never keep Him from being what He is. "Know ye that the Lord He is God," (1) says the  
(1). Ps. 99, 3

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

239 -

Prophet David; and in the words of the most Holy Mother of God: "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." (2)

Secondly, that all the powers of earth and hell can never hinder us in our sole and all-important occupation, that of serving and loving our most adorable Jesus and His most Holy Mother. Let us lose all rather than lose the least particle of trust we should have in their incomparable goodness toward our Congregation, of which they have given us such abundant proof.

We have never transacted any business that was not accompanied by some cross, which is the true character of all God's affairs. The more they are thwarted, the greater are the fruits and blessings that result from them. I have high hopes for this affair, since there are so many difficulties in connection with it. I am confident that Our Lord and His most Holy Mother will, in their goodness, remove these obstacles. Finally, my dearest brother, one would never accomplish anything in God's work if he were easily rebuffed by obstacles and difficulties. Even if you gain nothing, after having done everything possible, I shall be as happy, God willing, as if all were accomplished. For what is it that I seek? My own interests and gratification? By no means, thank God; only His will!  
(2). Luke 1, 47

## LETTER 173

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Rome.** *On the necessity of having the Superior-General of the Congregation (1) appointed by the Sovereign Pontiff.*

October 28, 1673

Above all, it will be necessary for the Bull to nominate and establish the superior of the

Congregation. I should be overjoyed if it were James de la Haye de Bonnefond. There is only one thing that worries me, and that is the possibility of your dying before me, although it seems not at all likely.

(1). The Congregation of Jesus and Mary founded by the Saint in 1643

240 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 174

**To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson.** *On the consolations that accompany crosses, and on several things regarding the house of the Charity Sisters of Bayeux, where she had been sent.*

Paris, February 16, 1674 J. M. J.

I thank you with all my heart, my dearest daughter and good niece, for your kind letter so full of charity and cordiality.

It is true that our most amiable Saviour is loading me down with crosses, but at the same time He is granting me such a great abundance of graces that all my afflictions are turned into consolations. Many lies and calumnies<sup>(1)</sup> about me have been widely circulated, but God will use them for His greater glory, while the father of lies, who is their author, will be put to confusion.

I give infinite thanks to my dearest Jesus and His Holy Mother for all the blessings they are bestowing upon your work in the house *where* you are at this time, and I beseech them to increase these spiritual favors more and more, in you as well as your dear companion, to whom I send my most cordial regards.

I am most grateful to Reverend Father Guardian, of whom you wrote me, for his charity toward you and his kindness in my regard; I thank him over and over again.

My affairs are progressing very well, thank God. The falsehoods are being exposed, and I hope that Our Lord and our gracious Mother will soon show us the effects of their special protection.

It is not enough for you to have revealed your reasons and difficulties to the Mother Superior; you should also acquaint his Lordship of Bayeux with them, and beseech him to keep in mind his word to you. Over and above all else, I entreat you, my dearest daughter, to implant deep in the hearts of all your daughters a tender and cordial devotion to the most Holy Mother of God, who is an inexhaustible source of

(1). These Were Circulated by the Jansenists, his enemies.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

241 -

every manner of blessing, and an infallible means of attaining eternal salvation. I implore her with all my heart to bless every one of them, and to shower her holiest and most precious blessings in *everlasting* abundance upon you, my dear child, together with your *beloved companion*, my dearest daughter. *Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria.*

I remain, in the holy love of the most amiable Heart of Jesus and Mary, my dear daughter,  
Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.



## LETTER 175

To Colbert (1)

Sunday morning, April 15, 1674 My Lord,

Yesterday evening I received an official letter which was delivered to me from you, ordering me to retire' to the seminary at Caen. I immediately made arrangements to obey. I will presently leave Paris and will await, along the way, a coach which is to be sent to me from Evreux, since I was unable to reserve a seat in the public coaches and my age does not permit me to go on horseback or on foot. I felt, my Lord, that I was under an obligation to you to inform you of my prompt obedience, and to protest that I remain, my Lord, with profound respect,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

JOHN EUDES, priest.

(1). Colbert (1619-1683), was statesman and general controller of finance under Louis XIV.

(2). When Father Boniface, mentioned in preceding letters, saw that he could not obtain from Rome the approbation of Our Lady of Charity, he filed a petition in St. John Eudes's name with the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, requesting that his Congregation be permitted to make a vow to uphold the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, even in matters which might give rise to doubts. The petition came to nothing, and St. John Eudes, not knowing that it had been filed, did not even suspect its existence.. His enemies succeeded in getting their hands on it and using it to discredit him with King Louis XIV, who banished him to the seminary of Caen.

242 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 176

To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Rome. *Concerning Father Boniface's petition.*

(1)

[1674]

Whatever you do, my dearest brother, we must labor to clear ourselves of the accusation of having drawn up that petition, which is altogether contrary to the truth. Father Boniface has given me a statement in writing to the effect that he wrote me, when he was in Rome, to ask if I wanted him to handle our business, and that my answer was no. But they are not satisfied with that. In short, the whole success of our affairs depends on this justification.

(1). Cf. Boulay, op. cit. Appendix to vol. 4, P. 40, for copy of the original Latin text.

## LETTER 177

To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond. *On love for Jesus and Mary, and the trust we must place in them.*

[About 1674]

Where can one find a faithful friend? It is the easiest thing in the world: let us love Jesus, the Son of Mary, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, placing all our trust in them, and they will manifest their power and incomparable goodness.

## LETTER 178

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Rome.** *The Saint asks to resign as Superior-General in order to calm the tempest.*

[1674]

I have no attachment for anything save the most adorable will of my God, which will be revealed to me through that of our most Holy Father, the Pope.(1) As for my own self, let them cast me into the sea so that this tempest may cease. Let them annihilate me and put another in my place. What difference does it make who governs the Congregation, provided he does it well? What do I desire, what do I seek, save that my God be glorified? Yes, with all my heart do I resign, at the feet of His Holiness, from all superiority.

(1). Clement X (1670-1676).

## LETTER 179

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Rome.** *The Saint expresses his joy on having obtained indulgences for the missions.*

Caen, August 21, 1674

I received your two parcels containing the indulgences(1) for the missions, and they have given me inexpressible consolation, for never before had we been able to obtain such a favor. I thank you a thousand times for it, my beloved brother.

(1). Father de Bonnefond obtained many benefits for the Congregation during his stay in Rome. Among the privileges was a Bull permitting St. John Eudes to give missions in all parts of France with a plenary indulgence. Boulay, Op. cit., VOL 4, P. 293.

244 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 180

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Rome.** *On the ingratitude of one of his children who had turned against him.*

[October 1674]

I can truthfully say to you, my dearest brother, that since I came into the world I have not suffered such a bloody persecution as this one. What grieves me most is that it is one of my own sons(1) who used to live here, and who never received anything from me but every possible mark of friendship, who has been my most relentless persecutor. "He ... rendereth evil for good." (2) . . . judge for yourself, my dearest brother, what sorrow and anguish is mine! It was in consequence of this that I fell sick.

(1). The name of this disloyal son is not known with certainty. Perhaps it was an ecclesiastic in minor orders, named Aude, who sometimes acted as St. John Eudes's secretary, and who handed over the Saint's notes on Mary des Vallées to Father Dufour, the Abbé d'Aulnay, who used them in circulating the odious libel which forms the subject matter of this letter to Father de Bonnefond. Cf.

Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, 1 , 7, n. 21.  
(2). Prov. 17, 13

### LETTER 181

**To Mother St. Gabriel.** *On an illness.*

October 1, 1674

I had an unremitting fever, accompanied by paroxysms, for nine or ten days, but I never believed myself to be in danger of death. Here I am now, thanks to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, in an entirely new life which I ardently desire to use wholly in their love and service.

### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

245 -

### LETTER 182

**To Father James de IS Haye de Bonnefond, in Rome.** *He had informed the Saint of the concession of indulgences for the Confraternity of the Divine Heart of Jesus ( 1 ) in the chapel of the Coutances seminary.*

November 27, 1674

O my dearest and beloved brother, what consolation your letter has given us! Eternal praise be rendered to the most adorable Heart of our good Jesus for having so well inspired yours! Immortal blessings be given the most amiable Heart of our Holy Mother for having guided you so well in this affair! Let all paradise redouble its prayers for the preservation and sanctification of our most Holy Father the Pope! (2) May Jesus and Mary fashion you perfectly according to their Heart, my dearest brother, inspiring and guiding you so well that you may do for our other houses, if possible, what you have done for the one at Coutances.

(1). Father de Bonnefond brought back six Bulls of indulgences for the establishment of the Confraternity of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in the six seminaries of Caen, Coutances, Lisieux, Rouen, Rennes and Evreux.

(2). Clement X (1660-1676).

246 -

### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 183

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond, in Rome.** *On a defamatory libel ( 1 ) published against the Saint.*

December 12, 1674

Now I am involved in a new persecution, bloodier than all the others. My great benefactors, the gentlemen of the new doctrine, had a libel printed against me which they have distributed throughout the whole of France and in all the communities of Paris. It deals with my writings on Sister Mary (2) and is full of falsehoods, calumnies and all sorts of marks of their prejudice. They charge me with thirteen heresies, namely: Arianism, Nestorianism, Monothelism, Jansenism, in connection with four condemned propositions, and others. The cause of their anger is that everywhere

I oppose their innovations, that I uphold the faith of the Church and the authority of the Holy See, and that I burned a hateful book written against devotion to the Blessed Virgin, at the end of which it said that we must by no means pray to her any more than to the other saints, and that she is not the Mother of God, even though she is called the Mother of Jesus. The author of this libel(3) is an abbe from M. de Sainte Marie's" locality, along with several others.

(1). *Lettre à un docteur de la Sorbonne*, which gave the example and set the tone for a multitude of others, veritable farragos of silly statements, falsehoods scattered in profusion and circulated throughout France. St. John Eudes, faced with this torrent of abuse and its resulting mistrust, remained silent. One of his friends, Father de Launay Hué, powerfully and convincingly replied to all the attacks of Father Dufour, turning against the latter the accusation of heresy which he has brought against St. John Eudes. Cf. Joly, *Life of Saint John Eudes*, P. 202.

Mary des Vallées.

(2). The author of the libel in question was Father Dufour, the Abbé d'Aulnay. 'It is not my," says Martine, a biographer of St. John Eudes, "to express the harm done in the reputation of this apostolic man by that unfortunate document."

(3). Father Faucon, called "de Sainte Marie," was a native of the borough of Aulnay in the diocese of Bayeux, Normandy. See Letter 123, note 1.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

247 -

### LETTER 184

**To the Priests of His Congregation.** *On trust in God in the midst of persecutions.*

[1674-1675]

Let us be strictly on guard against losing our trust even in the slightest degree. We should offend the power and infinite goodness of our most adorable Father and our most amiable Mother if, after having experienced so many effects of their incomparable charity, we lacked confidence in them. They are raising up several powerful persons to uphold and defend us. I hope that this persecution is the final attempt of the rage of hell against us. You cannot imagine how many different calumnies the demon is circulating against me on all sides.' But in the midst of all this I sing with my whole heart:

Live Jesus, my sole desire!  
Live Jesus, my whole delight!  
Live Jesus, my sweet Saviour!  
Live Jesus, God of my heart!

Live the Queen of my heart!  
Live Mary, Mother of love!  
Day and night I wish to sing  
The wonders of her all-good Heart!

(1). An illusion in the tempest aroused against the Saint by the Boniface petition and the libel of the Abbé d'Aulnay.

## LETTER 185

**To Sisters Mary of the Nativity Herson and Mary of the Child Jesus de Bois-David.**

They were then with the Charity Sisters of Bayeux. The Saint importunes them to return to Caen.(1)

[1674] J. M. J.

I can add no more, my dearest daughters, to what I have already told you a number of times, which is that you should do everything in your power to return to the house of your Order and your vocation. Not so long ago I was speaking about this to his Lordship of Bayeux, and he told me that the last time he had talked with you, you seemed quite satisfied to remain where you were. If that is the case, I do not understand a word of what you write me; otherwise, keep reminding him of his promise, of your weariness at being so long outside of your own center, and of the fact that there are many nuns in his own diocese with whom he can replace you. Do not be content to speak once, nor four times, nor a dozen, but keep on entreating, supplicating and importuning him both verbally and in writing.

I remain with all my heart, in Jesus and Mary,

Devotedly yours,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest

of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

(1). See Letter 171, note 1. Sister Mary of the Nativity returned to Caen on February 8, 1675. Sister Mary of the Infant Jesus had been sent home the preceding September. Cf. Ory, op. cit., p. 189.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

249 -

## LETTER 186

**To the Superior of the Rouen Seminary.** *In answer to a letter urging him to reply to the libel of the Abbé d'Aulnay.*

[1675]

A thousand thanks, my dearest and beloved brother, for the charitable and cordial letter you wrote me; I am most grateful to you and to those gentlemen who are noted therein. I beg of you to assure them of my gratitude and thank them profusely for me. Their zeal and goodness are most praiseworthy, but, because I can find no evidence in the holy Gospel that our divine and adorable Master ever used the ways and means indicated in your letter to defend Himself against the injustice and cruelty that He suffered at the hands of the Jews, I cannot bring myself to do otherwise than to try to imitate Him in His patience and silence: *Jesus autem tacebat*.(1) Perhaps God will raise up someone who can answer the libel.(2) Be that as it may, I gladly embrace all the crosses it may please God to send me, and I earnestly entreat Him to grant pardon to me and those who are persecuting me. My numerous sins are deserving of a thousand times worse ...

(1). Matt. 26, 63, "But Jesus held his peace."

(2). At a meeting held at the Abbey of Val-Richer, the friends of St. John Eudes decided that one of themselves would reply to the Abbé d'Aulnay's pamphlet. It was Father de Launay Hué, a doctor of the Sorbonne, who took his task upon himself and avenged the Saint of the unjust accusations levelled against him. Cf. Georges, Saint Jean Eudes, P. 349.

## LETTER 187

**To Mother St. Gabriel.** *On afflictions.*

Oh, what a rich and enormous treasure is a great affliction when one uses it well! There is a vast difference between the sufferings of this world and those of purgatory: 1. Because one does not suffer even a

250 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

thousandth part of what one ought to suffer here; 2. Because there is nothing which so greatly increases grace and divine love in the soul as the sufferings of this life—something which those of purgatory cannot do, since they serve only to satisfy divine justice for the punishment due to sin. In short, there is nothing which gives greater glory to God and is more pleasing to Him than the sufferings of this world. That is why Our Lord said one day to Blessed Henry Suso that, if a man only knew the reward obtained in heaven for the most trifling affliction of mind or body that can be suffered in this world for the love of God, he would prefer to spend a century in a fiery furnace than to be deprived of this reward. I should not want a soul who desires to love God purely, however, to suffer from the motive of that reward, but rather because suffering is infinitely pleasing to His Divine Majesty.

## LETTER 188

**To Mother St. Gabriel.** *On his grief during his disfavor (1) with Louis XIV.*

My little crosses would be as nothing on shoulders stronger than my own, which frequently bow in weakness under their burden. Pray to God that my humiliations may help me to cultivate some slight measure of true humility, and continue to pray, too, for my dearest benefactors to whom I am highly indebted. May it please God in His goodness to make great saints of them, in the blessed eternity, for the enormous benefits they are conferring on me.

(1). Because of Father Boniface's petition. See Letter 175, note 2.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

251 -

## LETTER 189

**To An Unknown Person.** *On his numerous duties during a mission.* (1)

[1675]

Though already advanced in age, I am preaching almost daily. I hear confessions and take care of an infinite number of things. All these hardships amount to nothing when one is sustained by the soothing grace of God and enjoys the consolation of seeing people correspond with what is being done for their salvation.

(1). This letter was evidently written during one of the Saint's last missions, perhaps the one at Saint-Lô (1674-1675) which was his final one, and the success of which was complete.

## LETTER 190

**To a Religious of Montmartre.** *The Saint assures her that he forgives his enemies.*

[1674 or 1675]

I beseech Our Lord to forgive them for all the wrongs they have done me, which are not very considerable. Would to God they did themselves no more harm than me. One of them died suddenly a few days ago, which grieved me exceedingly because he was one of those who had helped circulate the libel against me. God grant that he may not fare badly for that! But if, unhappily, such were the case, there is nothing I would not do to redeem him, were it possible.

252 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 191

**To a Religious of Montmartre.** *The Saint's consolation in the midst of his trials.*

Pray for me, my dearest daughter, for I have great need of it, being more laden with crosses than ever before. But the least of my sins is deserving of a thousand times worse. My consolation is that God is ever God, that He always derives the greatest glory from all things, and that all the powers of earth and hell cannot prevent me from performing my sole duty, which is to love and serve my most benevolent Saviour and my most amiable Mother.

## LETTER 192

**To a Religious of Montmartre.** *The Saint's feelings toward his enemies.*

I should be crushed beneath the weight of my sufferings if Our Lord and His Holy Mother were not sustaining me, but they are giving me an altogether singular strength, for which I entreat you to help me thank them. Help me, too, I beg of you, to pray a great deal for my benefactors, to whom I am most indebted for giving me such precious opportunities to practise the most beautiful virtues, particularly humility, obedience to the divine will, a love of Jesus crucified, and love for His most Holy Mother, also crucified with Him.

## LETTER 193

**To Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson, His Niece.** *On trust in God.*

Let us take care not to allow our spirits to become narrow and depressed through sadness and discouragement. Let us try, rather, to gladden, sustain and heighten them through trust, and through our love for Him Who is all love and goodness toward us.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

253 -

## LETTER 194

**To the Religious of Our Lady of Charity.** *On humility.*

Be very humble, my dear daughters, be very humble. Oh, how greatly do I desire you to be humble, for when you achieve humility Our Lord will abundantly infuse His graces into your hearts! A soul which is truly humble is indeed wealthy, for it possesses all; but a soul lacking in humility has nothing. It is like a sieve through which everything passes, and thus God takes no care to bestow and shed His graces on that soul, for they would be lost.

#### LETTER 195

**To the Community of Our Lady of Charity, in Caen.** *On preparation for the feast of Pentecost.*

J. M. J. My dearest Sisters:

The Holy Spirit of our Jesus Himself wishes to prepare us to receive Him. The best preparation we can make is to humble ourselves unceasingly, purify our hearts and renounce our own spirit, which we ought to fear more than all the evil spirits in hell.

Ask Our Lord for this preparation for yourselves and us, my dearest Sisters. For my part, I never cease offering you to Him and His most Holy Mother, imploring them to accomplish in you the designs of their infinite goodness, and not to permit either you or us to thwart them in any way.

I am greatly comforted by what our dear Mother informs me of your fidelity and perseverance. Ah! what a crown of glory is prepared for those who persevere! May it please Our Lord Jesus, through the prayers of His most Holy Mother, to strengthen you more and more and to make you true daughters of Our Lady of Charity.

254-

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

In them and for their sakes, *corde magno et animo volenti*, my dearest Sisters, I am

Devotedly yours,  
JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

#### LETTER 196

**To a Religious of Our Lady of Charity.** *The Saint consoles her.*

Your letter, my dearest daughter, pierces my heart with compassion. My consolation, however, is that your trouble is not a mortal one, but for the glory of God. No, my dear child, your soul is by no means in the state of death, and it will certainly not die the death of those to whom the Author of Life addresses these words: "Every man shall die for his own sin." (1) It will live eternally, to love and glorify its most amiable Redeemer for all eternity. Rid your mind, therefore, of all these thoughts which disturb you, and put all your trust in our benign Saviour and His most Holy Mother, both of whom love you far more than you love yourself, for they are all affection and love toward you. I implore them to grant you their holy blessing: *Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria~.*

(1). 2 Par. 25, 4



## LETTER 197

**To Father Trochu, the almoner of His Lordship Dominic de Ligny,  
Bishop of Meaux.** *Father Trochu had written to Father de la Haye, Superior of the Caen Seminary, with reference to the rumors being circulated about St. John Eudes in connection with Mary des Vallées.*

Caen, January 2, 1675

Since Father de la Haye is absent, I opened the letter you had written him, that I might answer it. A thousand thanks for all your benevo

### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

255 -

lence toward our little Congregation, which I ask you to continue for the love of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother.

I am not surprised, Sir, by these calumnies which are going the rounds, for it seems as if all hell has been loosed against us. But the least of my sins merits a thousand times worse, and I have not the slightest doubt that Our Lord will derive the greatest possible glory from all this. I sincerely beseech Him to show mercy toward all these slanderers and calumniators.

It is a strange thing to say and believe that priests, who profess to live in the fear of God, should be so blind, so senseless and so hatefully impious as to say prayers and salutations, recite a special Office and celebrate Masses and feasts in honor of the heart of a poor girl dead these ten years,<sup>(1)</sup> who is neither canonized, nor beatified nor anything else. Do they not see that all the words of the salutation, all the anthems, responses, hymns and lessons of the Office and Mass are addressed to the Heart of the Blessed Virgin?

It is the blackest and most false calumny to claim that this good girl was a sorceress, and that she had been condemned as such by a judgment of Parliament.

All the other statements in your letter, too, are utterly false, as are similar ones contained in a defamatory libel which has been spread against me. It is crammed with material taken from my writings on the life of this good girl. But the authors have done just as the Huguenots do with books written by Catholics on controversial issues, taking only the objections and omitting the answers. So, too, has the author of this libel selected only what is hard to understand and liable to offend the reader in these writings on Sister Mary, without adding the explanations I have given. In addition, he has also inserted several ridiculous things taken from other accounts that I never wrote ...

(1). This is a mistake. Mary des Vallées had been dead, as a matter of fact, for nineteen years. Father Costil who compiled the *Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie* adds that the letter sent him was not from the hand of St. John Eudes. Undoubtedly it was only a copy, which explains the error committed.

256 -

### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 198

**To His Lordship Francis de Nesmond, Bishop of Bayeux.** *On his relation with Mary des Vallées.*

[1675]

I, the undersigned, a priest of the seminary of Caen, do hereby declare to his Lordship the Most Illustrious and Reverend Bishop of Bayeux, my prelate, that several years ago, having assumed the obligation, by the order of His Lordship de Matignon, at that time bishop of Coutances, to become the spiritual director of Mary des Vallées, a native of his diocese, I felt that it was my duty, in order to give an exact account of the mind and soul of this girl, to assemble and write down all that I was able to learn about her, as much from various persons of outstanding doctrine and piety who had known or guided her several years previously, as from what I had learned since taking over her spiritual guidance. In doing so, however, I had not the slightest intention of compiling a book for publication, nor of submitting these writings as unquestionable truths. They were intended simply as memoirs, and as an account on which my superiors might pass whatever judgment they pleased. If I added my own reflections here and there, it was only to suggest to them a way of explaining and understanding these things. I never intended that anyone except my superiors should see these writings. If at present, then, they have fallen into other hands for I understand that certain persons claim to be in possession of them - it has happened through the negligence or disloyalty of some of my friends to whom I had entrusted them, in good faith, to be examined only in private. These persons either took copies or allowed them to be taken without my knowledge and against my will. Then certain individuals of evil intent not only confused and identified them with other accounts which had already been written by others on the same subject, but they also garbled and altered them in several places in order to make it possible to give them sinister and criminal interpretations.

After all, I do acknowledge that I am neither impeccable nor infallible, but that of myself I should be capable of falling into all sorts of

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

257 -

errors if God in His goodness did not keep me from doing so. And I confess, with the great St. Augustine, that I am indebted to the grace of God not only for the little good I have tried to do but also for all the evil I have not done.

Furthermore, if in the writings which are really mine there is found any expression too positive, or any proposition not strictly in conformity with the common doctrine of the Church, I am ready and willing to make a sincere retraction, both verbally and in writing, and to submit all that I have written and shall ever write to the judgment and correction of the most Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, and particularly of his Lordship the bishop, into whose hands I have delivered all my writings in order that he may pass judgment on them and make such disposition of them as it may please God to inspire him. I will yield entirely to his decision.

Dated at Caen this 25th day of June, 1675,  
JOHN EUDES, priest.

## LETTER 199

**To Mother St. Henry, a Religious of Montmartre. On a libel publicly  
circulated by the Saint's enemies.**

[December 1675]

... And yet withal, I am not lacking trials and crosses of various kinds. Yesterday I learned that there is still another libel being spread, as well as some new slanders, for which God be blessed. I beseech Him with my whole heart to make great saints of all my calumniators - or to state it better, of all my great benefactors.

## 258 - LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 200

**To An Unidentified Person.** *On the ordeals to which the Saint had to submit.*

April 20, 1676

... As for my condition at present, I shall tell you, my dearest daughter, that since my last mission I have been laboring under several indispositions, but all that is nothing. I am *better now*, thanks to Our Lord. My good friends<sup>(1)</sup> never cease to benefit me, and I, thank God, never stop asking divine goodness to make great saints of them.

(1). The persons who circulated libels against him.

### LETTER 201

**To Mother St. Gabriel, a religious of Montmartre.** *On the value of crosses.*

I thank you, my dear good daughter, for your participation in my crosses; blessed be Our Lord and His most Holy Mother for them. I hope that, in their incomparable goodness, they will grant you a share in all the fruits and blessings derived from my trials through their great mercy. Oh, what an enormous treasure is the Cross which Our Lord so loved, and which His Holy Mother and all the saints embraced and bore so lovingly! Surely, if there were a more excellent way in this world to glorify God and please Him, Our Lord would have chosen it for Himself and given it to His dearest Mother and all His saints.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

259 -

### LETTER 202

**To King Louis XIV.** *Memoir dealing with the petition which Father Boniface had addressed to the Pope, in 1662, in St. John Eudes' name but without his consent, and which had displeased that monarch.*

[1675 or 1676]

I protest at your Majesty's feet, Sire, and before God, that the petition in question was never presented by my order nor with my consent, that I never knew what it contained, and that Father Boniface has never belonged to our Congregation.

He is a good Flemish priest who was formerly an Oratorian Father. He claims to have left them because he felt that they leaned toward those who were too mild in their condemnation of the book of Jansenius.

It is true that this good priest offered to handle the business of our Congregation when he was in Rome thirteen or fourteen years ago; but he promised me in writing to affirm on oath that I requested him not to involve himself in our affairs. It is evident, through two petitions which I turned over to the archbishop<sup>(1)</sup> and which were formerly presented for us, that never have we either desired or sought anything having reference to that petition. That alone seems sufficiently to

justify our intentions. I cannot imagine what use our adversaries were able to make of that petition which they brought to light after it had been hidden for fourteen years, and against which they raised no outcry at that time, save to provide themselves with a means of constituting me an impostor. It could not be detrimental to them at present, since the last petitions presented from me were in no way similar to it. Therefore it appears likely that, having discovered this old scrap of paper by some means unknown to me and realizing, furthermore, that I was strongly opposed to what it contained, they had me questioned at length, surmising indeed that I would answer simply, according to my custom and my own mind, without suspecting the trap they were

(1). His Lordship Francis Harley de Champvallan, the archbishop of Paris.

260 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

laying for me to cast doubt on my innocence through Father Boniface's petition.

Do not, Sire, allow the goodfaith of a priest in his seventies, who has been laboring half a century for the Church, to remain in doubt, nor a Congregation established by letters patent from the King, your father of glorious memory, to be suppressed. In the letters of establishment granted to us by this great King, he declares that he would willingly give his life for the accomplishment of such a holy work which could do so much for the glory of God. The Queen, your mother, has always favored us with her powerful protection, and because of your Majesty's kindness I have had reason to hope that God was reserving for you the completion of a work begun by this great Prince and this holy Princess.

Prostrate, Sire, at your Majesty's feet, I ask this favor of you, and I hope that God, Who has given you such a just and upright heart, may render you the protector of innocence.

### LETTER 203

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond.** *The Saint urges him to accept the position of visitor of the houses of the Congregation.*

January 4, 1678

I do not know why you are so reluctant to be made visitor so that you may take care of changes and other matters of the greatest importance. I entreat you, in the name of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, to renounce your own opinion and give yourself to them, that you may accomplish their most amiable will.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

261 -

### LETTER 204

**To Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond.** *The Saint entrusts him with the duties of visitor.*

January 28, 1678

I have requested Father de Bonnefond, our beloved brother, to make up my deficiency, and have committed all my authority to him so that he may remedy any shortcomings he may find, make whatever changes in superiors as well as subordinates that he may deem suitable, and renew in your hearts the desire to pay strict observance to the Constitutions in order that our most lovable Saviour and His most amiable Mother may be served, honored and loved in the Congregation in conformity

with the purposes for which divine Providence established it in Holy Mother Church. I am asking all my dear brethren, therefore, to receive our aforesaid beloved brother, Father de Bonnefond, in the capacity of visitor, and to render him all the honor, respect and obedience due those who act in God's place.

#### LETTER 205

**To His Lordship Francis Harlay de Champvallon, Archbishop of Paris.** *The Saint requests the Archbishop to obtain for him an audience with King Louis XIV.*

[November 1678] My Lord:

Prostrate at your Lordship's feet, I very humbly entreat you to grant me your holy blessing and to have the kindness to give your attention to the reading of this letter, the sole purpose of which is to implore you to allow some spark of that gracious benevolence which enables you to win all hearts to reflect on the least of all men, who takes the liberty of hoping to be, and of always having been, foremost in paying the honor and veneration due your Lordship.

But how does it happen, my Lord, if I may venture to ask, that I have the misfortune to have lost the honor of your good graces? Who

262 -

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

has robbed me of this precious treasure? Is there not some unpleasant tongue which has spread its venom against me?

For six years I have groaned beneath the weight of the King's disfavor for a fault of which I am, in truth, completely innocent, and from which you and you alone, my Lord, have sufficient power and kindness to deliver me. For, although I have spent my whole life-nearly fifty years--in the service of the Church and of their Lordships the prelates, not one of them is willing to take a step or say a word in my defence except his Lordship of Coutances.(1) They all send me to his Lordship of Paris, saying that he is all-powerful and so kind that even his own enemies feel the effects of that kindness ...(2)

(1). His Lordship Claude Auvry, a former bishop of Coutances.

(2). In the remainder of the letter, St. John Eudes begged Archbishop Harlay to arrange an interview for him with Louis XIV.

#### LETTER 206

**To King Louis XIV.** *The Saint disclaims Father Boniface's petition, and requests an audience. ( 1 )*

November 7, 1678

Sire:

It is the most insignificant of your subjects who returns from death's door, where he still lingers, having been brought to that pass by a grievous illness. But God has not permitted me to leave this world with the hideous brand which was placed on my forehead by the accusation of having presented to our Holy Father, the Pope,(2) a petition offensive to your Majesty's interests. I can

assure you, indeed, that this accusation has in its way been more bitter, in this extremity, than death itself which hovered before my eyes, since I should prefer to be (lead

(1) This letter is of November 7, 1678. It was addressed to Bishop Auvry of Coutances with the plea to have it delivered to Louis XIV; but scarcely had it been sent when St. John Eudes wrote Bishop Auvry that he should examine it to see if the moment was opportune to have it given to the King. Therefore, we do not know whether or not it was ever delivered to the King.

(2). Innocent XI (1676-1689).

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

263 -

than to do anything displeasing to him who represents on earth the King of heaven. Before Him I protest that the petition in question never entered my mind.

I implore your Majesty to be mindful that it is a priest who has the honor of addressing you; one who, for more than fifty years, has daily offered to God the sacrifice of the adorable body and precious blood of Him Who is eternal Truth. It is Christian charity to give some credence to his words rather than to judge and condemn him as a liar and an imposter, seeing that I am ready to affirm what I say by every means by which a Christian can confirm a truth, and that I openly proclaim that I disown and detest that petition with my whole heart. I should prefer to forfeit a thousand lives than do anything contrary to the least of your Majesty's interests. I most humbly entreat your Majesty to banish the memory of that miserable petition, even as you desire the Saviour of souls to destroy utterly whatever might stand in the way of your eternal happiness. Permit me to come to prostrate myself at your feet in order to protest to you by word of mouth that I am, with the most profound respect, Sire, your Majesty's . . .

### LETTER 207

**To Mother St. Gabriel.** *On an illness of which God has cured him.*

November 7, 1678

My sins brought down upon me an illness which carried me to the brink of death. But He Who holds the keys of life and death has postponed my death and preserved my life, that I may have time to reform and begin a new life. It is what I most ardently desire, and I beg Our Lord and His most Holy Mother to grant me that grace and to let me begin to love them as I should, for I do not know if I have yet begun. Help me, my dearest Sister, to love them in that way.

264 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### LETTER 208

**To Madame d'Argouges.** (1) *On the projected establishment of the Daughters of Our Lady of Charity in Paris.* (2)

[1678] J. M. J.

Madame:

Here are your good nuns of Our Lady of Charity who have the honor to join you, that they may carry out whatever orders it may please you to issue. They are the Daughters of Most Amiable Heart of the Mother of God, and they are also the daughters of your most kind heart, since that glorious

Virgin has given you a mother's heart and love toward them. They are going to Paris to search for lost souls, in imitation of Our Saviour Who says of Himself that He came to seek and to save those who were lost. Of all divine things, the most divine, says St. Dionysius, is to cooperate with God in the salvation of souls. For that reason, Madame, you can do nothing more pleasing to His Divine Majesty than to provide the employment you intend to give these good girls. All the souls who may be saved through their mediation will honor you, after God, in heaven as the cause of their salvation, and you will have a very singular share of their glory. To win a soul for God is greater than to conquer a hundred thousand worlds, for a single soul is of higher value than that many worlds. That is why you will be wealthy in heaven beyond all power of speech or imagination.

(1). Wife of the first president of the Parliament of Brittany.

(2). "This letter bears no date, but it can have been written only in 1678. As a matter of fact, in that year a plan for an establishment in Paris, prepared by President d'Argouges, failed, for reasons unknown to us. The sisters were to leave Caen, and Mother Mary of the Trinity Heurtaut left her monastery at Guingamp in order to join them. This letter of St. John Eudes was undoubtedly intended to announce their departure from Caen and their arrival in Paris . . . Madame d'Argouges was in no way discouraged by this failure. She continued her proceedings, and in 1682 she was able to staff the St. Pélagie house with Mother Mary of the Trinity and several sisters who had come either from Guingamp or from Caen." Ory, *The Origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, p. 628.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

265 -

But what shall I say to you, Madame, to show my gratitude for your kindnesses toward my beloved sisters? I have no words capable of doing this; but I do have an overwhelming confidence that our most benign Saviour and His most kind Mother will make up my deficiency by repaying you a hundred thousand times for all the effects of the charity and tenderness with which you honor these sisters. All my life I shall beg them to do so, as well as to shower their most holy blessings increasingly upon you, Mr. d'Argouges and all that is yours. I assure you, Madame, that I will never say Holy Mass without addressing to them this earnest prayer. In them and for their sakes, Madame, I remain Your most humble, obedient and grateful servant,

JOHN EUDES, priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

### LETTER 209

**To Reverend Father Louis Francis d'Argentan, a Capuchin.** *On his book, Les Grandeurs de la Saint Vierge.*

[1678] Most Reverend Father:

I am doing myself the honor of writing you to render you infinite thanks for the admirable book you have written on the glories of the Blessed Virgin. I am preaching it to everyone. Would to God it were in the hands of all Christians, and that they took as much delight in reading it as I do! . . . Blessed be the hand which has written so worthily of the greatness of the Mother of our Saviour! Blessed be the head and heart whence have sprung such beautiful truths! Oh, how wretched and hateful is the tongue which dares to pronounce anathemas against those who have devotion for our lovable Mother! It is against her enemies that all the anathemas should be fulminated, particularly against those who hide themselves in their house whenever one knocks at their door, crying out that they are not there, only to surprise the passers-by and slaughter them. O my dearest Father, if I were now at your feet, you could not prevent me from kissing them, no matter how much you protested.

## LETTER 210

**To Father Ralph de Bon.**(1) *To inform him of his appointment as Superior of the Evreux Seminary.*

[Spring of 1679]

What comforts me is the sight of the most adorable will of God which does everything for the best, and my belief that you will gladly submit yourself to the decrees of that divine will which has chosen you to replace our dear departed superior. It is what I beg of you, my dearest brother, while venturing to assure you that Our Lord and His most Holy Mother will be with you, managing their house through you and giving you all the enlightenment and graces necessary for that purpose. Accept this post, therefore, from their hand, or rather from their most charitable Heart; and accept it *corde magno et animo volenti*, with a fervent desire to govern their family according to their spirit, which is one of humility, kindness, charity and meekness.

(1). Father de Bon (1640-1680) entered the Congregation Of Jesus and Mary in 1670. He was appointed to the Rouen Seminary and then to that of Evreux. On March 3, 1679 he succeeded Father de la Haye as Superior of Evreux. He died on April 17, 1680. Cf. *Les Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, p. 58.

## LETTER 211

**To Father Richard Dufour,**(1) *His Secretary. The Saint gives an account of his audience with Louis XIV.*

Paris, June 17, 1679

Yesterday I had the honor of seeing the King at Saint Germain. It happened in this way: I was ushered into the King's room, where I found myself surrounded by a large group of bishops, priests, dukes,

(1). Born at Clinchamps in the diocese of Coutances, Normandy, Father Dufour (1627-1696) entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1657. For many years he was the Saint's secretary and copied his letters and the Constitutions of the Congregation. He died on December 8, 1696 at the age of 69 years. Cf. *Fleurs*, Vol. 1, P. 132

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

267 -

counts, marquises, marshals of France and King's guards. His Lordship of Paris took me to one corner of the room. When the King made his entrance, he walked by all these great lords and came directly Up to me, his expression full of kindness. Then I began to speak to him of our affair and he listened most attentively, with an air of being very glad to hear what I was telling him.

"Sire, I have come to your Majesty's feet to render you my most humble thanks for your kindness in granting me the honor and consolation of seeing you once more before I die, and to protest to you that there is no man in this world who has more zeal and fervor than I where your Majesty's service and interests are concerned. This is the sentiment in which I desire to spend and use the little time left me in this life. I also beg of you most humbly, Sire, to honor us with your royal protection, and to continue to reward us with your graces and favors. This is what I hope from that wonderful benevolence which rejoices and delights the hearts of all who have the honor of speaking to your Majesty, and which never fails to send them away full of joy and comfort."



When the King had heard these things, he said to me:

"I am very pleased to see you. I have heard about you. I *feel quite* sure that you are doing a great deal of good in my States. Continue to work as you have been doing. I shall be very pleased to see you again, and will protect you on whatever occasions may arise."

Those were the words of the King, which filled me with an unspeakable gratification, and were overheard by his Lordship of Paris and all the lords who were present. They were amazed to see such a great King speak so gently and kindly to the most insignificant of all men.

Thereupon I went to say Mass at the Franciscans. Then I was invited to dine with the almoners, who received me with marked kindness and charity.

Write to all the superiors of our houses, in my name, that I beg of them to do three things: first, to make an octave of thanksgiving to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother for the splendid success of this affair; secondly, to pray a great deal for the King and all the royal house, for their Lordships of Paris and Coutances; thirdly, to make

268 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

a firm resolution henceforth to love and serve our benign Saviour and His most Holy Mother with more fervor than ever before, through the practice of the holy virtues ...

### LETTER 212

**To Father Ralph de Bon, Superior of the Seminary at Evreux.** *On a loss he had suffered.*

February 16, 1680.

As for the twelve hundred livres,<sup>(1)</sup> we must first of all sacrifice them to God. After that; however, I am of the opinion that you should have a novena of Masses for the Dead said for the souls in Purgatory, in order to enlist their aid in recovering the money.

(1). The money has been stolen or lost. Cf. *Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Vol. 1, p. 60.

### LETTER 213(1)

**To a Superior of Missionaries.** *On the course to follow in giving Missions.*

What should console and encourage you is that Our Lord is in your midst (on your missions) in a very special way, according to His promise: "Behold I am with you all days."<sup>(2)</sup> Not only is He with you, but He is in you, too, in order to continue that same work of the redemption of souls which He Himself began. Dwell also in Him, dearest brother, and to that end strive to put aside your own self and renounce it vigorously, that you may withdraw into Our Lord and give yourself completely to Him, since outside of Him you can do nothing but in Him.

(1). All letters from 213 to the end of this collection are taken from the biographies of the Saint or from *Les Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*. There are no references in them that would help to discover the date when they were written by the Saint.

(2). Matt. 28, 20.

you can do all things. Remember that to preach is to make God speak, and consequently he who preaches should be destroyed so that God may be everything in him. Take great care, therefore, to annihilate yourself at the feet of Our Lord before ascending the pulpit, and to give yourself to Him, imploring Him to annihilate you Himself and establish Himself within you, so that it may be He Who speaks, for to Him and Him alone belongs the privilege of preaching His Father's word.

Try also, dearest brother, always to pray a little, and to read your Breviary and say Mass with recollection.

Please be careful of your health, and to that end I urge you never to preach longer than one hour at a time. I also recommend to you the health of our dear brothers. See to it that they all return from the church at the same time, that they may have their meals together. Have the indisposed say early Mass, and above all, see that they retire at nine o'clock in the evening to get the rest they need.

Recommend interior piety and exterior modesty to them frequently, and that they give themselves often to Our Lord in order to accomplish His work in His spirit, that is, in the interior and exterior dispositions with which He performed all His actions when He was on earth. I beseech them all to give themselves earnestly to Him in order to perform the divine actions-and by that I mean sacerdotal functions *digne Deo*, that they may deal with sinful souls in a spirit of charity and meekness, and live and converse with one another with respect and brotherly love, "not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's," (3) Particularly do I urge them to hold in extreme horror and to shun more than death and hell itself the slightest shadow of that abominable vice which shall be nameless, and therefore to exercise the utmost reserve toward persons of the opposite sex.

I bless God infinitely for all the graces He bestows upon you during your missions. If the attendance is not so large at the current One, do not let that discourage you. If there are not many people there at first, there will be more later on. And remember, too, that a single soul is a whole world in the sight of God, and that Our Lord Himself stopped to preach to one lone woman. Furthermore, self-love and vanity, which interfere even in the works of God, must be mortified. Be careful, how

(3). Phil. 2, 4

ever, to devote just as much attention and preparation to your preaching, for in those circumstances it is necessary to be even more diligent and fervent.

### LETTER 214

**To a Benedictine Abbess.** *The Saint asks her not to suppress the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary in her monastery.*

Madame, although I do not have the honor of being known to you, I am nevertheless venturing to take the liberty of writing to you, to acquaint you with my sorrow upon learning that you not only have abolished the feast of the Holy Name of Mary in your monastery, but have also determined to suppress the feast of her Holy Heart.

O Madame! What are you doing? The abbesses preceding you, who were so full of wisdom and

virtue, established those feasts as a consequence of their singular devotion for the glorious Virgin, and you are destroying the work of their piety! What will they say to you on the day of judgment?

What are you doing, Madame? God in His goodness established these two feasts in your house, like twin fountains of graces and blessings, and you are draining them dry! The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Holy Heart of Mary were two impregnable towers to shelter the souls of the abbess and her daughters from their enemies, and you are destroying them! You are striking and wounding the Heart of the Mother of pure love! You are excommunicating her most venerable name and pleasing Heart! You are driving them out of your house! After all that, how will you dare to appear before her presence? Have you no fear at all that her Son, Who is acutely sensitive to the slightest offenses committed against His dear Mother, may fulminate some terrible excommunication against you, and that they may close the door of their house against you? They gave you their Hearts, which are but a single Heart through unity of spirit, to be your heart, your treasure and your consolation, and you are rejecting it! How will you continue to live without a heart? Will you not henceforth deserve to be called, in

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

271 -

the words of the Prophet Osee, "a dove that is decoyed,"<sup>(1)</sup> no longer possessing a heart? The Mother of God gave you her Heart as an asylum in all your troubles, an immense treasure filled with an infinity of benefits, according to these words of a holy prelate of your Order: "a fountain of infinite good." And yet you want none of them, preferring to lose them! You are abolishing a holy feast founded on the approbation of a great number of illustrious prelates, by authority of a legate *a latere* and on the immovable rock of the apostolic Holy See, and authorized by a great number of Holy Fathers, celebrated theologians, and even several great saints and a number of very learned men of the Order of St. Benedict, all of whom have left us obvious proofs of their devotion to this most benevolent Heart during their lives here on earth, and who are now celebrating its praises in heaven. Do you think, Madame, that you will do better to subscribe to the sentiments of men who are still in the darkness, rather than to those of the saints who are enlightened by the wisdom of heaven and educated by the doctrines of Jesus Christ? For He Himself desired to be the first to preach this devotion, having taught it to St. Mechtilde, a nun of your holy Order. If you condemn this feast, now that it has existed for several years in your monastery, it is greedy to be feared that you may not celebrate it with the saints who will solemnize it in heaven for all eternity.

In God's name, Madame, consider these things seriously and accept them from the hand which offers them to you, that of purest charity, and as coming from one who has all conceivable respect for you.

(1). Osee, 7, 11

## LETTER 215

**To a nun of the Order of St. Benedict.** *To become humble, but not discouraged, because of her shortcomings.*

No, my dear Sister, as long as we remain on earth we shall never be entirely free from the shortcomings and imperfections of the world. O earth, how unbearable thou art! O abode of sin and misfortune, wilt

thou hold us here yet a long time? O Jesus, wilt Thou not call us Soon to join Thee? Tell us, most amiable Jesus, when will there no longer remain anything in us that is contrary to Thy love? When shall we love Thee perfectly? Let us hasten, my dear Sister, to labor for the ac. accomplishment of God's work in ourselves, so that we may soon leave this place of darkness and horror to enter into the kingdom of eternal love.

Furthermore, let us always humble ourselves a great deal in view of our shortcomings; but at the same time, let us cast off ourselves, flee from ourselves as from a place filled with all sorts of evils and miseries, that we may enter into Jesus Who is our house of refuge, our treasure in which we possess every kind of wealth and shall find all types of virtues and perfections to offer His eternal Father in satisfaction for our sins and imperfections. If we dwell within ourselves, we shall find nothing therein save every cause for grief and sadness; but if we emerge from ourselves in order to ascend to Jesus, we shall behold in Him so many delights, grandeurs, perfections and wonders that, if we truly love Him, we shall rejoice exceedingly in the sight of these things, exclaiming with the Blessed Virgin: *Exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo*, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." (1)

That is one of the uses we should make of our defects. O blessed shortcomings, if I may so express it, when they give us cause to cast ourselves aside in order to ascend to Jesus and unite ourselves with Him Who alone is free from shortcomings and imperfections! Belong to Him alone; remain wholly and for ever in Him.

In this same Jesus I am devotedly yours, and ever more and more.

Live Jesus and Mary.

(1). Luke 1, 47.

## LETTER 216

### To Two Religious of Montmartre. *On crosses and afflictions.*

I am writing you this, my dearest daughters, to assure you that I feel your crosses very keenly, that is, humanly speaking. For, speaking as a

Christian, I shall tell you that the greatest cause for joy that we can ever have on earth is to be crucified with our amiable Saviour.

Human nature does not begin to understand such language, but it is an article of faith that therein is the sovereign good of Christian souls. So true is this that the saints in heaven who suffered the greatest torments here on earth would very gladly exchange the glory and joys they possess in heaven for the sufferings they endured in the world, if God allowed them to do so. That is why I give infinite thanks to divine Bounty for the holy dispositions which fill your hearts in this circumstance. Courage, my dearest daughters, rejoice; rejoice because our dearest Jesus is granting you a share in the one thing in this world that He most dearly loved, and of which His Holy Mother had the greatest share. You must not doubt that I am doing my very best for you in the presence of God.

## LETTER 217

**To a Religious of Montmartre.** *On the crosses and afflictions of one of her sisters in religion.*

I beseech my dearest daughter to help me to love God She has much, indeed, for which to show Him great love. For just as the greatest love He manifested for us was in His sufferings, so also the greatest love we can show for Him is to suffer for His love. Oh, if the seraphim were capable of jealousy, they would surely be jealous at the sight of the sorrows of our dear sister, and I venture to say that they would gladly exchange the delights of the glory that is theirs for the greatest torments that can be endured on earth. I give infinite thanks to our most adorable Crucified Saviour for allowing this dear sister to participate in His most sacred crown of thorns, and for the grace He is giving her to make such good use of her sufferings. I urge her always to continue to bear them with all possible humility, resignation and love.

274 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 218

**To a Nun of the Order of St. Benedict.** *On the good use to be made of her headaches.*

It is a special favor that our most adorable Crucified is granting you in still allowing you your headaches so that, by this means~ you may pay some small measure of honor to His divine head crowned with thorns. Exercise the utmost care, my dearest daughter, to use this illness to the best possible advantage by supporting it with humility, submission to the divine will and love for Jesus wearing a crown of thorns.

## LETTER 219

**To a Religious of Montmartre.** *On the love of God.*

I thank you, my dearest daughter, for your charitable letter. I am indeed delighted to see that you are persevering in your desire to love our most amiable Saviour and His dearest Mother more and more. I very humbly supplicate them to cast all of you, that is to say, Madame(1) and all her daughters, who are my dearest sisters, into the innermost depths of the furnace of divine love. I do this daily for you, insofar as I am able, with a most ardent desire for all of you to be inflamed, devoured and consumed by the sacred flames of that divine furnace. From the depths of my soul do I cry out, *de prof undis clamavi*, for each and every one of you: Hear, hear, O great furnace of love! It is a tiny wisp of straw that begs thee most earnestly to be cast, engulfed, lost, devoured, consumed for ever in Thy sacred flames.

The divine Heart of Jesus and Mary is this furnace whose fires and flames are fed only on hearts. Oh, how happy are the hearts which lose themselves in these divine flames! But they require hearts that are humble, pure, detached, charitable, faithful, obedient, inflamed with an at

(1). Madame de Lorraine, Abbess of Montmartre.

dent desire to please God, and utterly filled with trust in the infinite goodness of the Son of Mary and the incomparable benignity of the Mother of Jesus.

## LETTER 220

**To Reverend Mother St. Gabriel, a Religious of Montmartre.** *On trust in Mary.*

I thank you with all my heart, my dearest daughter, for the immense love you bear our most amiable Mother whose name is Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Continue to grow in this holy love, my dear daughter, and strive to make her loved by everyone of your acquaintance. Have no fears; the good and powerful Mother of God has never failed, and will never fail, the needs of those who love and serve her, and who, after God, have put all their trust in her incomparable goodness. But she has her own seasons and moments, and we must await them with patience and submission to the will of her Son, which is also her own will.

## LETTER 221

**To a Nun of Montmartre.** *On obedience during a time of illness.*

If you are ordered to eat meat, be extremely careful not to make the slightest resistance to obedience, for you will tender more honor to God by eating flesh-meat through obedience than by fasting on bread and water of your own volition.

## LETTER 222

**To One of His Nephews.** *On the occasion of some services he had received from him.*

I pray Our Lord Himself to be my gratitude; and to shower you so abundantly with His choicest graces for the life you wish me, even at the expense of your own, that you may join the ranks of the holiest priests in paradise.'

'One of the brothers of Mother Mary of the Nativity Herson entered the religious life. This letter Was ~evidently addressed to him. The wish expressed at the end pre~udes any doubt on this Point.

## LETTER 223

**To the Superior of the Seminary of Coutances.** *On the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary.*

I thank you for the great consolation afforded me by your letter. I was overjoyed to learn that the feast of the Most Holy Heart of Our Admirable Mother was so well celebrated, and that his Lordship of Coutances officiated and has promised to do so again next year. I give infinite thanks to Our Lord and His most Holy Mother.

## LETTER 224

**To a Superior.** *On how to say Holy Mass.*

I beseech each one of our dear confreres to say Mass with the utmost concentration of mind and heart on this great and divine mystery, never to hurry, and to pronounce distinctly every word said at the altar.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

277 -

## LETTER 225

**To the Superior of One of His Houses.** *On mistrust of self and frequent recourse to Our Lord.*

Let us frequently have recourse to our oracle, who is Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, in order to pray Him to lead and direct us along all our paths. Let us acknowledge that we are but darkness, and that we have an extreme need to mistrust ourselves and an infinite necessity of the enlightenment of grace.

## LETTER 226

**To the Superior of One of His Seminaries.** *On trust in God.*

There has occurred to me a way to find help, and I have communicated it to our friends who approve of it. Nevertheless, I am not counting on it in the least, but if Our Lord finds it pleasing He will avail Himself of it. Otherwise, His holy will be done. In Him alone should we place our dependence and trust. He does want us, however, to do what we can on our own part ...

## LETTER 227

**To the Same Superior.** *On another occasion.*

May God deign to keep us from depending on anything but His infinite goodness. Let us expect nothing, hope for nothing and wish for nothing save Him, placing our dependence and trust in Him alone.

278 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

## LETTER 228

**To the Superior of the Seminary at Rouen.** *On the necessity of offering daily an hour of prayer.*

Without prayer, it is impossible, my dear brother, for a Congregation to subsist in the spirit of piety and virtue necessary to render it pleasing to God and useful to the Church. To make a half-hour of prayer and not make any at all are practically one and the same thing. And yet, there is nothing more necessary to ecclesiastics. Besides, I know of no seminary where an hour of prayer is not made. If you are absolutely set on establishing a half-hour for the seminarians, I beg of you to arrange it so that our confreres may always make a full hour of prayer. Otherwise it would be better for us to give up the seminary.

## LETTER 229

**To the Superior of One of His Houses.** *To request prayers of him for the poor who were involved in lawsuits.*

I am asking you to have a novena of Masses and rosaries said for all those who are implicated in just lawsuits, and who are poor and defenceless, in order to ask Our Lord Himself to be their judge, the Blessed Virgin their counsel, St. Joseph their attorney, and St. Gabriel their petitioner.

## LETTER 230

**To a Superior.** *The Saint reproves him for neglecting to celebrate a day recommended as one of thanksgiving in the Congregation for a favor received from God.*

Is it possible, my dear brother, that you have so little esteem and affection for a grace like that one, of which you are so well aware? I must

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

279 -

confess to you that I felt, and do feel now, an inexpressible sorrow. I beg of you, and of all our brethren, too, to atone for this omission as best you can. To that end give the order that, on the first day open after the receipt of this letter, all the Masses be votive Masses: some of the Holy Spirit, some *de Cruce*, some *de Beata*, and have one *de Beata* High Mass—all of them in thanksgiving for the favors God has granted us and in reparation for our misuse of them. For the future, it will be necessary to repeat this each year.

## LETTER 231

**To a Superior.** *On how to direct subordinates.*

Always show meekness and cordiality, no matter with whom you are dealing. That is the spirit and behavior which should reign among us. It is the spirit of our Father and Mother, of whom it is written: "My spirit is sweet above honey."<sup>(1)</sup>  
(1). Ecclus. 24, 27

## LETTER 232

**To a Superior.** *The Saint complains because he refused to allow the withdrawal of a subject.*

If you persist in your impetuosity and disobedience, I shall complain about it to Our Lord and His Holy Mother. I am wholly confident that they will take the matter in hand, and will not allow you to ruin and destroy their Congregation in this manner.

It is charity alone which constrains me to write you these things. I urge you, my dearest brother, by the Sacred Heart of our most benign Father and our most bountiful Mother, to make good use of my recommendations and accept them in a spirit of humility, obedience and charity.



## LETTER 233

**To a Superior.** *The Saint asks him not to be too exacting with regard to the sick.*

It is never detrimental to the spiritual progress of a Community when one does not do what God does not want him to do. Now God does not desire anyone to observe rules when he cannot do so because of illness or some other infirmity. We should not wish to do more than what God desires. Let us do only what we can, my dearest brother, without becoming troubled or worried, submitting ourselves with peace and tranquility to the commands of His most adorable will.

## LETTER 234

**To a Confrere.** *The Saint's charity toward a sick person.*

I embrace our dear patient most cordially, in the sacred love of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary. I beseech him to rejoice and to bless God for the graces He is bestowing upon him, to abandon himself wholly to the divine will, and to entrust himself unreservedly to His infinite goodness. With all my heart do I implore our most kind Jesus and His most bountiful Mother to grant him their holy blessing, not for his death, but that he may live and recover in order to win still more souls who may bless them for all eternity. It is for that intention, in the name and on behalf of the Son and the Mother, and by virtue of their divine Heart, that I pronounce over our beloved brother: *Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria.*

## LETTER 235

**To One of his Sons.** *At the beginning of the New Year.*

God grant us the grace to make perfect use of this New Year in His service and that of His most Holy Mother, and with as much solicitude and fidelity as if this were to be our last year. With all my heart do I desire to do so. For that reason I have withdrawn into seclusion to make a good retreat, God willing, just as long as possible. Help me to do this, my dearest brother, by your holy Masses.

## LETTER 236

**To a Priest of His Congregation.** *The Saint informs him that his past wrongs are forgotten.*

I am here in Evreux, where I received your letter. It would have made me very happy if I had found therein, instead of such a long discourse, this one word of humility: *Peccavi*. For everyone knows that you have brought Me ... But let us say no more about it. It is enough, my dearest brother, for me to protest to you that my heart is yours in all truth and sincerity. .

## LETTER 237

**To One of His Priests Who Was on a Mission.** *On the persecutions (1) of which he was a victim.*

While you are contending with the seven-headed, ten-horned monster where you are, it is striving to wage war on us here. But, thanks be to God, it does not deprive us of peace. For those to whom God grants

(1). See Letters 176 and 183.

282 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

the grace to be, to have and to do what they wish, because they desire only what He wills—those, I repeat, always possess perfect peace. And then, too, I agree with our benefactors, for I have resolved to take their part against myself and my sins because I find that they are right in wanting to annihilate a sinner who deserves the wrath of God and of all His creatures, provided they do what they are doing with the zeal of divine justice and in the spirit of Christian charity. That is what I should and wish to believe.

### LETTER 238

**To the Priests of His Congregation.** *On the accomplishment of the divine will.*

The accomplishment of the divine will is the sole object of our being in this world; it is our sole business and *unum necessarium*. It is what we ask of God each day through these words: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (1) It is our proper sphere and our element, in which we shall find real repose and true life. But in order that the divine will may reign over us and govern us, it is absolutely necessary that we renounce our own wills, which are just as contrary to Him as the devil is to God. We should strive, with the help of God, to trample our wills underfoot, to crush them like a serpent and like the and Christ, in the conviction that nothing within us forms so great an obstacle to the accomplishment of the divine will as our own wills.

(1). Matt. 6, 14.

### LETTER 239

**To One of His Sons.** *On obedience.*

Perfect obedience is prompt, having no need of reasons or speeches to become convinced. What would happen if each one obeyed his own temperament and inclinations whenever it was necessary to send a subject to a different house or give him some employment?

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

283 -

### LETTER 240

**To Some of his Priests during a Mission.** *On devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

Above all things, my beloved brethren, I urge you to honor and have honored, in as many ways as possible, our most kind and amiable Mother, the most Holy Mother of Jesus, the beloved of God and the consoler of the afflicted.

## LETTER 241

**To a Priest of his Congregation.** *On crosses.*

Dearest brother:

May Jesus be eternally blessed for the share He deigns to grant us in His Cross. Oh I when shall we be able to say with truth: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."(1). How very true it is that there is nothing to be desired in this world, save to be nailed to the Cross with Jesus Christ! Therefore let us joyfully embrace our crosses, dearest brother, and try to bear them in the spirit of our most adorable Crucified Lord.

(1). Gal. 6,14.

## LETTER 242

**To a Priest of his Congregation.** *To outline to him a reply to be given to a Carmelite Sister of Caen, who believed that she had been inspired to change Communities.*

In reply, tell her that I exhort her to follow the example of her blessed Mother, St. Teresa, who one day received a command from the mouth

284 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

of Our Lord Himself to go and establish a new Order-a matter of far greater importance for her than merely changing from one convent to another. When the Saint informed her superior about her plans, she was prevented from carrying them out and was ordered to go elsewhere. Whereupon she obeyed at once, not only without accusing her superior of resisting the will of God, but even without opening her mouth to make any reply or plea. Afterwards Our Lord told her that she had been more pleasing to Him in obeying her superior than if she had made the new foundation. Let Sister St. Anne remain in peace where she is, according to that example, until I come to Caen to look into this matter more closely. In it I perceive a good many things which to me seem contrary to the spirit of God. Perhaps I am mistaken, but I should be very glad to investigate the whole thing right on the premises. Obedience does no harm. Sister may be mistaken in her revelations, but she will never make a mistake by being obedient.

## LETTER 243

**To the Superior of the Seminary of Coutances.** *Trust in God during a time of trial.*

I left all our brethren ill in Lisieux, ecclesiastics as well as laymen, with the exception of two. Nevertheless, that does not discourage me, thank God, because I do not lose sight of the divine will which does all things and does them well, and because I have the greatest confidence that Our Lord and His Holy Mother will not abandon us but Will attend to everything in the way most pleasing to them. That, thanks be to God, is all I desire.

285 -

## SHORTER WORKS

287 -

### MEMORIALE BENEFICIORUM DEI

Memoir of the principal favors which I have received from God  
through His Son Jesus Christ Our Lord and His most Holy Mother,  
for which I must incessantly praise and thank Him.(1)

Confiteantur Domino misericordiae ejus, et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.

1. God granted me the grace to be born, baptized, to make my first Holy Communion and to give a mission filled with blessings, all in a parish dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, its patroness; that is to say, the parish of Ri,(2) in the diocese of Seez.

Uni trinoque Numini honor, virtus, imperium; Proli Matrique Virgini sit laus per omne saeculum.

2. God granted me the grace to be born of parents who were in a modest condition of life,(3) who lived in His fear, and who, I have every reason to believe, died in His grace and love.

Benedicite servi Domini Domino. Qui timetis Dominum, laudate eum; universum semen Jacob glorificate eum.

3. My father and mother were married (4) three years without being able to have children, because of a curse that had been put upon them which prevented it. Then they made a vow, in honor of the Blessed

(1). Other biographical details on the Saint are found in the Prayer, placed at the beginning of *The Kingdom of Jesus*, pp. xxvi-xxvii and in the one which forms the conclusion of *The Admirable Heart* reproduced on pages 332-339. We also refer the reader to the notes in the *Letters* in this volume.

(2). A village in Lower Normandy, about nine miles from Argentan, on the road to Tours.

(3). "Not belonging to rich and proud aristocracy, nor yet in abject poverty, which has in special dangers and excludes from the boon of a liberal education." Cf. Matthew Russell, *Blessed John Eudes*, P. 4

(4). About the year 1598, Isaac Eudes of Ri married Martha Corbin, who probably lived in the neighboring village of Houay. Cf. Boulay, op. cit., Vol. x, p. 10.

288 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Virgin, to go to Our Lady of Recovery,(5) which is a place of devotion to this same Virgin in a chapel in the parish of Tourailles, in the diocese of Seez. Afterwards, my mother then being pregnant, she and my father made a pilgrimage to the same chapel, where they offered and consecrated me to Our Lord and Our Lady.

*Tuus sum ego, O Domine Jesu; tuus sum ego, O Domina Maria. Accipite et possidete me totum ut totus impendar cum Jesu et Maria, et omnibus Sanctis, in laudem et gloriam aeternam sanctissimae Trinitatis. Amen, amen, fiat, fiat. Sit nomen Domini benedictum, qui habitare facit sterilem in domo, matrem filiorum lactantem.*

4. If doctors are correct in their opinion which holds that the soul is infused into the bodies of

male children the fortieth day after conception, my soul was created by God and united with my body on the 25th of March, the day on which the Son of God was made incarnate and the Blessed Virgin Mary became the Mother of God. For I was born on the 14th of November, and consequently, having been conceived nine months previously, the 14th of February was the day of my conception. Now from that day to the 25th of March there are exactly forty days.

*Benedictum sit Cor amantissimum, et dulcissimum Nomen Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, et gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae Matris ejus, in aeternum et ultra.*

5. I was born on November 14th, in the year 1601, on a Wednesday, and baptized the following Friday evening, which was the beginning of Saturday. At that time the name of John(6) was given me by my godfather of the same name, and my godmother whose name was Mary.

*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, etc. Gratias aeterno Patri, qui dedit Filio suo nomen quod est super omne*

(5). A Shrine at Tourailles, about fifteen miles from the home of the Eudes.

(6). Boulay says in *Vie du Vénérable Jean Eudes, Vol. 1, p. 15*, that the patron Saint of John Eudes was the Apostle St. John, not St. John the Baptist. The people in the country places of France always make a distinction between John and John the Baptist. Furthermore, the Saint does not seem to have had a special devotion to St. John the Baptist, whereas he chose St. John the Evangelist as one of the patrons of the Congregation Of Jesus and Mary. Strangely enough, we find the Religious of Our Lady of Charity sending him their feast day wishes for June 24, Feast of St. John the Baptist. See Letter 34.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

289 -

*nomen, ut in nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur coelestium, terrestrium, et infernorum.*

6. Living in a parish where there was very little instruction for salvation, and where few persons ever received Communion except during the Easter season, I began to know God when I was about twelve years old, through a special grace of His divine goodness, and to receive monthly Communion(7) after having made a general confession. It was on the feast of Pentecost(8) that He granted me the grace of making my first Holy Communion. *Gratias Deo super inenarrabili dono ejus.*

Thereupon He also gave me the grace, shortly afterwards, to consecrate my body to Him by a vow of chastity, for which may He be blessed for evermore.

7. For sometime I studied under a rural teacher, a priest named Father James Blannet, from whose example and spiritual instruction I profited a great deal. Then my father sent me to Caen to continue my studies at the College of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers(9). There, on the feast of St. Dionysius,(10) in 1615, I was taken into the fourth class conducted by Father Robin,(11) with whom I studied as far as the second class inclusively. This was through a special grace of Our Lord, because he was a virtuous and pious teacher who frequently spoke to us of God with extraordinary fervor, which helped me in matters of salvation much more than I can express.

*Benedic anima mea Domino, et noli oblivisci omnes retributiones ejus.*

8. I was received into the Sodality of Our Lady,(12) at the college of the very Reverend Jesuit Fathers of Caen, about the year 1618, wherein Our Lord granted me extraordinary graces through the intercession of His most Holy Mother.

(7). At that time there were very few in the parish who received the Blessed Eucharist more than once 2 year." Cf. Russel, OP. cit., P. 7.

- (8). According to the Saint's biographers the date was May 26, 1613.  
 (9). The Royal College of the Mount founded at Caen in 1668.  
 (10). October 9.  
 (11). Francis Robin was just ten years older than his illustrious pupil; he was not a priest, and had finished his noviceship only the year before. Cf. Russel, *ibid.*, p. 8.  
 (12). One is surprised that his entrance into the Sodality was delayed until his third year at College. St. John Eudes is always mentioned among the glories of the Sodality. Cf. Russel, *ibid.*, p. 9.

290 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

*Confitebor tibi, Domine, in iota corde meo, in concilio justorum et congregatione.*

9. I received tonsure and the four minor orders in the year 1620, if I remember correctly, in Seez, in the month of September.(13)

*Omnes sancti Sacerdotes et Levitae, benedicite Dominum in aeternum.*

10. I was admitted into the Congregation of the Oratory(14) at their house on Saint Honoré Street in Paris, where I was received by the founder, Reverend Father de Bérulle, on March 25, 1623. (15)

*Benedicamus Jesum Filium Marine, et Mariam Matrem Jesu. Laudemus et superexaltemus eos in saecula.*

11. I was clothed with the ecclesiastical garb that same year, on the feast of The Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which falls on Friday of Passion Week.

*Confitebor Domino, et exaltabo nomen ejus in aeternum, quia incluit me vestimentis salutis, et indumento justitiae circumdedit me. Tibi laus, tibi honor, tibi gloria, O piissima Virgo Maria, in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

12. I began to preach during the same year, 1623, at the command of my superiors, although I was not as yet in holy orders.

*Confiteantur tibi, Domine, opera tua, et Sancti tui benedicant tibi. Gloria Patri, etc.*

13. I received tonsure and minor orders in Seez, on September 19, 1620, and the order of subdiaconate, also in Seez, in 1624. I began the reading of the Breviary on the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle.(16)

*Repleatur as meum laude, et cantem gloriam tuam, tota die magnitudinem tuam.*

14. I received the order of diaconate in Bayeux, during Lent of 1625.

(13). In entry 13 the Saint says that the date was September 19.

(14). The Oratory of Jesus was founded in 1611 by Father Peter de Bérulle, who was afterwards created Cardinal.

(15). The Feast of the Annunciation was an important day in the Congregation of the Oratory. Cardinal de Bérulle, the founder, had a special devotion to the Incarnate Word and taught his young disciples to concentrate all their spiritual efforts on the adorable Person of the Saviour. Faithful to the spirit of the Founder, St. John Eudes inculcated the devotion upon his spiritual son. It is noteworthy that he founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary on March 25, 1643.

(16). December 21.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

291 -

*Omnes sancti Levitae, magnificate Dominum; et exaltemus nomen ejus in idipsum.*

15. In the same year, 1625, the order of the priesthood was conferred upon me in Paris on the 20th of December.(17)

*Sacerdotes Domini, benedicite Dominum: laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula.*

16. Thereupon I said my first Mass on Christmas Day of 1625, at midnight, in the Saint Honoré house of the Oratory in Paris, in a chapel and at an altar dedicated to the most Holy Mother of God.

*Gloria tibi, Domine, qui natus es de Virgine, etc.*

17. In the years 1625 and 1626 God sent me a physical infirmity which prevented me from working abroad. He allowed me to spend these two years(18) in retreat, devotion to prayer, the reading of pious books, and other spiritual exercises. This was a very special grace for which I must eternally bless and thank His divine bounty.

*Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo.*

18. In 1627 pestilence(19) invaded the diocese of Seez, in the parishes of St. Christopher, of St. Peter and St. Martin of Vrigny, of Avouines and several other neighboring parishes, and the stricken inhabitants were left devoid of any spiritual help. I requested permission of Reverend Father de Bérulle, in Paris, where I was at the time, to go to their assistance, and this he granted me. Then I went to take up residence with a good priest of St. Christopher's parish, named Father Laurens~ who received me charitably into his house. Every day we would say Mass, he and I, in a chapel at St. Evroult's, not far from his house. After that I would put some consecrated Hosts into a small white steel box, which I now keep at the bottom of my trunk, but which I wore then around my neck. Thereupon we would go, this good priest and I, to call on the sick, sometimes in one parish and sometimes in another, where we would hear confessions. Then I would administer the Blessed Sacrament to them. We did this from the end of August until after All Saints' Day, when the plague had completely disappeared, and God *preserved us* so well that we never felt any ill effects from it.

(17). Saturday of Ember Days.

(18). These years were spent at the country house of the Oratory at Aubervilliers, 2 small town, in the northeast of Paris, and afterwards in the Paris community.

(19). For ten years, from 1627, Asiatic cholera ravaged every province of France.

292 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

*Confitebor tibi, Domine Rex, et collaudabo te Deum Salvatorem meum. Confitebor nomini tuo, quoniam adjutor et protector factus est mihi.*

19. In 1631 Father Gaspard de Repichon, the superior of the house of the Oratory in Caen, was stricken with the plague. God also granted me the grace to assist him in his illness, which proved fatal to him, and to administer all the sacraments and be present during his last agony and at his death; likewise I assisted two others after him and rendered them all the corporal services usually given to sick persons, after having administered the holy sacraments to them. Later one of them

recovered, but the other died. And God again preserved me from all harm.

*Propterea confitebor et laudem dicam tibi, et benedicam nomini Domini in aeternum; quoniam de interitu redemisti vitam meam. Laudent coelum et terra, mare, et omnia quae in eis sunt.*

20. In the year 1632 I labored on missions(20) in the diocese of Coutances, at Lessay, Périers, Saint Sauveur-le- Vicomte, La Haye-du-Puits, Cherbourg and Montebourg.

*Cantate Domino canticum novum, cantate Domino omnis terra.*

21. In 1635 I gave several missions in various places in the diocese of Bayeux, namely: at Beneauville, Avenay, Evrecy and Villers-Bocage.

*Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.*

22. During the summer of 1636 I took part in several missions in the diocese of Saint Malo in Brittany, at Pleurtuit, Plouer and Cancale.

*Benedic anima mea Domino, et omnia quae intra me sunt nomini sancto ejus.*

23. In September of the same year I gave a mission in the parish of Le Fresne, the cost of which was borne by Mr. de Camilly(21) On this occasion God was pleased to convert a goodly number of Huguenots. It was also on this mission that I began to have morning and evening prayers offered, as we do now on our missions.

(20). His missionary labors continued with extraordinary fruitfulness for 44 years. In the course of this long career St. John Eudes preached over 100 missions, each lasting at least six weeks.

(21). Mr. James Blouet de Camilly and his wife, Madame de Camilly, were two steadfast friends of St. John Eudes. See *Letter* 15, note 2.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

293 -

*Confiteantur Domino misericordiae ejus, et laudent cum omnes virtutes ejus\**

24. In the year 1637 I gave a mission in the parish of Ri, my birthplace, in the diocese of Séez, upon which God showered many blessings.

*Benedicite omnia opera Domini,.Domino, Laudate et superexaltate cum in saecula.*

25. In 1638 I gave three missions: the first at Bremoy, in the diocese of Bayeux, during the summer; the second in September at Estreham, the expenses of which were defrayed by Madame Laurence de Budos,(22) the abbess of Holy Trinity at Caen; the third during Advent at Le Pont-l'Eveque, in the diocese of Lisieux.

It is impossible to express the fruits garnered by God from all these missions; may He be eternally blessed and glorified for them.

26. In the year 1639 I preached during Lent at Le Pont-l'Eveque, which served as a continuation of the mission I had given there during Advent.

27. In that same year, between Advent and Lent, I gave a mission at the Abbey of St. Stephen in Caen, the fruits of which were far more abundant than can be recorded.



*Quid retribuam Domino, pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi? Tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis, et benedicam nomen tuum in saeculum, et in saeculum saeculi.*

28. During the summer of that year His Lordship Philip Cospéan, Bishop of Lisieux, had me conduct a mission in the city of Lisieux, through which God was greatly glorified.

*Tibi laus, tibi honor, tibi gloria, O beata Trinitas, unus Deus, a quo omne bonum in coelo et in terra procedit.*

29. Still in 1639 I preached during Advent in St. Peter's Church in Caen, as also the following Lent, in 1640, when Our Lord deigned to produce some wonderful effects of grace in many souls by virtue of His divine word.

*Confiteantur tibi, Domine, omnia opera tua. Laudent et superexaltent misericordias tuas in saecula.*

(22). *Madame Laurence de Budos*: The abbess of Holy Trinity Monastery was a lifelong benefactor of the Saint. See Letter 1, note 2.

294 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

30. In 1640 I also preached the Advent season in Lisieux, as well as the following Lent, in 1641, when God in His goodness continued, as always, to grant me His usual blessings.

Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore: semper laus ejus in ore meo.

31. In the aforesaid year 1640 I conducted a mission in the parish of Le Mesnil-Mauger, in the diocese of Lisieux. God lavished so many graces upon it that they are beyond the power of expression.

Ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia, ipsi gloria in saecula.

32. In 1641 I gave five missions, all filled with immeasurable blessings: The first was at Urville, near Falaise, in the diocese of Bayeux.

The second was given at Remilly, in the diocese of Coutances. It was requested and paid for by Mr. de Montfort(23) and his wife, a sister of Mr. de Bernières.(24) It was during the Remilly mission that I began to hold private conferences for ecclesiastics.

The third was at Landelle, in the same diocese. Mr. de Renty(25) induced us to give this one.

The fourth was conducted at Coutances. Father Le Pileur, the vicargeneral of His Lordship Léonor de Matignon, Bishop of Coutances, requested and paid for it.

The fifth was held during Advent in the city of Pont-Audemer, in the diocese of Lisieux. Its cost was defrayed by His Lordship Philip Cospéan, Bishop of Lisieux.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te, gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

33. Also in 1641, during the octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, God gave me the grace to formulate the plan of establishing our Congregation.

34. In that same year 1641, during the month of August, God granted me one of the greatest favors I have ever received from His infinite

(23). A brother-in-law of Mr. John de Bernières. See next note and also Letter 18, note 1. " Mr.

John de Bernières was treasurer of the City of Caen. A pious layman, he founded The Hermitage, a community of devout laymen who spent their leisure in prayer and devotional exercises. See Letter 15, note 12.

(25). Gaston John Baptist, Baron de Renty, another devout layman. See Letter 24, note 4.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

295 -

bounty, for it was then that I had the happiness of first knowing Sister Mary des Vallées," through whom His gracious Majesty bestowed on me a great number of signal graces(27). After God, I am indebted for this favor to the most Blessed Virgin Mary, my most honored Lady and dearest Mother, whom I can never sufficiently thank.

Confiteor tibi Pater, Domine coeli et terrae, quia abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis. Ita Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te. Ave Maria gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus. Amen.

35. It was also in 1641 that God granted me the grace of beginning the establishment of the house of Our Lady of Charity,(28) on the day of the Immaculate Conception of the most Holy Virgin.

Deo gratias.

36. In the year 1642 I gave three missions which were even richer in graces and blessings than all the preceding ones.

The first was held at Rouen and lasted from the beginning of the year until well on into Lent. Its cost was defrayed by the Duchess d'Aiguillon.

The second was conducted during the summer in the city of Saint Malo, in Brittany, and was paid for by His Lordship Harlay-Sancy, Bishop of Saint Malo.

The third was given in Saint U, in the diocese of Coutances.

(26). Often called "The Saint of Coutances," Mary des Vallées was the humble instrument used by God to guide St. John Eudes in many of his important undertakings. See Letter 17, note 3.

(27). In this Article 34 the Saint makes two statements: first, that it was in the month of August, 1641 that he began to know Mary des Vallées; secondly, that God bestowed upon him, during the course of his life, signal graces through the intercession of this holy woman. He does not say that these graces were given him at his first meeting with "The Saint of Coutances" as she was called by the people. It is hard then to understand how this text could have been used to substantiate the assertion that at that very moment, through the mediation of Mary des Vallées, the Saint received from heaven the triple mission of founding the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, instituting the Order of Our Lady of Charity and establishing the public cult of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The Saint's early biographers never wrote anything of the sort. This opinion, which dates from Reverend Father Le Doré, seems to us to be thoroughly groundless. Cf. the pamphlet by Reverend Charles Lebrun on Marie des Vallées et le culte public du Coeur de Jésus. Reply to Mr. Emile Dermenghem.

(28). The religious order founded by St. John Eudes for the conversion and rehabilitation of penitent women.

296 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Renedictus es, Domine, in firmamento coeli, et laudabilis, et gloriosus, et superexaltatus in saecula.

37. In the year 1643 Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, in their excessive goodness,

granted, us the grace to begin the establishment of our little Congregation(29) on March 25th, the day on which the Son of God was made man and the Blessed Virgin became the Mother of God.

Sacrosanctae Trinitati, Christi Jesu humanitati, Virginis Matris foecunditati, et omnium Sanctorum universitati, sit sempiterna laus, honor, virtus et gloria, ab omni creatura, per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.

38. In this same year we gave two missions which yielded extraordinary fruits, surpassing those of all the preceding missions, as if Our Lord had clearly wished to show everyone that He was with us and was the author of the above-mentioned establishment.

The first was given at Saint Sauveur-le-Vicomte, in the diocese of Coutances.

The second took place at Valognes, where the crowds were so large that I was obliged to preach daily outside the city, behind the chateau, and it is estimated that there were forty thousand persons present on Sundays and feast days.

It was during this mission that God granted us the grace to establish the devotion of Our Lady of Victory in a chapel which had been completely deserted and abandoned, in the parish of Alleaume, near Valognes.

Gloria aeterno Patri, gloria Filio ejus Unigenito, gloria Spiritui sancto, gloria Virgini Matri, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

39. In the year 1644 I preached during Lent at Coutances, with altogether singular blessings. I had the pleasure of lodging with Father Potier, a holy priest, at whose house Sister Mary des Vallées was living. I made it a point to see and converse with her daily, thereby gaining spiritual benefits and advantages that words can never reveal.

(29). Congregation of Jesus and Mary, religious order of priests founded by St. John Eudes on March 25, 1643. The chief objects of the Congregation are the sanctification of the clergy and the evangelizing of the people through the preaching of missions.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

297 -

Gratias Deo et beatissimae Virgini Mariae pro inenarrabilibus donis eorum.

40. During the summer of that year we gave a very celebrated and fruitful mission at Honfleur, in the diocese of Lisieux, for which may God and His most Holy Mother be for ever blessed.

We conducted several others like it during the following years in various places, namely:

At Entrees, near Corbon, diocese of Lisieux, in the year 1645;

At Vimoutiers, in the same diocese, also during 1645;

At Arnay-le-Duc, in Burgundy, in the diocese of Autun. It was procured and partially paid for by Mr. de Renty, in that same year of 1645;

And at Couches, in the same diocese and year, and also through Mr. de Renty.

41. At Thorigny, in the diocese of Bayeux. This mission was procured by Madame de Matignon, in the year 1646, during Lent.

At Le Bénv, in the same diocese, in 1646. Its cost was borne by Mr. de Renty. Sister Mary des Vallées was present, at Mr. de Renty's request, and God worked several wonders through her on that occasion.

At Lion, in the diocese of Bayeux, near Our Lady of Deliverance, in the aforesaid year 1646.

42. At Nogent-le-Rotrou, in the diocese of Chartres, in 1647.

At Fouqueville, in the diocese of Evreux. It was arranged and paid for by Madame de Bec-Thomas, who is now Madame de la Porte, the wife of Mr. de la Porte, a councillor of the Parliament of Rouen, in that same year 1647.

At La Ferté-Vidame, in the diocese of Chartres. This mission was paid for by the Duke de Saint Simon, in the aforesaid year 1647

43. At Autun, in Burgundy. It began in Advent of the year 1647 and ended shortly before Lent in the year 1648.

At Beaune, in the diocese of Autun, during Lent of that same year 1648. These last two missions were also arranged by Mr. de Renty, who defrayed their expense.

At Fère-en-Tardenois, in the diocese of Soissons. It was obtained and paid for by the Princess de Conde, the mother of the Princess de Conde and de Conti, in the aforesaid year 1648.

298 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

During these last four missions, the results of God's goodness and mercy were most extraordinary and abundant, for which may Jesus Christ be praised and glorified for all eternity.

Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus, quoniam in saeculum misericordia ejus.

44. His bounty and mercy were also very manifest and considerable on the following missions conducted by us:

At Saint Sauveur-Lendelin, in the diocese of Coutances, the birthplace of Sister Mary des Vallées, who attended this mission. We gave it in the year 1649 at the expense of Mr. de Liancourt.

At Briquebec, in the same diocese, also in 1649

At Alleaume, near Valognes, in the aforesaid year 1649.

At Saint Sever, in the diocese of Coutances. It had been requested in the last will and testament of Mr. de Renty, at that time deceased, and paid for by Madame de Renty in the same year 1649.

45. At Vesly, in the diocese of Coutances, in the year 1650. It was during this mission that God granted us the grace of establishing the devotion of Our Lady of Consolation in a chapel situated in the parish of Vesly, which previous to that time had been totally abandoned.

At Denneville, also in that diocese, in the same year 1650.

At Ravenoville, in the same diocese. Its cost was borne by Mr. de Cybrantot, in the aforesaid year 1650.

46. In this same year we began the establishment of our house in Coutances, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the most Blessed Virgin, for which may her Son Jesus and she be eternally blessed by all the creatures in heaven and on earth. Amen, amen, fiat, fiat. And this establishment was made possible through the great kindness shown us by His Lordship Claude Auvry, Bishop of Coutances, who of his own accord indicated that he desired it.

47. After this we gave a second mission in Coutances which began during Advent in 1651 and ended shortly before Lent of the year 1652. Its fruits were most abundant; for them and for those of all the preceding and following missions, eternal praise and glory be rendered to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and to the most Holy Mother of God, for ever and ever. Amen.

48. God also granted us the grace to give the following missions, namely:

At Paris, in the parish of Saint Sulpice, during Lent of the year 1651. This mission had been requested a long time before by Father Olier,(30) pastor of Saint Sulpice, who defrayed its cost.

In the city of Corbeil, diocese of Paris. It was paid for by Madame Tronson, of the parish of Saint Sulpice in Paris, during the same year 1651.

At Bernay, in the diocese of Lisieux. It was procured and paid for in part by Mr. de Croisy, lawyer for the Council, in the aforesaid year 1651.

At Marolles, in the diocese of Lisieux, in autumn of that same year 1651.

49. At Pontoise, in 1653. This mission was obtained and paid for through the efforts of Reverend Mother Joan of Jesus, a Carmelite nun and sister of his Lordship, Chancellor Segulier.

At Lisieux, our second time there, during autumn of the same year 1653

50. It was during this mission that our house in Lisieux was established, for which immortal thanks be rendered to Our Lord Jesus and His most Holy Mother.

51. At Cisai, in the diocese of Lisieux. It was requested and paid for by President d'Amfreville, in the year 1654

52. At Lingevres, diocese of Bayeux, in 1656. This mission was procured by His Lordship Francis Servien, Bishop of Bayeux, and employed by divine Providence to destroy the bad impressions that his Lordship had received of us, and to reconcile him with us.

53. At L'Etanville, near Grandcamp, in the diocese of Bayeux. It was given at the request and expense of President de Langrie in the year 1657.

54. The establishment of our house at Rouen was concluded and signed by his Lordship the Archbishop on the feast of the Ascension in 1658, and our church there was opened in the year 1659, all through the efforts and charity of Mr. de La Motte-Lambert,(31) Father Mallet, who was the vicar-general, Mr. d'Omonville, (32) Father de Fermanel, a priest and the son of Mr. de Fermanel the collector, and Mr. Cornier.

(30). Father John James Olier, the founder of the Society of St. Sulpice.

(31). Peter de la Motte-Lambert was for many years councillor of the Court of Rouen.

He later became a priest. Pope Alexander V<sup>11</sup> appointed him Vicar Apostolic in China with the title of Bishop of Berytus.

(32). Counsellor of the Rouen Parliament. See Letter 75

55. At Vasteville, in La Hague, in the diocese of Coutances, we gave a mission filled with extraordinary blessings, in the year 1659.

And we held another that year at Villedieu-les-Poëles, in the same diocese, which was no less fruitful than the preceding one. It had been the wish of the late Mr. de Remy, and its expense was defrayed by his widow.

For all these missions and establishments, for all these graces that God has granted us, I say with my whole heart and supplicate all the angels, saints and creatures to say with me: *Regi saeculorum immortalis et invisibilis, soli Deo honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

*quoque, O sanctissima Dei Mater, laus, et gratiarum actio ab omni creatura, in aeternum et ultra. Amen, amen, fiat, fiat.*

I must not forget seven other favors bestowed upon us by Our Lord and His Holy Mother, for which I owe them particular thanks.

56. The first was in connection with His Lordship Edward Molé, Bishop of Bayeux, who had been prejudiced by unfavorable impressions he had been given of us, and ordered our chapel in Caen to be closed, with the intention of completely suppressing our establishment. God frustrated these plans, undoing all that his Lordship had done against us, through l'Abbé de Sainte Croix, his brother, for shortly afterwards Bishop Molé died, and l'Abbé de Sainte Croix was appointed to the bishopric of Bayeux. He restored us to our former status, so that our chapel was reopened in the year 1653, after Easter, on the feast of the Apparition of Our Lord to His most Holy Mother after the Resurrection, a day of great consolation and extraordinary joy for us and all our friends.

*Regina coeli laetare, alleluia, quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia, resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia. Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

57. The second favor was that Our Lord Jesus Christ and His most worthy Mother granted us the grace to erect a church in Coutances, over a period of three years. This is the first church ever to be built and dedicated in honor of the most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin, who has but one Heart with her beloved Son.

*O Mater admirabilis, magnificet te omnes gentes; et benedicant fidelissimum Cor tuum omnes populi.*

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

301 -

58. The third favor concerned our most honored Sister Mary des Vallées, who had desired that her body be interred in our church. Although we were deprived for a time of this treasure, God in His goodness was pleased to restore it to us through the mediation of President de Langrie,(33) and to preserve it for us through the protection of His Lordship Claude Auvry, Bishop of Coutances, notwithstanding all the evil intents of worldly persons to rob us of it, nor all their efforts in that direction.

*Exaltabo te Domine, quoniam adiutor et protector factus est nobis, nec delectasti inimicos nostros super nos.*

59. The fourth was that, through a wonderful demonstration of His divine might and infinite mercy, God deigned to give us, contrary to all likelihood, the large square(34) in front of our house in Caen for the construction of a church in honor of the most Holy Heart of our admirable Mother, and for the erection of the other buildings and accommodations we needed, availing Himself of His Lordship Francis Servien, the bishop of Bayeux, Mr. de Longueville, the governor of the province, and Mr. de la Croisette, governor of the château of Caen, as well as of Madame de la Croisette, his wife.

*Magnus Dominus Deus noster, et magna virtus ejus, et sapientiae ejus non est numerus. Sit benedictum nomen ejus in aeternum.*

60. The fifth is that God preserved me many times, through the intercession of my most kind Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, when I found myself on the verge of losing His grace and falling into

the hell of sin.

*Confiteor tibi, Domine Deus, in toto corde meo, et glorificabo nomen tuum in aeternum, quia misericordia tua magna est super me, et eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori. Sit laus tibi, Mater gratiae, sit laus tibi, Mater misericordiae, quoniam ab hoste me protexisti. Sit laus tibi, Mater mea charissima, ab omni creatura in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

61. The sixth is that divine Mercy has had me undergo a great number of tribulations, which is one of the greatest favors accorded me, because they have been most useful to me and God has always delivered me from them.

(33). Royal Councillor and President of the Normandy Parliament.

(34). *Place des Petits-Prés, later Place Royale and today Place de la République.*

302-

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Benedictus Deus et Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, Pater misericordiarum et Deus totius consolationis, *qui quos amat castigat*. Dedit mihi per multas tribulationes transire, et consolatus est me in omni tribulatione mea, et eripuit me de omni angustia.

62. The seventh is an infinite number of other graces that Our Lord has granted me, through the mediation of His most worthy Mother, for which may they both be blessed and glorified for all eternity.

Magnificate Dominum Jesum mecum: et exaltemus nomen Matris ejus in aeternum. Confiteantur Domino misericordiae ejus: et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.

63. In the year 1659, for ten days during Advent, I delivered conferences in Rouen to the candidates for ordination, as also during the following Lent of the year 1661, with great blessings.

Benedictus es, Domine, in firmamento coeli, et laudabilis et gloriosus in saecula.

64. In the closing days of 1659 and at the beginning of the year 1660, God permitted me to be despised, reviled and calumniated to an extraordinary degree. Nevertheless, this grieved me very little and almost not at all, through a special grace of divine Bounty, for which may He be forever praised and glorified.

65. During the same year 1660, shortly before the Ascension, divine Providence sent me to Paris and engaged me, when I least expected it, to give a mission at the Quinze-Vingts, (35) on which God abundantly lavished wonderful blessings. It was His Lordship Claude Auvry, Bishop of Coutances, who had us give it and who defrayed the expenses.

Confiteantur Domino misericordiae ejus: et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.

66. Following the preceding mission, we gave a short one that lasted only ten days, in the parish of Mauregard, five or six leagues from Paris, in the diocese of Meaux.

In omni loco dominationis ejus, benedic anima mea Domino.

67. In the same year 1660 we gave another mission at Paris, in the Church of Saint Germain-des-Prés. It began On July 4th and continued

(35). A hospital for the blind in Paris. The Church connected with the institution had a very select congregation. Even King Louis XIV and his Court attended services there.

until the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady. God bestowed *even greater* blessings upon this mission than the one we had given at the Quinze-Vingts. It was Father de Pousse, the pastor of Saint Sulpice, who had us conduct it.

Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur.

68. In the years 1661 and 1662 God granted me the grace of enduring several great afflictions, partly from the slanders and calumnies of the world and partly from persons very dear to me who caused me, for many months, the most poignant sorrows and griefs I have ever suffered in my whole life.

Benedicam Dominum Jesum omni tempore: semper laus ejus in ore meo.

69. In the year 1662, on a Saturday, the eve of the Visitation of Our Lady, Our Lord provided us with the means of redeeming an annuity of three hundred sixty-nine livres which we had been paying to the city of Caen for the square in front of our house which had been granted us in fief. This was accomplished through the mediation of a man from Paris who wishes to remain anonymous, both during his lifetime and after his death. Simply out of pure charity he, or rather Our Lord and His most Holy Mother, gave us the sum of ten thousand francs, from which we took about eight thousand to effect this amortization and pay up two years of arrears owed on the aforesaid annuity. Thereupon I dedicated and consecrated the square, on that same day, in honor of the Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin. I also made a vow to God, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, to choose her as foundress of the church that we desired and hoped to erect there in honor of this same Heart, as well as foundress of the houses necessary and expedient for our Community, and never to concede the title of founder or foundress to anyone else at all.

Benedictum sit in aeternum Cor tuum amantissimum, O Maria, vita, spes et laetitia cordis nostri.

70. It was also in 1662, on the 16th of September, that Our Lord was pleased to send me a grave illness which lasted for six weeks, during which He bestowed choice graces upon me.

Benedic anima mea Domino: et omnia quae intra me sunt, nomini sancto ejus.

71. In 1663 Our Lord and His most Holy Mother granted us a very precious gift in the form of a heavy cross, with the grace to receive it from their hands and bear it with complete submission to the most adorable will of God. It was the death of our beloved brother, Father Manchon, (36) who died at Rouen on February 6th with the holiest dispositions that could be desired, after having labored more than twenty years for the salvation of souls and won a great number of them for God through numerous missions. The news of his death was brought to us here in Caen on February 8, the feast day of the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin, on which His Lordship of Bayeux celebrated Holy Mass, solemnly officiated at Vespers, was present at a very beautiful sermon delivered by Father de Than, a doctor and religious of the Abbey of St. Stephen in Caen, and then gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, all of which afforded us comfort in our great affliction.

Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore: semper laus ejus in ore meo.



72. In the same year 1663 we gave a very fruitful mission in the parish of Saint Germain de la Campagne, in the diocese of Lisieux. It was requested and paid for by Father Le Marchand, one of the four priests of that parish.

Deo gratias.

73. During that year we also conducted a second mission at L'Etanville, where we had previously given one in 1657, and it proved to be even more fruitful and celebrated than the first one had been. It too was requested and paid for by President de Langrie, who died on the 13th of December in that same year. His Lordship Francis de Nesmond, Bishop of Bayeux, arrived toward the end, administered confirmation, preached at the cemetery, and gave benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, after a powerful and very fervent exhortation.

Soli Deo honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

74. In the same year we gave a mission at Saint Lô which lasted from the 7th of October until Advent. God bestowed wonderful blessings upon it. There were twenty-five confessors, but even fifty would scarcely have been enough. A great number of restitutions and recon

(36). One of the first five members of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. See Letter 13, note 2.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

305 -

ciliations were effected, and we burned a considerable number of bad books. Gratias Deo super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.

The Abbé of Saint Lô procured it and defrayed most of the expense incurred; the rest was contributed by Mr. de Mesny, a clothier named Mr. Eliot, and several others whose names are written in the book of life.

75. In the year 1664 we gave a mission in the city of Meaux which lasted from the Epiphany to the first week of Lent inclusively. God showered no fewer blessings on this one than upon the preceding mission. His Lordship the bishop of Meaux instructed us to give it and bore the entire cost.

Sit nomen Domini benedictum, ex hoc nunc, et usque in saeculum.

76. During that year 1664, on the 20th of May, the day before the Eve of the Ascension, the first stone of our church in Caen was laid with great solemnity by Madame de la Croisette, the wife of Mr. de la Croisette, governor of the city of Caen. This she did, not in her own name, but in the name and on behalf of our divine foundress, the most Holy Mother of God. His Lordship Francis de Nesmond, Bishop of Bayeux, assisted by fifteen ecclesiastical dignitaries, performed the ceremony and celebrated the pontifical Mass of the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin, with the Introit *Gaudeamus*, the *Gloria in excelsis*, the *Credo* and the Sequence *Laetabunda*. It was sung by the clergy of Caen, all of whom were on hand, for his Lordship had ordered all the pastors to bring their processions there. The Mass was celebrated on a stage which had been erected on the spot where the church was to be built. Mr. de la Croisette was present, together with the chief personages of the city and a very great multitude of people. The sermon was preached by Father Lamy, lecturer in theology at Bayeux. On the afternoon of the following day, May 21, the eve of the Ascension, the laying of the first foundations of the church was begun.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Benedictum sit in aeternum sanctissimum Cor Mariae, pars nostra, spes et gaudium, coetusque nostri gloria. Amen.

77. In the same year 1664 we gave our second mission at Ravenoville, in the diocese of Coutances. Its cost was defrayed by Mr. de Cybrantot, and it was richly blessed by God.

306 -

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Sit nomen Domini benedictum, ex *hoc* nunc, et usque in saeculum. 78. Also in that year we gave a mission at Cretteville-en-Beaupois, in the diocese of Coutances. It was paid for in part by Madame de Malherbe, who just before her death had requested that mission and had left some money toward its expense; the remainder was furnished by other pious persons. The blessings of God were extraordinarily in evidence there.

Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino.

79. In 1665 we gave a mission at Granville, in the diocese of Coutances. Its cost was generously defrayed by the inhabitants of the city, and it yielded innumerable fruits. During this mission I was taken ill with pleurisy, from in which divine Bounty deigned to deliver me.

Benedic anima mea Domino: et omnia quae intra me sunt nomini sancto ejus, qui sanat omnes infirmitates tuas, qui redimit de interitu vitam tuam, qui coronat te in misericordia et miserationibus.

80. In the same year, 1665, we gave a mission in the city of Châlons, in Champagne. It was requested and paid for by His Lordship the Bishop of Châlons, and divine Mercy showered very abundant blessings upon it.

Gratias Deo super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.

81. In that same year, and also at the beginning of 1666, we gave a mission at St. Peter's Church in Caen. It continued from the beginning of Advent until Lent, at the partial expense of His Lordship of Bayeux, who contributed five hundred livres. Mr. and Madame de Secqueville donated about eight hundred livres, and other persons also contributed. This mission produced wonderful and abundant results, for which may God be eternally glorified.

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

82. In 1666 we also gave four other missions:

The first in the diocese of Lisieux, in the parish of Mesnil-Durand.

The second in the diocese of Coutances, in the parish of Cerisy-Montpinchon. Its cost was borne by some private individuals.

The third in the château at Caen, for the soldiers.

The fourth in the parish of Saint Eny, in the diocese of Coutances, at the expense of Father de Meautis, a priest, and the inhabitants of the place.

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

307 -

Sit nomen Domini benedictum, ex *hoc* nunc, et usque in saeculum.

83. In 1667 we continued the mission at Evreux which we had begun during the preceding year 1666, and which we finished on the Epiphany. It was given through the zeal and at the expense of

His Lordship Henry de Maupas du Tour, Bishop of Evreux. In the course of this mission we established the feast of the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin in several of the churches of Evreux, and His Lordship granted permission for this to be done throughout his diocese.

84. At the conclusion of this mission, His Lordship established our seminary at Evreux, purchasing, paying for and furnishing the house, and endowing it with an income of two thousand livres. Father Le Doux, the dean of Évreux, donated to us his house and garden, and the Priory of the Wilderness, known as St. Susan's Priory.

Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur.

85. During that same year we gave four other missions:

The first at Besneville, in the diocese of Coutances, near Saint Sauveur-le-Vicomte, at the expense of Father de Gourmont, the archdeacon of Coutances.

The second at Percy, in the diocese of Coutances, through the efforts of Madame de Matignon.

The third at Brucheville, near Le Grant-Vey, in the diocese of Coutances. It was requested by the pastor of that parish.

86. Previous to these last two missions, we had given one in the cathedral of Rouen which was paid for by Mr. Le Cornier, head of the exchequer, and several other persons of piety who had contributed to it. It began on Septuagesima Sunday and ended during the octave of Easter, suffering many trials and setbacks at first but yielding abundant fruits.

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

87. God in His goodness was pleased to grant me, that same year, several extraordinary crosses, for which may He be eternally praised and blessed.

88. From the closing days of 1667 until Lent of the following year, we also gave a mission at Marigny, in the diocese of Coutances, through the efforts of Fathers Eleine and Chardin, priests of that locality.

Deo gratias.

308 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

89. In 1668 we gave one during Lent at Carentan, in the same diocese, chiefly through the Cure de Brevands; during the summer, another at Montfarville, in the parish of Le Plessis; one in 1669, during Lent, in the borough of Montsurvent, in the same diocese; and in the month of July, one in the borough of Cenilly and at Quettehou.

90. At the end of the same year and the beginning of the following one, we conducted a long mission in the city of Rennes, in Brittany, which lasted from the first part of Advent until the Octave of Easter. It was singularly blessed, thanks to the zeal and generosity of His Lordship de la Vieuville, Bishop of Rennes who, at the conclusion of this mission, established us at Rennes, donating to us a house, a garden and an income of two thousand livres.

*Quis loquetur potentias Domini, auditas faciet omnes laudes et . us?*

91. In that same year 1670 we gave three other missions in the diocese of Rennes:

The first at . . . (37)

The second at ...

The third in the city of Fougères.

*Soli Deo honor et gloria, in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

92. In that year, too, Our Lord was pleased to favor me with several good crosses, for which may He be eternally blessed. May He grant me the grace to be able to say for evermore:

*Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in Cruce Domini.*

93. In the same year 1671 His Lordship the archbishop of Paris sent us to give a mission at Versailles, during the jubilee. It was the wish of the King, who took care of its cost. There, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed, God granted me the grace to deliver two powerful exhortations before the Queen, while I was holding the monstrance, and a third one of even greater force in the King's presence.

*Domine, salvum fac Regent, et exaudi nos in die qua invocaverimus te.* That year I was accompanied everywhere by crosses. Eternal thanks be rendered to the most lovable Crucified Saviour and to His most Holy Mother and mine.

94. Throughout the year 1672 I was almost always laden with crosses, (37). The names of the parishes where St. John Eudes preached these two missions are left blank in the copy of the Memorial which has come down to us.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

309 -

in the midst of which divine Bounty granted me so many graces that I was able to say:

*Repletus sum consolatione, superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione mea. Circumdederunt me canes multi. Pater, dimitte illis.*

95- In 1673 the King and Queen had us give a mission during the Easter fortnight at Saint Germain-en-Laye. It was most fruitful, and their Majesties appeared highly pleased with it.

*Domine, salvum fac Regem.*

96. Also in the year 1673 we gave a mission at Elbeuf, diocese of Evreux, by the command of His Lordship of Evreux. Its expense was shared by His Lordship, by the pastor of Elbeuf and by Father Le Sueur, his curate. Two extraordinary things happened during the course of this mission:

First of all, on June 11, the fourth day of the mission, as I was preparing to take my place in the pulpit to preach, there was a fearful clap (38) of thunder which filled every heart with a great fear, and penetrated into the church, scattering violence everywhere in its wake, even at the high altar; but it left the altar of the Blessed Virgin completely unscathed. This was attributed by a number of persons to the fact that the mission had been dedicated on its opening day in honor of her most Holy Heart. Two small stone columns on either side of an embossed image of the Blessed Virgin,

which is on a small door leading into the nave of the church, were shattered, but the image remained intact. The lightning did strike a priest, who was carried out half dead, his shirt having caught fire underneath. After regaining consciousness, he made his confession and received all the sacraments, dying a Christian death. Only the one priest was killed, but other persons were injured; among them, a scrivener or notary who had been praying with one knee resting on a small low box and the other off the floor. The thunder prostrated him, to teach him the respect with which one should address His Divine Majesty, and it injured both his knees, to punish him through the things in which he was deficient.

The second event which occurred during that mission was what I am about to relate. On the second day of July I preached on the subject (38). The Saint relates this fact in a letter to Mother St. Henry, a religious of Montmartre. See Letter 169.

310 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

of the most Blessed Virgin Mary. As I began to speak, toward the end of my sermon, against that vice which is incompatible with devotion to the Queen of Virgins, everyone became aware of something that sounded like frightful thunder coming from the vault of the church, although the weather was quite calm and cloudless. It seemed at first, nevertheless, to be thunder; but as people realized that it was lasting a long time, that is to say, for about the length of a *Miserere*, and that it was coming from the vault of the church, they believed that the roof was splitting open and was about to collapse, and that everyone there would be crushed to death. And then you would have witnessed the most fearful desolation in the world; the whole church resounded with the most pitiful cries, tears, groans and lamentations. Some were crying for mercy, others were calling upon the Blessed Virgin and the saints to help them, while still others prostrated themselves on the floor, and some cast themselves at the feet of nearby priests, beseeching them to absolve them from their sins. At last the noise ceased and everyone withdrew from the place more dead than alive. As for myself, I knelt down in the pulpit to adore divine Justice and do what I should for my listeners and myself.

The cause of this incident was never ascertained. For, as soon as the noise ceased, people hastened up to the vault, but they could discover nothing at all there. However, everyone deemed it to have been a manifestation of the fury of the devil against the mission, but the confusion was tied against him, for God employed these two kinds of thunder as a means of softening hardened hearts and preparing them to receive the grace of the mission, the fruits of which were many.

*Benedicite fulgura Domino: ignis et spiritus procellarum, quae faciunt verbum ejus.*

97. In the same year 1673 Her Royal Highness Madame de Guise donated twelve thousand francs to us to be used in building the Church of the Most Amiable Heart of Jesus and Mary in our house at Caen, in the manner and according to the conditions imposed by the contract drawn up in Paris, in the presence of Notaries Du Chatelet, Després and Gallois, on June 3, 1673.

*Tibi laus, tibi honor, tibi gloria in aeternum, O Cor amantissimum Jesu et Mariae.*

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

311 -

98. Toward the end of that year and at the beginning of the following 1674, divine Providence favored me with several great trials, (39) greater in some respects than all the preceding ones. For, first of all, in an attempt to destroy our Congregation, my enemies turned the King against me by persuading him that I had committed serious acts against his Majesty's interests, although I had

never even thought of such things; but this had been foretold to me a year or so previously. Secondly, in order to Prevent us from obtaining confirmation of our Congregation from the Holy See, they sent a document from Paris to Rome which was crammed with calumnies and lies about us.

99. In the years 1675 and 1676 our most lovable Crucified Saviour honored me with several weighty crosses by permitting defamatory libels,(40) filled with atrocious insults and slanders, to be published against me practically throughout the whole of France. These accused me of a great number of heresies, from which, thanks be to God, I am far removed. However, all that vanished into thin air.

*Deo gratias et Mariae, super inenarrabilibus donis ipsorum. Pater, dimitte illis.*

100. In 1674 our dear Father James de la Haye de Bonnefond,(41) who had gone to Rome, returned with several Bulls(42) for us from our Holy Father Pope Clement X: a Bull which authorizes us to give missions

(39). Father Boniface, a Flemish priest, had been sent to Rome by St. John Eudes to obtain the formal approbation of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. This was not granted. Wishing to secure some return for the very great expense which his mission put upon the Eudist Fathers, Father Boniface, in the year 1662, presented a petition to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in which he suggested that, as a barrier against heretical opinions that were creeping into many countries, the members of this Congregation were ready to add in their obligations a vow binding them to uphold all opinions and doctrines tending to favor the authority of the Holy See, even if they were doubtful. Twelve years later this petition was found by the Saint's enemies, who brought it in the notice of Louis XIV as an attack on the pretensions of the French King. Although St. John Eudes made a formal declaration that he had no part in Father Boniface's petition, he fell under Louis's displeasure. Father Boniface also declared on two different occasions that the Saint had nothing to do with the petition. The King refused to be appeased. Through the intervention of His Excellency Harlay de Champvallon, Arch. bishop of Paris, King Louis XIV finally consented to receive the Saint. See Letter 202.

(40). The most defamatory of these libels was *Lettre à un docteur de la Sorbonne*, by Father Dufour. See Letter 183.

(41). See Letter 126, note 1.

(42). See Letter 179, note 1.

312 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

anywhere in France, with a plenary indulgence; a Bull confirming the statutes of our Congregation; and six other Bulls for our houses at Caen, Rouen, Coutances, Lisieux, Evreux and Rennes, giving us the power to establish Confraternities of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary in our churches and chapels, with many indulgences. From the lips of our Holy Father, and consequently from the adorable lips of Our Lord Himself, these churches and chapels received the name, in the aforesaid Bulls, of *The Churches and Chapels of the Divine Heart of Jesus and Mary*, which afforded me extraordinary consolation in the midst of all the above-mentioned troubles.

*Gratias infinitas, immensas, aeternas, amantissimo Cordi Jesu et Mariae.*

101. In the years 1674, 1675 and 1676 we gave several missions in the dioceses of Bayeux, Coutances, Lisieux, Evreux and Rennes. God lavished His choicest blessings upon them, particularly on the one that we gave at Saint Lô in 1676, our third time there, during which divine Bounty converted a considerable number of Huguenots.

*Deo gratias et Mariae.*

102. In the year 1676 Our Saviour bestowed upon me many painful crosses, for which may He be blessed for all eternity.

*A very painful affliction turned into consolation.* From the 25th of November, in the year 1673 to the 17th of June, 1679 I suffered a terrible affliction as the result of a thoroughly false calumny against me which had been implanted in the King's mind. It accused me of having presented a petition(43) to our Holy Father the Pope, requesting permission to render obedience to him *etiam in iis quae dubium movere possunt*;(44)which is something that has never entered my mind. Nevertheless, the King was persuaded to regard it as a crime, and this threatened to bring about the destruction of our Congregation. But God in His goodness prevented it, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, in the following manner. Having made a vow to God to dedicate one of the principal chapels of our church in Caen in honor of her Immaculate Conception, I received a letter three days later from His Lordship Claude Auvry, a former bishop of Coutances, addressed to(43). The Boniface Petition.- See note 39  
(44). Even in matters that might raise doubts.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

313 -

me at Caen on behalf of His Lordship the archbishop of Paris, and stating that the King had lost the unfavorable impression that he had been given of me, and that I should come to Paris to thank his Majesty. I went, and upon being presented to the King by His Lordship of Paris, I spoke to him as follows:

"Sire, I have come to your Majesty's feet to render you my most humble thanks for your kindness in granting me the honor and consolation of seeing you once more before I die, and to protest to you that there is no man in this world who has more zeal and fervor than I where your Majesty's Service and interests are concerned. This is the sentiment in which I desire to spend and use the little time left me in this life. I also beg of you most humbly, Sire, to honor us with your royal protection, and to continue to honor us with your graces and favors. This is what I hope from that wonderful benevolence which rejoices and delights the hearts of all who have the honor of speaking to your Royal Majesty, and which never fails to send them away filled with joy and comfort."

*The King's reply.* The King, having listened very attentively and with a kind expression, spoke to me in the following manner:

"I am very pleased to see you; I feel quite sure that you are doing a great deal of good in my Kingdom. Continue to work as you are doing. I shall be very pleased to see you again, and will help and protect you on whatever occasions may arise."

Those words of the King filled me with an inexpressible happiness. So it was, then, that after a desolation of six years' duration, the Father of Mercy and God of consolation deigned to dry my tears and change my most bitter anguish into unbelievable joy, for which may He be blessed and praised for all eternity, Immortal thanks and praises, too, be given the Mother of graces and blessings, through whose hands pass all the blessings that divine Bounty grants to us.

*Another affliction.*

103. On my return from Paris I developed a hernia as the result of the jolting of the coach in which I was riding, as it traveled along a very rocky road. This caused me a great deal of physical pain, but far

greater suffering of mind, inasmuch as it deprived me of the power to labor on missions for the salvation of souls.

*Gloria tibi, Domine, qui natus es de Virgine.*

104. In the year 1680, during the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi, God granted us the grace to convene the first general assembly of our little Congregation, with the purpose of electing someone to replace me, particularly after my death. Father Blouet de Camilly (45) was unanimously elected to be Superior General of the Congregation for life. This was a very great consolation to me, and all the greater because it has been preceded by very acute sorrow and anguish, for reasons I cannot record here.

*Te Dominum Jesum laudamus, te Dominam Mariam, Matrem Jesu dignissimam, et Matrem nostram amantissimam, benedicimus. Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria.*

105. Today, July 25th of the same year 1680, (46) God granted me the grace to finish my book, *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God*.

*O sacrosancta Trinitas, aeterna vita cordium, Cordis Mariae sanctitas: In corde regnes omnium. Amen.*

(45). Father John James Blouet de Camilly, eldest son of James Blouet and Anne Le Haguais. Father Blouet entered the Congregation of Jesus and Mary on February 8, 1655, at the age of 23. He died on August 11, 1711. See Letter 11, note 2; also Letter 76, note 1.

(46). St. John Eudes died on August 19, 1680.



**VOW(1)**

**or Prayer to Jesus, to offer himself as a sacrifice and victim to be  
immolated to His glory and pure love.**

(1637) *Jesus, Mary*

O my most amiable Jesus, I adore Thee and glorify Thee endlessly in the most bloody martyrdom Thou didst suffer through Thy Passion and Cross.

I adore Thee and bless Thee with all my might in the state of offering and victim in which Thou art present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, where Thou art continually sacrificed for the glory of Thy Father and love of us.

I honor Thee and venerate Thee in the most sorrowful martyrdom suffered at the foot of Thy Cross by Thy Holy Mother.

I praise Thee and magnify Thee in the various martyrdoms of Thy saints who endured so many atrocious torments for love of Thee.

I adore and I bless all the thoughts, intents and infinite love Thou hast had from all eternity with regard to all the blessed martyrs who have been in Thy holy Church since the beginning and will continue to be there until the end of the world.

I adore and I venerate in every way I can Thy extreme desire and most ardent thirst to suffer and die in Thy members until the end of the world, in order to fulfill the mystery of Thy Holy Passion and glorify Thy Father through the way of suffering and death until the end of time.

In honor of and in homage to all these things, and in union with the boundless love in which Thou didst offer Thyself to the Father, from the first moment of Thy Incarnation, as a sacrifice and victim' in order to be immolated for His glory and for love of us through the most sorrowful martyrdom of the Cross; and also in union with the love of Thy Holy Mother and all Thy holy martyrs: I offer and aban

(1). It is interesting to note that John Eudes's saintly director, Father Charles de Condren, also took a vow of martyrdom. Cf. Emile Georges, *Saint Jean Eudes*, p. 39.

don myself, I vow and consecrate myself to Thee, O Jesus my Lord in the capacity of sacrifice and victim, that I may suffer in body and soul, according to Thy pleasure and with the help of Thy holy grace, all manner of pains and torments, and even shed my blood and sacrifice my life for Thee through any death pleasing to Thee; and this for Thy sole glory and for pure love of Thee.

I vow to Thee, O my Lord Jesus, never to revoke, that is, never to make a formal act of disavowal, of this my oblation, consecration and sacrifice of myself to the glory of Thy Divine Majesty. And should there arise an occasion on which I should have either to die or to renounce Thy holy faith, or else do something of consequence against Thy divine will, I make a vow and promise to Thee, as firm and constant as possible, while trusting in Thine infinite goodness and the help of Thy grace, to confess, acknowledge, adore and glorify Thee in the presence of everyone, at the price of my

blood, my life and all the martyrdoms and torments imaginable, and to suffer a thousand deaths, with all the tortures of earth and hell, rather than deny Thee or do anything serious that is contrary to Thy holy will.

O good Jesus, receive and accept this vow of mine and this sacrifice which I make to Thee of my life and my being in homage to and by the merits of the most divine sacrifice Thou didst make of Thyself to Thy Father on the Cross. Look upon me henceforth as an offering and victim dedicated to be wholly immolated to the glory of Thy holy name. Grant, through Thy great mercy, that my whole life may be a perpetual sacrifice of love and praise for Thee. Let me live a life that may perpetually imitate and honor Thine own holy life and that of Thy Blessed Mother and holy martyrs, that I may never pass a day without suffering something for love of Thee; and that I may die a death conformable to Thy holy death.

That is what I beg of Thee very humbly and earnestly, O most kind Jesus, by that ardent love which brought Thee to a death on the Cross for us, by that precious blood Thou didst shed, by that most sorrowful death Thou didst suffer, by the overwhelming love Thou didst bear for Thy most Holy Mother, the Queen of martyrs, by Thy love for all the holy martyrs and their love for Thee; in short, by all Thou dost love and all who love Thee, in heaven and on earth.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

317 -

O Mother of Jesus, Queen of all martyrs, O ye holy martyrs of Jesus, implore this same Jesus, I beseech you, to effect these things in me, through His infinite goodness, solely for His glory and most pure love. Offer Him this vow of mine, and pray Him to confirm and fulfill it by virtue of His precious blood, just as I am about to sign it with my own blood in testimony of my desire to shed it even to the last drop for love of Him.

Done at Caen, in the Oratory of Jesus, this 25th day of March, 1637.(2)

JOHN EUDES.

Live Jesus and Mary, Whom I love more than my life.

Jesus, Mary

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

Amo te, amantissime Jesu, amo te, bonitas infinita: amo te ex toto corde meo, ex tota anima mea, et ex totis viribus meis, et magis atque magis antare Polo.

Beati qui ad coenam nuptiarum Agni vocati sunt! Beati qui laverunt stolas suas in sanguine Agni! Majorem charitatem nemo habet, quam ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis. Amen.

Veni Domine Jesu. Jesus Maria. Jesu fortitudo Martyrum, miserere nobis. Regina Martyrum, Pea pro nobis. Omnes sancti Martyres, clarificate et orate Jesum pro nobis. Jesus Maria.

(2). The date is significant. St. John Eudes had been trained in the school of de Bérulle and de Condren, who held up the Incarnate Word as the perfect model of the Christian and the priest. In his spiritual classic, *The Kingdom of Jesus*, Part 1, P. 75, St. John Eudes explains that at the moment of His Incarnation Jesus Christ took a vow of obedience and martyrdom, thus offering Himself as a victim entirely immolated to the glory of His Eternal Father. It was in memory of this vow that the

Saint choose the Feast of the Annunciation to consecrate his whole life to God as a victim to His glory and pure love. Cf. Georges, Op. Cit., P. 41

318 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

### CONTRACT(1)

#### of Holy Matrimony with the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

(1668) *Jesus, Mary, Joseph*

O admirable and most amiable Mary, Mother of God, only Daughter of the eternal Father, Mother of the Son of God, Spouse of the Holy Ghost, Queen of heaven and earth, it is no wonder thou art willing to be the spouse of the least of all men and greatest of all sinners, Who had the boldness to choose thee from his tenderest years to be his most unparalleled spouse, and to consecrate his body, heart and soul wholly to thee. The truth is that thou dost wish to imitate the infinite goodness of thy Son Jesus Who is willing to be the spouse of a sinful and wretched soul. May all the angels, saints, creatures and the Creator Himself praise and bless thee eternally for it, and atone for all my countless acts of ingratitude and infidelity against thee.

Since thou hast already shown such great kindness, O most charitable of all creatures, deign to accept the conditions of our holy union which I am about to write down on this paper. It will serve as the contract, or rather, as a copy of the contract, of which I implore the Holy Spirit to be the notary, that He may record it in thy Heart and in mine in the golden and indelible letters of His pure love.

Whereas the husband is the head and superior of the wife, and whereas she is subject to his authority, I wish to respect and honor thee as my Queen and sovereign Lady, and I desire my whole being, with all its dependencies and appurtenances, to be fully subject to thy power, that thou mayest dispose of them all according to thy pleasure.

Whereas a portion of the wife's dowry remains in the hands of her husband-an arrangement popularly known as a changeable gift-who

(1). A somewhat similar fact is found in the life of St. Robert, Abbot of Citeaux. St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, once told his aunt that when he was very young he chose the Blessed Virgin Mary as his spouse and placed a gold ring on the finger of her statue in token of his promise.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

319 -

uses it as he deems best, I desire to appropriate and retain nothing of the dowry thou hast brought me, that is to say, the numberless graces and favors which the heavenly Father has granted me through thy intercession. I willingly surrender all claims to any advantage for my private interests, placing these graces in thy hands, together with all the fruits they have yielded, so that thou mayest return them to Him Who is their primary source, and to Whom alone may all glory for them be eternally rendered.

Whereas the wife, after her husband's death, retains only a portion of her wealth as her marriage settlement, it is my intention, O my most honored Lady, that all that I am, all of which I am capable, all that I possess in body and soul, nature and grace, all that I hope for in glory, and in general, all that belongs to me in either the spiritual or temporal order, or that depends on me in any

way whatsoever, be thine entirely and without reservation, that thou mayest do with them what thou wilt. But all that is nothing. O, had I a hundred million worlds, how gladly would I give them to thee, O my Holy Spouse! Truly, if through the impossible I were a divine being, like thy Son Jesus, I would give myself to thee with the utmost happiness, in union with the same love with which He gave Himself to thee.

Whereas the wife must conform to her husband and become like him, according to these divine words: *Faciamus homini adjutorium simile sibi*,<sup>(1)</sup> I desire with all my heart to strive to become like thee, O my Queen, through a careful imitation of thy holy life and eminent virtues. I beseech thee to use thy God-given power to destroy in me whatever may prevent my doing so, and to impress upon me a lively image and perfect likeness of thyself.

Just as husband and wife must live together in the same house, so also do I desire to dwell with thee in the most amiable Heart of Jesus, which is also thy Heart. Grant that I may never leave it, I beg of thee, but that I may have no other dwelling in time and in eternity.

Just as the wife is inseparable from her husband and is obliged to follow and accompany him everywhere, so also do I beseech thee, my all-good, to be ever with me, in all places, at all times and in all my  
(1). Gen. 2, 18.

320 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

actions, that thou mayest guide and govern me in all things, according to the most adorable will of thy Son.

Just as the honor of the wife, which is her husband's glory, must be very dear and precious to him, so do I protest my desire to be especially fervent in honoring and having honor paid thee in every way I can, with the help of the grace of thy Son.

Just as husband and wife must love each other with a love that is sincere, constant and cordial, so have I every imaginable proof, O my all-lovable one, of thine incomparable affection for me; thou dost likewise behold the fires and flames, the sincerity and tenderness of my heart in thy regard. O my all-desirable Queen, what do I wish, what do I love, in heaven and on earth, after thy Jesus and mine, other than thee! O thou sole object of my heart, second only to my God, what would I not do and suffer for thy love! I know there is nothing more pleasing to thy Son and thee than to labor for the salvation of souls. Surely thou art aware of my feelings in that respect! O, that I had all the hearts of men and angels, with all the capacity to love which ever was and ever shall be, that I might avail myself of them to love Jesus, the Son of Mary, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus! But even then I should not be content. One must have the heart of a God in order to love worthily a God-Man and a Mother of God. Thanks be to Him, I have such a one, for, since Jesus has given Himself wholly to me, His Heart is consequently mine. Yes, the Heart of Jesus is my own heart. It is in the love of this Heart that I wish to love my most kind Saviour and His most amiable Mother, and that I desire to love them deeply, ardently, tenderly, solely and eternally. I wish to love only what they love, I hate only what they hate, rejoice over nothing save what affords them happiness, grieve over nothing except what displeases them. And I wish to find all my consolation and delight in thinking of them, conversing with them, speaking of them and hearing them spoken of, being active in their service, suffering for love of them, and dying ten thousand times, were it possible, for Jesus and Mary.

Just as husband and wife have a mutual obligation to aid and console each other in their infirmities, illnesses and afflictions, it is my desire to serve, help and console thee, according to the

power God has granted me, in the persons of the poor, sick and afflicted, in whom I shall see

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

321 -

thee as the mother in her children. I beseech thee, too, my all-gracious one, to help, protect and sustain me in my spiritual and corporal needs.

just as husband and wife should have but a single heart and soul, grant, O Queen of my heart, that I may have but one soul, one mind, one will and one heart with Thee. To that end, deprive me of my own heart and give me thine, according to thy word, that I may sing for all eternity:

*O qualis haec benignitas!  
Ardens Mariae charitas  
Meum sibi cor abstulit,  
Suum mihi Cor praebuilt.*

May this sacred Heart of my dearest Mary be the soul of my soul and the spirit of my spirit; may this amiable Heart be the principal of my life and all my thoughts, words, actions, feelings and affections; may I perform all my actions and bear all my trials and afflictions in the love, charity, humility, submission, patience and the other holy dispositions and intentions of this most holy Heart.

Just as the wife should redouble her care of her husband and her affection toward him during his last days and at the hour of his death, so also do I ask thee, O beloved of my soul, to be present and near me personally On my last day and during my final hour, according to thy promise, in order to defend me against the enemies of my salvation; to strengthen and comfort me; to prepare me for a holy death; to give me a share in the holy dispositions with which thou didst die; to receive my soul when it leaves my body; to lodge it within thy bosom and thy maternal Heart, for thou art the Mother and Spouse of my Jesus; to elevate it unto thyself in heaven, that there I may love, praise and glorify for ever the most Holy Trinity, together with thee and with all the angels and saints.

Just as the wife should care for the children that her husband has left her after his death, so do I beseech thee with all my heart, O my all-charitable one, to take very special care of all the spiritual children God has given me; they are thy children, too, since He has given them to me through thy intercession. I place them all, from this moment forward, in thy loving care, beseeching thee to preserve them so well

322 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

that not a single one may perish. I also place in thy blessed hands the Communities over which divine Providence has given me charge, or with which He has granted me a special bond of unity; and all those persons who have any friendship and charity toward me, or who have recommended themselves to my prayers, or to whom I have any obligation whatsoever, without forgetting those who have felt any hatred or aversion toward me, for whom I pray thee to ask pardon of divine Mercy.

But above all else, I recommend to thee most earnestly, O my loving Mother, the little Congregation of Jesus and Mary, which thy Son and thou have given me, entreating thee, O my Queen, by all the kindness of thy most benign Heart, to make up all my omissions in its regard; to annihilate anything that may obstruct the designs of God for it; to protect, bless and govern it in all things. Remember, O most kind and powerful Virgin, that thy Son Jesus is its Founder, Superior and Father; that thou art its foundress, superioress and mother; and that it is wholly dedicated and consecrated to thy most Holy Heart. Grant then, I beseech thee, that all the children of this Congregation may be true

children of thy Heart, and that to that end they may make a complete renunciation of their own wills in order to comply *everywhere* and in all things with the most adorable will of God. Expel all those who wish to live according to the desires of their own hearts, and do not allow anyone of that character to enter. Bless and favor in every way those who faithfully observe the rules which are established in this Congregation. Bless, too, with thy holiest blessings all who love and protect it. But most of all do I ask of thee, O my amiable Princess, that thou grant it a superior pleasing to thy Heart, who may make amends for the countless mistakes I have made in its regard, and who may rule it in thy spirit, which is the spirit of thy Son.

Those are the conditions of the contract of holy matrimony into which thou has desired me to enter with thee, O Queen of heaven, as with the most holy spouse of my spirit and heart. Once again I entreat thee to look with favor upon it and to sign it with the blood of thy virginal Heart, just as I am going to sign it with my own blood, in the ardent desire of affixing my signature with the last drop of my heart's blood. Grant that it may be accepted and signed by thy adorable

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

323 -

Father, Who is also my Father; by thy Son Jesus, my Redeemer; by thy Spouse, the Holy Spirit; by thine own father, St. Joachim; by thy mother, St. Anne; by thy spouse, St. Joseph; and that thy good guardian angel St. Gabriel, my own guardian angel, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, all the saints who had particular devotion for thee while they were on earth, and all the other angels and saints, may sign it as witnesses; and that the Holy Spirit may imprint thereon the eternal seal of His divine love. Amen, amen! So be it!

Dated at Caen, in the house of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, on Saturday, this 28th day of April, 1668.

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest  
of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

## LETTER TO THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN

Most august Mother of God, most glorious Empress of heaven and earth, prostrate in mind and heart at the feet of thy Supreme Majesty, in all the humility, respect and devotion of all the hearts that love thee, and desiring that my mind, understanding, memory, will, heart, tongue, hand and pen may render thee all possible homage, I venture, though infinitely unworthy, to take the liberty of writing thee this letter, in imitation of others among thy children.

First of all, it is to protest to *thee*, in the face of heaven and earth, that I acknowledge and honor *thee* as the most worthy sanctuary of the Holy Trinity, the most worthy daughter of the eternal Father, the dearest Mother of His Son, the beloved Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the most powerful Queen of the universe, my sovereign Lady, my most honored Mother, and the holiest, wisest, sweetest, happiest and most beautiful, powerful, generous, compliant, glorious, admirable and amiable of all creatures.

Secondly, it is to offer *thee* all the respect, service, veneration, praise, honor and glory which are due to thy grandeurs, and have been and ever shall be rendered in all times past, present and yet to come.

Thirdly, it is to render thee all possible gratitude and thanksgiving

for the countless results of thine incomparable goodness toward me and all created things.

Fourthly, it is to ask pardon of thee most humbly and to make honorable amends for all my ingratitude, negligence and unfaithfulness toward thee, and for all the wrongs and offenses thou hast received from men and demons; and to offer thee, in supplement and reparation, the most amiable Heart of thy Son Jesus, all aflame with love for thee, together with all the love and honor which has been and ever shall be rendered thee in time and in eternity.

Fifthly, it is to beseech thee most humbly, by the most ardent love which thy Son Jesus bears thee, by that which thou bearest Him, and by all the kindness of thy maternal Heart, to obtain from Him pardon for me for all my sins, to atone for all my offenses against His Divine Majesty, to destroy within me all that is displeasing to Him, to establish perfectly in me the reign of His divine love and adorable will, to let me share with thee in all things, in whatever way is most pleasing to Him, to fashion me wholly after His Heart and thine, to give me knowledge, if such be His pleasure, of the time when He shall be pleased to call me unto Himself, to assist me at my death, to obtain the favor for me from my Saviour that my last breath may be an act of pure love for Him and thee, to receive my soul when it leaves my body, to present it to my Jesus, to lodge it in His Heart and thine, and to plunge, engulf and consume it in that fiery furnace of divine love for evermore.

These are the most humble and earnest prayers which I venture to offer thine incomparable benignity, O Mother of grace, not only for myself but for all thy children, with whom I desire to have but one heart and soul in order to live the same life and die the same death in the holy love of the most amiable Heart of Jesus and Mary, to whom and through whom I am,

Most august Mother of my God, most gentle Queen of my heart,  
and most pious and good Mother of my soul, Thy Sovereign Majesty's Most humble, obedient,  
grateful and sincerely devoted servant in all things,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

### LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF SAINT JOHN EUDES

(1671) Jesus, Mary

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and in honor of and union with the last will and testament made by my Jesus on the final day of His mortal life on earth, I am drawing up this will solely for the glory of my God, and in the following form:

1. I bequeath myself with all my heart to my Saviour, that I may unite myself with the perfect faith of His most Holy Mother, His Apostles, His saints and the entire Church; and in union with this faith, I protest before heaven and earth that I wish to die as a child of the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, and in the belief of all the Christian truths she teaches; and I offer myself to my God so that I may suffer, with the help of His grace, all imaginable torments and all possible deaths to that end.

2. With all my heart do I bequeath myself to the infinite love through which my Saviour died

on the Cross for me and for all men; and in union with this love, I accept and embrace my death, whenever and however it may please Him to send it, in honor of and thanksgiving for His holy death and that of His glorious Mother. I most humbly beseech Him, by the Holy Heart of this Blessed Mother, and by His own adorable Heart broken and shattered for love of us and by the sorrows of the Cross, to grant me the grace to die in His love, through His love and for love of Him.

3- Prostrate in spirit at the feet of all my brethren and all those persons to whom I have given any dissatisfaction or bad example, I ask pardon of them with my whole heart, entreating them to forgive me for the love of Our Lord, and to beg Him to show mercy to me.

4- With all my heart I bequeath myself to that boundless charity which prompted my Saviour, while He was hanging on the Cross, to offer this prayer to His eternal Father for those who were sacrificing Him: *Pater, dimitte illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt.*(1) And in union (1). Luke 23, 34.

326 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

with this same charity, I say to my heavenly Father from the very bottom of my heart for all those who have offended me in any way whatsoever, provided, of course, it were at all possible to offend a wretched sinner like me: *Pater, dimitte illis, non enim sciebant quid faciebant.*

5. I declare that it is my intention to receive Holy Viaticum and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. I beseech my dearest brethren to administer them to me while I still have the use of reason, and I give myself to my God in order to unite myself with all the holy dispositions with which any of the saints have ever received them. And should it come to pass that I am deprived of the last sacraments, I implore my most benign Redeemer to accomplish in me the purposes for which He instituted them, and to do so for His sole glory.

6. Should it happen that I lose my use of reason and exterior senses, I concur with my whole heart in all the acts of faith, hope, charity, humility, resignation, contrition and others which may be said for me, whether on earth or in heaven; and I beseech my dear brethren, my guardian angel, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, all the other angels, St. Joseph, St. Joachim, St. Anne, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, St. Lazarus, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Martha, all the holy Apostles, martyrs, priests and virgins, all the holy innocents, all the saints in paradise, and in particular, my Blessed Mother, the most Holy Virgin, to supply my deficiencies, discharge all my duties toward God and perform for me all that will be most pleasing to His Divine Majesty. I also implore them to protest that I wish every throb of my heart and veins, and every breath, to be as so many acts of contrition, resignation, praise and love for my Creator and Saviour.

7- With all my heart do I will myself to the infinite love through which my Jesus gave His holy soul to His Father with these words: *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum;*(2) and in union with this same love, I bequeath my own soul to the Father of mercy, the God of all consolation, with the same words: *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.* I place it also in the most amiable Heart of Jesus and Mary, that fiery furnace of eternal love, entreating them most (2). Luke 23, 46.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

327 -

humbly to embrace, consume and transform it into a very pure flame of that divine love.

8. If I had any desire, I should wish my body to be interred in our church at Caen, which is



consecrated to this same Heart of Jesus and Mary. But I abandon both my body and soul completely to the divine will, submitting myself most willingly to all it may be pleased to ordain in time and in eternity, joyfully consenting that my body be reduced to a powder, and that each grain of dust from it be a perfect act of adoration and praise for the mystery of the burial of my Saviour and His most Holy Mother.

9. I implore my dearest brethren to bury me in the little white habit of my loving Mother, including the white silk girdle and the heart bearing a red silk cross, as well as the alb I have marked for that purpose, together with the holy scapular, the holy rosary given me by Sister Mary des Vallées, the original of my last will and testament, of which this copy will survive, the *Contract of Marriage* that I made with the Blessed Virgin, and above all, the holy image which is fashioned in part from holy relics and is kept in a small niche of gilded copper.

to. To the fullest extent of my will do I give myself to that incomprehensible love through which my Jesus and my all-good Mother gave me their most amiable Heart in a special manner. In union with this same love, I bequeath this Heart (3) as something which belongs to me, and of which I can dispose for the glory of my God-I bequeath it, I repeat, to the little Congregation of Jesus and Mary to be the portion, the treasure, the chief patron, the heart, life and rule of the true children of this Congregation. In like manner do I offer and dedicate our Congregation to this divine Heart, to be consecrated to its honor and praise for time and eternity. I beseech and urge all my beloved brethren to strive to render It and have It rendered all the honor within their power; to celebrate with the most fervent devotion possible its feasts and

(3). This is noteworthy in view of the fact that St. John Eudes was the first to preach the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Holy Heart of Mary. He considers the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary as belonging to him "in a special manner" and therefore leaves them to his spiritual sons and daughters as a priceless heritage. Cf. *The Sacred Heart of Jesus* (New York, 1946), p. XX.

328 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

Offices on the days indicated in our *Proper*, and to give exhortations on this subject in all their missions; to strive to impress on their hearts a perfect likeness of the virtues of this most Holy Heart, and to look upon It and to follow It as the pristine rule of their lives and conduct. I entreat them to give themselves to Jesus and Mary in all their actions and exercises in order to perform them in the love, humility and all the other dispositions of their Sacred Heart, so that, by this means, they may love and glorify God with a Heart truly worthy of God, *Corde magno et animo volenti*, and that they may be like unto the Heart of God and true children of the Heart of Jesus and Mary.

ii. I likewise bequeath this most precious Heart to all my dearest daughters, the religious of Our Lady of Charity, to the Carmelites of Caen, and to all my other spiritual children, particularly those who have a special love for their most unworthy Father, and whose names are written in the book of life. I give all of them, and each one individually, to this most kind Heart for the aforesaid intentions indicated in the preceding Article, and I promise them that, if my Saviour grants me forgiveness, as I hope from His infinite mercy and the incomparable charity of His Blessed Mother, I will take very special care of them in heaven. I hope that God may grant me the grace to assist them in their hour of death, in company with this most kind Virgin.

12. Prostrate at the sacred feet of my Jesus, Whom I adore as the Institutor, Founder, Superior and Father of our Congregation, as also at the feet of the Queen of heaven, whom I honor as the institutress, foundress, superioress and mother of that same Congregation, I implore them most humbly and earnestly, by their most benign Heart, and I ask all paradise to join in my prayer, to replace me with a man to govern it who will be pleasing to their Heart, make reparation for the

incomparable mistakes I have made in its regard, and guide it in their spirit. And because I know better than anyone else the qualities and dispositions of the members of the Congregation, I beg my dear brethren to approve of my telling them that there is no one indeed so well suited in every respect for this position as our dearest Brother . . . (4)

(4). There is a blank in the original manuscript. Father Costil in *Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie* says that the Saint undoubtedly had Father Blouet de Camilly in mind. Cf. Boulay, *Op. cit.*, Vol. 4, P. 460.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

329 -

13. I also ask them to regard the Rules and Constitutions which I leave them, as well as all the Offices and prayers which are found in the *Proper* and *Manual* of our Congregation, not at all as something proceeding from me, but as being given to them by the hand of Our Lord and His most holy Mother. I beg them to observe and practise the rule conscientiously for the love of Jesus and Mary, for I declare to them that the Son and the Mother will love, protect and bless in every way those who do so, and that they will deal with them in this world and in the next as true children of their Sacred Heart; but that they will refuse to consider as children of their Congregation, either in life or in death, those who despise or neglect these Constitutions or Offices. (5)

14. I bequeath my sacred, heart-shaped reliquary of silver, the one that I wear, to the sacristy of our house at Caen, to be inseparably attached to the image of the most Holy Virgin which is exposed on the altar whenever her Litanies are sung.

15. I bequeath my crucifix, which is filled with holy relics, to my successor, with the request that every morning and evening he perform the acts of devotion to the crucifix which are given in *The Kingdom Of Jesus*. (6)

16. I also leave to him the disposal of the other holy relics which I wear, and of those contained in the little chest in my room, near the window which overlooks the garden of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers, together with some medals which are kept there and in the drawer of my desk. Through his hands I bequeath them to whomever he distributes them.

17. I urge him, as well as all his successors, not to fail to pay an annual visit to all the houses of the Congregation, either in person, or through others when he cannot do so himself, and to observe in them everything that is indicated in the Constitutions.

18. I also request him to see that my *Sermons* are not scattered, but to have them bound in order to preserve them for the Congregation; and if there should remain some of the books I have written for the

(5). In Boulay's *Vie du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, Vol. 4, P. 460, Article 13 has been replaced by Article 13, and vice versa.

(6). Part V, P. 238.

330 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

good of souls, to have them printed, and even to arrange to have all my writings printed in one volume.

19. I beseech all the superiors of the Congregation to study and practise conscientiously the rules of their office, to speak unceasingly to their subordinates through their works and examples, and to guide them with all possible charity, meekness and kindness. And I conjure all true children of

the Congregation always to pay their superiors all the respect, affection and obedience due those who represent Our Lord Jesus Christ. For from these two duties of superiors and subordinates depends the preservation and entire happiness of the Congregation.

20. Having received outstanding aid in all my exterior needs for many years from our dear Brother Richard Le Moine,(7) I beg all my dear brethren, particularly him who will succeed me, to have toward him the same charity that they would have for me, if I were still of this world.

21. In conclusion, I bequeath myself with my whole heart to my dearest Jesus, that I may unite myself with all the holy dispositions with which He, His most Holy Mother and all the saints died, embracing for love of Him all the pains of mind and body which may be mine during my last days, protesting to Him that I wish my final breath to be an act of purest love for Him, and imploring Him to accept and reserve for my hour of death all the sentiments and acts of religion indicated in this paper.

This is my last will and testament. I very humbly implore my most amiable Saviour and His good Mother, by their most benign Heart, to be its executors, and to see that all the Articles contained herein are carried out in whatever way is most pleasing to the most adorable will of my God.

Amen, amen. Fiat, fiat. Veni, veni, veni, Domine Jesu.

Dated at Paris, this 24th day of April, 1671.

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest  
of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.  
(7). Richard Le Moine: a lay brother who died in 1722.

## **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

331 -

### **SUPPLEMENT**

I should not wish to be guilty of extreme ingratitude toward my dearest daughter in Our Lord, and my eldest daughter, Anne Le Haguais, Madame de Camilly. It was she with whom our dearest brother, Father de Than, associated himself in the foundation of our house at Caen, and very justly so, for God gave her a maternal affection for the whole Congregation, and particularly for that house which she benefited in every way possible. Therefore I implore all my dear brethren to regard and honor her in that capacity, and to render her, during her lifetime and after her death, all that is due the foundress and mother of a Congregation. I am giving her something which is very precious to me - a small image of the Blessed Virgin that I wear around my neck in a little silver case, which also contains a fragment of the true Cross. This image was given me from the same Virgin as a token of the special union which she granted me the privilege of forming with her.

Dated at Paris, this 1st day of May, 1672.

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest.

### **DONATION OF HIS HEART AND REVOCATION**

St. John Eudes had requested that his heart be given, after his death, to the house of Our Lady of Charity; and in addition to having indicated this desire in his last will and testament, he had entrusted to the nuns a document on this subject signed by his hand, the text of which follows:

In the year 1678, on the 13th day of January, I gave my heart to my beloved daughters in Our Lord, the religious of Our Lady of Charity who are established at Caen, to be interred in their monastery there. Such is my will which I desire to be carried out, and I request the priests

332 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

of our seminaries to do so. In testimony whereof I have affixed my signature,

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

He revoked the aforesaid donation by crossing out that Article in his will and leaving to the seminary the following statement:

I hereby revoke the gift which I made of my heart to the religious of Our Lady of Charity, desiring that my body and heart be interred together in our church of the most amiable Heart of Jesus and Mary. Dated at Caen, this 18th day of September, 1678.

JOHN EUDES, missionary priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

## PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

*To give thanks to her, to "commend to her care the Congregation at Jesus and Mary, and to ask of her a good and holy death.( 1 )*

O great and most amiable Mary, most august Empress of the universe, most holy and worthy Mother of my God, behold me prostrate at thy feet to ask pardon very humbly of thee for having dared to undertake, through an excessive audacity, to record in this little book the ineffable perfections and incomprehensible excellences of thine admirable Heart. What is this compassionate Heart, save an impenetrable abyss of grace and holiness, an immense world of unrivalled wonders and an infinitely exalted heaven of incomparable glories and grandeurs? And what am I, save an infinitesimal atom, an abyss of wretchedness and darkness, the nonentity of nonentities? Is it not prodigious temerity for a puny earthworm like me to dare lift my eyes toward heaven to gaze upon the foremost, the worthiest and the most brilliant object of

(1). This Prayer forms the conclusion of the *Admirable Heart of Mary*. It contains interesting biographical details and resembles a last will and testament. For that reason we print it here.

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS333

the infinite love of the three adorable Persons of the most Holy Trinity?

But how can I close my ears to so many millions of voices which incessantly cry out to me that I am a monster of ingratitude if I do not render the thanks I owe my sovereign Princess for the many favors that I have received and am constantly receiving from the inconceivable kindness with which her most generous Heart is filled toward the least of all men?

For, first of all, is it not true, O Holy Virgin, that after God I should respect and honor thee as my true Mother to whom I owe my birth, my being and my life, and without whom I should still remain in the nothingness from which I should never have emerged? For this reason I have as many obligations toward thee as there are advantages attached to existence and to the life of a reasonable and Christian creature.

Secondly, how great is my debt to thee, O Mother of goodness, for having given me a father and

a mother who exercised great care to rear me, by the good example of their lives and their holy instructions, in the fear of God and the spirit of Christianity?

How greatly am I indebted to thee for having inspired them to place me under the discipline and guidance of the holy Society of Jesus, in the city of Caen, and for having admitted me into thy Sodality which is truly a school of virtue and piety, under the direction of the same Society? And this, indeed, O Mother of grace, was one of the greatest graces I have ever received from my God through thy intercession. .

Here is another very special grace. It is that, in order to snatch me from a manifest danger which would have caused my downfall, thou didst enlist me in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, established by thee and thy beloved Son in the holy Church for two ends of the greatest importance and usefulness to that same Church, namely: to attend to the functions of ecclesiastical seminaries and to the exercises of missions. And God has granted me the grace, through thy mediation, O Mother of mercy, to devote myself unceasingly for nearly forty years to the functions of these same seminaries, and for nearly sixty years to the exercises of missions, with the very abundant blessings which divine Bounty has showered upon my meager efforts through

334 -

#### LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

thy sacred hands, for the saints assure us that no grace descends from heaven to earth without passing through those blessed hands.

I have no words at all to express the infinite excellence of the incomprehensible favor thou didst grant us, my brethren and me, in bestowing upon us the adorable Heart of thy beloved Son, along with thine own all-loving Heart, to be the heart, life and living rule of our Congregation.

I must not omit mention of the great favor with which the Sovereign Priest, thine only Son and my Saviour, deigned to honor me through thy intercession, when He granted me a share in His divine priesthood, which is a grace in a certain sense infinite, and which comprises an infinity of others, such as the power to consecrate on the holy altar His adorable Body and precious Blood; the power to offer Him to God as a sacrifice, as He offered Himself to the Father on Calvary; the power to give Him to the faithful in the Holy Eucharist; the power to annihilate all the sins of earth and hell if they were in one soul; the power to bind and loose, to absolve and condemn, to reconcile sinners with God, to open heaven and close hell; the power to spread the Holy Gospel, preach the divine word and propagate the admirable light of faith throughout the world; the power, finally, to confer upon Christians the divine Sacraments of the Church, which are the inexhaustible sources of the graces acquired for us by our Redeemer through His precious blood.

I do not even mention the light thou wert pleased to give me so that I might bring into existence this small undertaking, together with other similar ones preceding it, in which there is no favor which does not proceed from the Father of wisdom and from that admirable Star who for our sakes brought forth the Sun of justice.

What shall I say of an infinity of other benefits which I have received from the generosity of my God through thy intercession, O admirable Mother? How many sins have I committed for which thou hast obtained pardon for me? How many others should I have committed if thou hadst not preserved me from them?

How often have I seen myself on the brink of hell, in obvious danger of falling therein but for thy most benign hand which saved me?

How often would the roaring lion from hell, who prowls about un

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

335 -

ceasingly in all directions seeking to devour the souls redeemed by the precious blood of thy Son, have swallowed up and devoured my own soul, had not the admirable charity of thy Heart opposed it?

Alas! Without thee, my dearest and all-good Mother, where should I be today? I should be in the fiery furnace of hell from which I should never emerge.

Oh, what a profusion of kindnesses! What an excess of mercy! What incomprehensible obligations I have toward the incredible charity of thy most benign Heart O, what immense graces, infinite graces, eternal graces! Let all the spirits, all the tongues and hearts of heaven and earth praise, glorify and love thee eternally in my name!

But the grace of graces, the favor of favors, is the great multitude of crosses which my most adorable Crucified has bestowed upon me on thy behalf, for which may He be praised and glorified forevermore.

Now are not all these graces, not to mention a million others, as so many voices continually preaching the respect, veneration and gratitude I should have for that most august Heart, of which I have infinite reason to say what St. John Chrysostom said of the heart of St. Paul—that it is for me a fountain of countless blessings: *Fons innumerorum bonorum*? Yes, indeed, the most kind and benign Heart of the Mother of my Jesus is for me an immense source of all sorts of inconceivable blessings, graces and favors. That is what I should and wish to proclaim openly, wherever I may be. It is what compels me to bring forth this little work, that those who take the trouble to read it may be aroused and animated to praise, bless and glorify with me this most worthy Heart as the holiest, noblest and most generous, royal, magnificent and amiable of all hearts, second only to the adorable Heart of Jesus.

Finally, my most kind Mother, I have received so many favors from thy maternal Heart that I can truthfully say that they surpass in number the hairs of my head.

But I have still two favors to ask of thee which will crown all the others. For I possess overwhelming confidence in the unrivalled charity of thine admirable Heart that my infinite unworthiness will not prevent thee from granting me these two things.

336 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

The first is that thou look with favor, my dearest Mother, upon my giving to thee, or rather, my returning to thy hands, the little Congregation of Jesus and Mary which thou wert pleased to give me through an excess of thine inexplicable goodness. Thou knowest that I have offered, given and consecrated it to thee hundreds and hundreds of times during my life; but now I wish to give it to thee incessantly and for all eternity, in union with the incomprehensible love with which the only Son of God gave Himself to thee for evermore. Avail thyself of thy sovereign God-given power in order to take full, absolute and eternal possession of it. Give it wholly to thy Son Jesus; pray Him to annihilate therein all that is displeasing to Him; to establish perfectly in it the reign of His holy love and His adorable will; to fill it with His divine spirit, His spirit of humility, submission, charity, purity, zeal for the glory of God, hatred for sin, love for the Cross, the abnegation of the aged, and a great detachment from and scorn for the world and all the things of this earth; to protect, sustain and defend it against those who would thwart it; to give it a great number of evangelical laborers who may

devote themselves to the training and instruction of holy priests and good pastors through the exercises of seminaries, and who may work efficaciously for the salvation of souls through missions. Finally, may He dispose of it entirely according to His Heart, together with all His children in general and each one individually; and may He accomplish in it all the designs of His goodness, at all costs, annihilating us rather than permitting us to place any obstacle in its way because of our sins.

I also offer thee, O most sacred Mother of God, all the founders, benefactors and friends of this little Congregation, beseeching thee very humbly to preserve, bless and sanctify them, to place them in the ranks of the children of thy Heart and to let them feel the effects of this holy prayer which we offer for them several times a day: *Retribuere dignare, Domine, omnibus nobis bona facientibus, propter nomen tuum, vitam aeternam. Amen.* O Lord, be pleased to grant eternal life, for the love of Thy Holy Name, to all our friends and benefactors.

The second favor I ask of thee, O Mother of goodness, is to look upon me always as a true child of the ineffable goodness of thy most

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

337 -

Holy Heart, even though I am infinitely unworthy of my heritage. For it is not a pretended or imaginary thing, but a real and established truth, that thou gavest me birth and life through a certain and unquestionable miracle, following the vow made to God by my father and mother, who were without children and unable to have any, that they might obtain this favor through thy intercession. When this vow was followed by the fulfillment of their desire, they took me, while I was yet in my mother's womb, into a holy chapel dedicated to thy name under the title of *Our Lady of Recovery*, in order to give thanks to thee for the favor thou hadst granted them, and to offer and consecrate me to my Creator, as well as to her through whose intercession He had called me into being. Look upon me, therefore, and treat me, O most amiable Mother, as the fruit and the child of the wonderful charity of thy Holy Heart, and do not allow me to degenerate from such a noble birth. Impress upon my heart and my life the likeness and resemblance of the holy virtues which reign in the Heart and life of my heavenly Mother, from which, alas! I am infinitely removed. But above all, I implore thee, by all the mercies of thy benign Heart, to obtain for me from divine Clemency complete pardon and general remission of my numberless sins, offenses and negligences, and to help and protect me with extraordinary bounty in my last days and in my final hour.

Alas! thou knowest, O Mother of grace, that human weakness and wretchedness is so great that there is not a man in the world who, after having struggled with the infernal powers for eighty or a hundred years, would not be capable of succumbing to them and losing his salvation in the last hour of his life. Have pity on me, then, O Mother of goodness: *Tu mea maxima fiducia, tu ratio spei meae.* I have the greatest confidence in thee, who art, after God, the principal foundation of my hope. Do not permit the enemies of my salvation to have any advantage over thy poor son: *Nequando dicat inimicus meus: praevalui adversus eum.* But grant, through thy powerful intercession, that all the moments of life still remaining to me may be entirely and solely consecrated to the glory of my Saviour and the honor of my Holy Mother; that all my thoughts, words and actions, every breath,

338 -

## LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS

every throb of my heart and veins, all the functions of the faculties of my soul, and every use of my interior and exterior senses may be a perpetual exercise of praise and love for my most adorable Jesus and my most amiable Mother.

O most kind Mother, obtain for me from my God that moriatur anima mea morte Justorum et

fiant novissima mea horum similia; that I may die the death of the just, that is, the holy death of the King and Queen of the just, who are Jesus and Mary, and of those of whom the Holy Ghost says: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord"; and that I may die in the holy interior and exterior dispositions in which they died.

Let me die pronouncing these words which my Redeemer spoke on the Cross, and while giving myself to Him in order to say them in the holy dispositions with which He uttered them: Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.

Let me die in the faith of all the holy martyrs, with complete confidence in the immense mercy of my Redeemer and the unparalleled kindness of His Most Holy Mother and mine; and with perfect charity toward my neighbor.

Let me die in the spirit and in the sentiments of humiliation, contrition and penance with which my loving Savior bore my sins during His Sacred Passion and Death.

Let me die with these divine words in my heart and on my lips: "Jesus, Mary"; and let me pronounce them in union with all the love which ever has been, is now and ever shall be in all hearts which love Jesus and Mary.

Let me die in the love, through the love and for the love of my Jesus, and let my last breath be an act of purest love through which I may offer and sacrifice myself of my own accord to my God, in union with that same love with which my Redeemer offered and immolated Himself on the Cross to His Father for love of me.

In conclusion, with all my heart do I give my soul, O Mother of love, in union with the same love by which my Saviour gave thee His at the moment of His Incarnation. Do thou preserve it as something which is wholly thine; receive it into thy most sacred hands when it

## **LETTERS AND SHORTER WORKS**

339 -

leaves my body; harbor it in thy maternal Heart; present and give it to thy beloved Son, that He may place it in the ranks of those who will love and bless Him for all eternity with thee and with all the angels and saints in that blessed eternity, O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria, vita, dulcedo et spes mea charissima.

## **LIVE JESUS AND MARY**





**Meditations  
on Various Subjects**

**BY**

**SAINT JOHN EUDES**

Translated from the French

With an Introduction by  
THE LATE REVEREND CHARLES LEBRUN, C.J.M., S.T.D.

FORMERLY PROVINCIAL OF THE CANADIAN PROVINCE  
OF THE EUDIST FATHERS

Foreword by

THE MOST REVEREND P. A. BRAY, C.J.M, D.D.

BISHOP OF SAINT JOHN, N. B.

NEW YORK  
P. J. KENEDY & SONS

1947

Imprimi potest

A. D'Amours, C.J.M.  
praepositus Provincialis  
Laval-des-Rapides, P.Q.  
die 27 Martii 1946.

Nihil Obstat

J. M. FEARNES, S.T.D.  
Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

Francis Cardinal Spellman  
Archbishop of New York  
JULY 12, 1946  
Copyright  
1947  
P.J. Kenedey & Sons, NEW YORK  
Made in U. S. A.

on.ca

## GENERAL PREFACE

ST. JOHN EUDES has been called "the wonder of his age." Missionary, founder, reformer of the clergy, he crowded into a life of seventy-nine years so many and such varied accomplishments that one marvels how a single man could achieve so much. In addition to the activities of an incessant and many-sided apostolate, he wrote a number of valuable books, which rank him among the most prolific ascetic writers of the seventeenth century.

For many years the devotional works of St. John Eudes were practically unknown.(1) Occasionally a volume was discovered in the library of some seminary or religious house. Many others preserved in manuscript form were lost in the chaos of the French Revolution(2) At the beginning of the present century the sons of St. John Eudes united in a tribute of filial piety to bring out a complete edition of the works of their spiritual father, seeking them in public and private libraries throughout the world(3) About twenty volumes were found and edited in 1905 by the late Fathers Charles Lebrun, C.J.M., and Joseph Dauphin,

(1).Before the French Revolution the works of St. John Eudes were popular in France. In 1792 the houses of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary were confiscated by the Government and its members were massacred or dispersed throughout Europe. With the suppression of the Eudists, their rich literary heritage was widely scattered and partially destroyed. It was not until the re-establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1826 that effort was made to recover the printed and manuscript works of St. John Eudes. The research was carried on until the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the "Preface Générale to the Oeuvres Complètes (Vannes, 1905), Father Charles Lebrun points out that one of the purposes of the edition was "to unearth these works buried too long in oblivion," exhumers ces ouvrages ensevelis depuis trop longtemps dans l'oubli...

(2)The following manuscripts were not found: The Christian Man, All Jesus, The Divine office, The Admirable Sacrifice of the Mass, Meditations, (2 vol.), Sermons of St. John Eudes (3 vols.), Favors obtained by the Diocese of Coutances through the Blessed Virgin, The Divine Childhood of Jesus, The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, The Admirable *Life of* Mary des Vallées, (incomplete copy found at Laval University Library, Quebec) and Correspondence of St. John Eudes.

(3). cf. oeuvres Complètes, P. xiv.

V -

## GENERAL PREFACE

C.J.M. The first edition in French, *Oeuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, ran into twelve octavo volumes with introductions, explanatory notes, analytic and alphabetic indexes of great value. These writings constitute a complete summa of ascetic and pastoral theology. The list is as follows:

*Volume 1 The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls.* In this work the Saint develops his spiritual teaching on the Christian life, namely, that the Christian life is simply the life of Jesus extended and continued in each one of us.

*Volume 11.* This volume contains six short treatises on subjects relating to the Christian life:

1. *A Treatise on the Respect Due to Holy Places*, which is an echo of the fiery denunciations he pronounced during his missions against profaners of the temple of God.

2. *Meditations on Humility*, a series of meditations on the profession of humility as used daily in his order of Priests, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

3. *Interior Colloquies of the Soul with God*, meditations on creation, the end of man and the grace of Baptism.

4. *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, a summary of the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Tradition on the Sacrament of Baptism.

5. *The Practice of Piety*, a brief explanation of what is necessary in order to live a Christian

life.

6. *Catechism of the Mission*, an outline of the catechetical instructions given during a mission.

*Volume III.* Contains two important works on sacerdotal perfection:

1. *The Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*, an explanation of the dignity and duties of the priesthood.

2. *A Manual of Piety for Use in an Ecclesiastical Community*, in which the author explains how the means of sanctification he recommended to his priests should be practically applied in their daily lives.

*Volume IV.* Comprises significant works on the priestly ministry.

1. *The Apostolic Preacher* is one of the first treatises written on the ministry of the Word of God and is even yet one of the most practical.

## GENERAL PREFACE

V 11 -

2. *The Good Confessor* explains the qualities, and obligations of the minister of the Sacrament of Penance.

3. *Counsels for Mission Confessors* suggests practical means of assisting penitents to make their examination of conscience and excite themselves to contrition.

4. *The Manner of Serving Mass* explains the dignity and holiness of this act and what one must do to perform it devoutly and worthily.

*Volume V. The Admirable Childhood of the Most Holy Mother of God.* This book treats of the holy childhood of Mary and the practical means of honoring the mysteries and virtues of her early life.

*Volumes VI, VII, VIII* contain the entire writings of the Saint on the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The work is entitled: *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God.* It comprises twelve books covering the complete theology of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. Eleven books discuss the theory, history, and practice of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The last book deals with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is this work, together with the Offices of the Sacred Hearts, that merit for him the title of Father, Doctor and Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts.

*Volume IX. The Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*

*Volume X.* Contains *The Rules and Constitutions of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, the *Directory* of the Order, and a collection of two hundred and forty letters.

*Volumes XI and XII* embrace the Saint's *Liturgical Works*, comprising twenty-five Offices and Masses for feasts to which he urged special devotion, the *Memorial of God's Blessings* and several other minor works.

The second French edition appeared in 1935, *Oeuvres Choisies de Saint Jean Eudes*, prepared under the direction of Father Lebrun, the leading authority on Eudistic research. It comprises nine volumes: *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, *Meditations of Various Subjects*, *Regulae Vitae Christianae et Sacerdotalis*, *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, *Letters and Minor Works*, *Writings on the Priesthood*, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, and *The Admirable Childhood of the Mother of God*. The format of

these volumes is compact and more convenient than the 1905 edition, which is now out of print.

The publication of the works of St. John Eudes revealed the extent and depth of their spiritual doctrine. Cardinal Pitra, who was associated with the cause of Beatification, discovered in the writings of St. John Eudes a remarkable depth of thought and purity of doctrine. Cardinal Vives has more recently expressed his admiration:

I was acquainted with the Doctors of the Order of Saint Francis; I was acquainted with Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, the mystical writers of my own country, Spain; but I was completely ignorant of the writings of Father Eudes. As a member of the Sacred Congregation of Rites it was my duty to study his life and his works, and I am in admiration. Blessed John Eudes must be ranked with the great lights of the Church. His spiritual doctrine is profound and of wonderful exactitude. He is one of the writers who has best propounded the doctrine of the Gospel.(4).

The late Father Ange Le Doré, for fifty years Superior General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, wrote:

The works of Blessed John Eudes, although they do not bear the scientific touch of the professional theologian, are nevertheless proof of his remarkable theological, ascetic and scriptural knowledge.... He is not a Doctor after the fashion of the scholastics of the thirteenth century or of the great theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As they, he might have built up theses and composed books didactic in form; but he was before all a saviour of souls. For him the science of theology found its chief field of usefulness in the practice of virtue and in the acquisition of sanctity of which it is the principle.... He was a Doctor after the manner of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus de Liguori. The science which shines in his works not only emits light; it engenders piety and sanctity.(5)

The spiritual doctrine expounded by St John Eudes follows the teaching of Cardinal *Pierre de Bérulle* and Father Charles de Condren, two prominent members of the seventeenth-century French School of Spirituality. St. John Eudes applies this doctrine to the devotion to the

(4). Quoted by P. A. Bray, C.J.M., *Saint John Eudes* (Halifax, 1925), P. 116.

(5). Quoted by Buy, op. cit., p. 117.

## GENERAL PREFACE

1 X -

Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, developing and rendering it more precise and practical. He has the rare gift of expressing the most sublime truths in simple, familiar language. He also excels in condensing into a few pages a complete scheme of Christian life and perfection.

The wish was repeatedly expressed that these inspirational writings could be made available to English-speaking readers. Excellent abridged editions of certain books were published in England and in Canada, but they did not do justice to the literary value of the Saint. Consequently, the Eudist Fathers commemorating their tercentenary in 1943 resolved to publish a complete translation of the principal works of their founder. Competent translators were secured and much time and effort were expended to produce readable volumes in modern English, faithful to the spirit and style of the original.

The first English edition, *Selected Works of Saint John Eudes*, is the result. In presenting it to the public the Eudist Fathers and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, and of the Good Shepherd, wish to thank all those who contributed to the success of this comprehensive undertaking.

They are especially grateful to the distinguished churchmen who have so graciously accepted to introduce these volumes to Catholic readers, because they consider that the works of St. John Eudes should be more widely known. The Saint in his apostolic work and in his writings ranks with the eminent figures who belong not to one country and to one religious order but to the universal Church. Three centuries have passed since he wrote the works now being printed in the new world, a striking illustration that he wrote for all time. He still speaks in accents that penetrate the mind and heart of the reader to enlighten, purify and sanctify so that Jesus Christ may live and reign in the Christian soul.

WILFRID E. MYATT, C.J.M.

PATRICK J. SKINNER, C.J.M.

*Editors*

Holy Heart Seminary

Halifax, N. S.

Feast of St. John Eudes, 1945.

## CONTENTS

General Preface . . . . . V

Foreword . . . . . xxi

Introduction . . . . . iii

Prayers before and after Meditation . . . . . I

### 1 .

## MEDITATIONS ON THE MYSTERIES OF JESUS

### for

### EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

*Meditation for Sunday:* The Divine Life of Jesus in the Bosom of the

Heavenly Father . . . . . 1 5

*Meditation for Monday:* The Incarnation . . . . . 1 7

*Meditation for Tuesday:* The Holy Childhood of Jesus . . . . 2 0

*Meditation for Wednesday:* The Hidden and Laborious Life of Jesus 22

*Meditation for Thursday:* The Public Life of Jesus and His Life in the

Blessed Eucharist . . . . . 2 5

*Meditation for Friday:* The Passion and Death of Jesus . . . . 2 8

*Meditation for Saturday:* The Life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus .. 31

*Second Meditation for Sunday:* The Glorious Life of Jesus in Heaven 33

*Another Meditation for Sunday:* The Mysteries of Christ's Life 3 5

X 1 -

X 1 1 -

CONTENTS

### 1 1

## INTERIOR COLLOQUIES

### of a

## CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

*First Colloquy:* God's Favors to Us before Our Creation and Our Consequent Debt to Him . . 41

*Second Colloquy:* God's Favors to Us by Our Creation and *Preserva* tion and Our Obligations towards Him . . . . . 45

*Third Colloquy:* The Dignity and Sanctity of Our Ultimate End . 48

*Fourth Colloquy:* Our Obligations to God for the Creation and Preservation of the World 51

*Fifth Colloquy:* The Divine Claims upon Our Allegiance because of Our Creation . . . . . 55

*Sixth Colloquy:* The Rights of God over Man as a Result of Creation 58

*Seventh Colloquy:* Man's Obligation to God by Reason of the Preceding Rights . . 61

*Eighth Colloquy:* Our Obligation to Love, Honor, Imitate and Serve

God for All that He Is in Himself . . . . . 66

*Ninth Colloquy:* Our Obligations to God as Christians, and What It Means to Be a Christian . . . 71

*Tenth Colloquy:* Admirable Accomplishments of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in Making Us Christians . . . . . 75

*Eleventh Colloquy:* By Baptism We Are Made Christians . . . 79

*Twelfth Colloquy:* Baptism Is a Divine Contract between God and Man . . .84

*Meditation:* The Choice of a State of Life . . . . . 89

CONTENTS

X111-

## 111.

### MEDITATIONS ON HUMILITY

*First Meditation:* on the Words: *Nihil Sumus*, "We Are Nothing. 96

*Second Meditation:* Annihilation of Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . 99

*Third Meditation:* Annihilation of the *Blessed Virgin* Mary and of Holy Church . . . . . 102

*Fourth Meditation:* We Are Nothing from Every Point of View . 104

*Fifth Meditation:* On the Words: *Nihil Possumus*, "We Can Do Nothing 107

*Sixth Meditation:* On the Words: *Nihil Valemus*, "We Are Worth Nothing 110

*Seventh Meditation:* On the Words: *Nihil Habemus Praeter Peccatum*, "We Possess Nothing but Sin." . . . . . 112

*Eighth Meditation:* On the Words: *Servi Inutiles Sumus*, "We Are Unprofitable Servants .114

*Ninth Meditation:* On the Words: *Natura Filii Irae*, "We Were Born Children of Wrath .117

*Tenth Meditation:* On the Same Words: "We Were Born Children of Wrath . 119

*Eleventh Meditation:* On the Same Words: "We Were Born Children of Wrath 122

*Twelfth Meditation:* On the Same Words: "We Were Born Children of Wrath 125

*Thirteenth Meditation:* On the Same Words: "We Were Born Children of Wrath." .129

*Fourteenth Meditation:* On the Words: *Novissimi Virorum*, "The Last of Men 131

*Fifteenth Meditation:* On the Same Words: "The Last of Men." . 134

xiv -

CONTENTS

*Sixteenth Meditation:* On the Same Words: "The Last of Men." 138

*Seventeenth Meditation:* On the Words: *Primi Peccatorum*, "The First of Sinners .141

## IV.

### MEDITATIONS

#### on

### BIRTH AND BAPTISM

*First Meditation:* Duties to Be Rendered to God on the Anniversary of Our Birth .148

*Second Meditation:* Our Obligation of Loving and Serving God . . 151

*Third Meditation:* Institution of the Sacrament of Baptism . . . 155

*Fourth Meditation:* The Mysteries of Which Baptism Makes Us Participants 157

*Fifth Meditation:* Administration and Ceremonies of Baptism . . 160



Sixth Meditation: Profession of Baptism . . . . . 163

**V.  
MEDITATIONS  
on  
THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH**

Meditation for the First Day: Submission to the Will of God . . . 170  
Meditation for the Second Day: Thanksgiving for Graces Received . 174  
Meditation for the Third Day: Confession, and Satisfaction for Our Sins . . 176

CONTENTS

XV-

Meditation for the Fourth Day: Holy Communion . . . . . 179  
Meditation for the Fifth Day: Extreme Unction . . . . . 181  
Meditation for the Sixth Day: The Last Will and Testament of Jesus  
and the One that We Should Make in Its Honor . . . . . 183  
Meditation for the Seventh Day: Our Last Agony and the Moment of Death . 189  
Meditation for the Eighth Day: The Particular Judgment . . . 192  
Meditation for the Ninth Day: Death and Burial . . . . . 196  
Meditation for the Tenth Day: The Entrance of the Soul into Heaven 200

**V1.  
MEDITATIONS  
on  
THE ADMIRABLE CHILDHOOD  
Of  
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

First Meditation: The Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary 205  
Second Meditation: Our Obligations to Honor and Imitate the Blessed  
Virgin Mary in Her Admirable Childhood . . . . . 208  
Third Meditation: The Innocence and Simplicity of the Blessed Vir  
gin Mary in Her Admirable Childhood . . . . . 211  
Fourth Meditation: The Humility of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Her Admirable Childhood . . 214  
Fifth Meditation: The Obedience of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Her Admirable Childhood . 217  
Sixth Meditation: The Charity and Meekness of the Blessed Virgin  
Mary in Her Admirable Childhood 220

XV1-

CONTENTS

*Seventh Meditation:* The Silence of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Her  
Admirable Childhood . . . . . 223  
*Eighth Meditation:* The Modesty of the Blessed Virgin Wry in Her Admirable Childhood 226

**VII.  
MEDITATIONS  
on  
THE HOLY HEART OF MARY  
MEDITATIONS FOR THE FEAST OF THE HOLY HEART  
OF MARY**

<i>First Meditation:</i> The Vigil of the Feast: Preparation for the Feast	231
<i>Second Meditation:</i> The Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary: The Holy Heart of Mary	. 234
<i>Third Meditation:</i> Second Day of the Octave: The Holy Heart of Mary Reflects the Adorable Love of the Eternal Father	. . . 237
<i>Fourth Meditation:</i> Third Day of the Octave: 'Me Holy Heart of Mary Is One with the Eternal Father and Is the Mirror of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	. . . . . 239
<i>Fifth Meditation:</i> Fourth Day of the Octave: Reasons Inspiring Us to Honor the Holy Heart of Mary	. . . . . 242
<i>Sixth Meditation:</i> Fifth Day of the Octave: Further Reasons for Honoring the Holy Heart of Mary	. 245
<i>Seventh Meditation:</i> Sixth Day of the Octave: Other Reasons Which Bind Us to Have a Special Devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary	247
<i>Eighth Meditation:</i> Seventh Day of the Octave: Three Additional Reasons for Honoring the Holy Heart of Our Holy Blessed Mother	249
<i>Ninth Meditation:</i> Octave Day of the Feast: The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Heart of the Mother of Fair Love and Charity	. . . 251

CONTENTS

XV11-

# **EIGHT OTHER MEDITATIONS** **on** **THE HOLY HEART OF MARY**

<i>First Meditation:</i> The Holy Heart of Mary Is Our Sun, Our Treasure and our Refuge	. 255
<i>Second Meditation:</i> The Holy Heart of Mary Is Our Rule, Our Heart, a Fountain of Wine, Milk and Honey, and Our Oracle	. . . 258
<i>Third Meditation:</i> The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Sanctuary of the Human Passions	260
<i>Fourth Meditation:</i> The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Kingdom and Throne of All Virtues	.262
<i>Fifth Meditation:</i> The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Center of Humility	.265
<i>Sixth Meditation:</i> The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Treasure of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost	.. 268
<i>Seventh Meditation:</i> The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Sanctified Garden of the Fruits of the Holy Ghost	271
<i>Eighth Meditation:</i> The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Paradise of the Eight Beatitudes	. . 274

# **V111.** **MEDITATIONS** **on** **THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS** **MEDITATIONS FOR THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART** **OF JESUS**

<i>First Meditation:</i> The Vigil of the Feast: Dispositions for the Worthy Celebration of This Feast	. 279
--	-------

XV111-

CONTENTS

<i>Second Meditation:</i> the Day of the Feast: The Gift of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	. 282
<i>Third Meditation:</i> The Gift of This Feast Is a Great Favor Bestowed by Our Lord	284
<i>Fourth Meditation:</i> The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is Our Refuge, Our Oracle and Our Treasure	. 287
<i>Fifth Meditation:</i> The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Perfect Model and Rule of Our Lives	290
<i>Sixth Meditation:</i> Jesus Gave Us His Sacred Heart to Be Our Heart	293
<i>Seventh Meditation:</i> The Profound Humility of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	. 296
<i>Eighth Meditation:</i> The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the King of Martyrs	299

*Ninth Meditation:* The Heart of Jesus Is the Heart of Mary . . . 302

**EIGHT OTHER MEDITATIONS  
on  
THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

*First Meditation:* The Blessed Trinity Lives and Reigns in the Sacred Heart of Jesus .305

*Second Meditation:* The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Sanctuary and  
Image of the Divine Perfections . . . . . 308

*Third Meditation:* The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Temple, the Altar  
and the Censer of Divine Love . . . . . 310

*Fourth Meditation:* The Sacred Heart of Jesus Loves Us with an  
Eternal and a Boundless Love . . . . . 313

*Fifth Meditation:* The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Source of the Life of the God-man, of the Mother of  
God and of the Children of God . . . . . 316

**CONTENTS**

X1X-

*Sixth Meditation:* The Three Hearts of Jesus Which Are but One Heart .318

*Seventh Meditation:* The Miracles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . 321

*Eighth Meditation:* The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is a Furnace of Love,  
Purifying, Illuminating, Sanctifying, Transforming and Deifying 324

**1X.  
MEDITATIONS  
for  
SPECIAL DAYS OF THE YEAR**

Meditation for New Year's Day . . . . . 329

Meditation for Ash Wednesday: The Holy Season of Lent . . . 333

Meditation for Good Friday . . . . . 335

Meditation for the Vigil of the Ascension of Our Lord . . . . 338

Meditation for the Vigil of the Assumption of Our Lady . . . . 340

Meditation for the Feast of the Holy Relics . . . . . 342

Meditation for Christmas Day . . . . . 345

Meditation for the Last Day of the Year . . . . . 347

XX1-

## **FOREWORD**

IT WAS indeed a happy inspiration which prompted the late Reverend Charles Lebrun, C.J.M., to gather into a single volume, and thus render easily accessible, the various meditations that Saint John Eudes scattered so profusely through his many spiritual writings. It was also a happy inspiration on his part to have enriched the volume with his own brilliant essay on prayer as practised and recommended by Saint John Eudes. No one has studied more carefully or understood more thoroughly the spiritual teaching of the Saint, and no one was more highly qualified to develop his thought on prayer-its nature, importance, form and the place it occupies in his concept of the Christian life.

It is a fundamental principle in the teaching of Saint John Eudes that the Christian life is nothing more than the reproduction, continuation and completion of the life of Jesus, the Head of the Mystical Body, in each one of us, the members. "When a Christian prays," he says, "he continues and accomplishes the prayers of Jesus Christ. When he works, he continues and accomplishes Christ's laborious life. When his relations with his neighbor are inspired by charity, he continues and accomplishes Christ's public life . . ." (1)

Now it was with the hope of aiding Christians to reproduce and continue in their lives the life of prayer of Jesus while on earth that Saint John Eudes composed his meditations. To facilitate the practice for those who find it difficult to concentrate and reflect, he frequently proposes an elevation or ready-made colloquy by means of which they can easily raise their minds and hearts to God and give expression to their sentiments of tenderest love and deepest devotion, as is evident the Saint himself was accustomed to do. We know that the entire life  
(1) . *The Kingdom of Jesus* (New York, 1946), Part I, p. 6.

XX11-

## **FOREWORD**

of Jesus on earth was a life of continual prayer, and consequently that there can be nothing more important in the life of a Christian than the practice of prayer. *Oportet semper orare* (Luke 28, 1).

For the first time, this book of Meditations by Saint John Eudes, with the admirable Introduction of Father Lebrun clarifying the mind of the Saint on the whole subject of prayer, is offered to the public in English dress. With it go the hope and the prayer that it may prove serviceable to many souls in the world and in the cloister; that it may assist them in reproducing and continuing the life of prayer of Jesus; nay more, that it may help many to "put on Christ," become more perfectly "other Christs," and thereby greatly extend His kingship on earth.

P. A. BRAY, C.J.M.  
*Bishop of Saint John*  
Saint John, N.B.  
December 8, 1945

## INTRODUCTION

THE wish has been expressed that the meditations scattered through the spiritual writings of St. John Eudes be gathered together in one separate volume. To comply with this request, the present work has been compiled. All the meditations in *The Kingdom of Jesus*, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, *The Admirable Childhood of Mary*, and the *Manual of Piety*, will be found in this book. A brief note at the beginning of each series indicates the work from which the meditations are taken and adds explanatory material to make them more useful to the reader. The following general introduction outlines the teaching of St. John Eudes on prayer, especially on mental prayer or meditation.

### I. PRAYER IN GENERAL

St. John Eudes did not write a special book on prayer, but the few pages devoted to the subject in *The Kingdom of Jesus* (1) enable us to give an account of his ideas on it. Moreover, that book is full of prayers and meditations that make it, in M. Joly's words, "a manual of prayer" and show us the theoretical ideas of the author reduced to practice.

In that volume the Saint uses the word "prayer" in its widest sense so that he applies it to every kind of prayer, no matter what acts it comprises or how it is offered. In his eyes spiritual meditation and the reading of good books are true prayers for they arouse in us devotional sentiments and acts of love of God.

Prayer is often defined as a request made to God for our necessities, and some Christians restrict prayer to petition. Such a prayer is certainly good, and the Divine Master recommends it in the Gospels: "Ask, and it shall be given you," He said to His apostles, "seek and (1). In this Introduction and elsewhere all references to *The Kingdom of Jesus* and to *The Sacred Heart of Jesus* are to the new American translation published in the series *The Selected Works* of St. John Eudes, New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1946.

## INTRODUCTION

you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Matt. 7, -7); and on another occasion He reproached them for having made no requests: "Hitherto, you have not asked any thing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive" (John 16, 24)

Excellent as the act of petition may be, it is not the main element of prayer. St. John Eudes unfolds a much wider idea of prayer which he draws from Catholic traditions. "Prayer," he says, "is a respectful and loving elevation of your mind and heart to God. It is a joyous meeting, a holy communication, a divine conversation between God and the Christian." (2)

As a rule, in actual fact, a Christian speaks to God in prayer in the style of the *Our Father*, and God replies by inspiring in his mind good thoughts, or acts of faith, confidence, love and the like. But it may happen in prayer that the mind and heart are raised to God with a more or less active feeling of adoration and love which finds no expression in either external or internal words; yet, this is most certainly prayer. That is why the Saint begins by telling us that prayer is "a respectful and loving elevation of your mind and heart to God."

After defining prayer, St. John Eudes goes on to describe in detail the elements that compose it. "In it," he says, "the soul considers and contemplates its Creator in His divine perfections, in His mysteries and in His works; it adores and blesses Him, loves and glorifies Him, gives itself to Him, is

abased before Him at the sight of its sins and ingratitude. It implores Him to be merciful and learns to become like Him by imitating His divine virtues and perfections, and finally, asks for all the things necessary to serve and love Him."(3)

(2). cf. *The Kingdom of Jesus*, Part 1, P. 24. St. Augustine, St. John Damascene, and many subsequent writers define prayer as *Ascensus mentis ad Deum*, but in adopting this definition St. John Eudes develops it in his own way. He remarks that it is a respectful and loving elevation of the heart as well as of the mind, and this indeed is how everyone considers it. The second part of his definition (an intercourse with God) is also classical, and is to be found in St. Francis de Sales' *Treatise of the Love of God*, as well as in the writings of St. Teresa and many others. On the idea of prayer, see Bremond, *Histoire du Sentiment Religieux*, V11, P. 5ff.

(3). cf. *The Kingdom of Jesus*, Part I, pp. 24-25. The Saint is not here dealing exclusively with infused contemplation. He often uses the word contemplation in *The Kingdom of Jesus*, but in its widest sense, meaning the attentive consideration (apparently without reasoning) of the divine perfections or of the mysteries of our Lord and of His holy Mother.

## INTRODUCTION

XXV-

These few lines, inserted almost accidentally in one of the chapters of *The Kingdom of Jesus*, really contain the germ of a complete theory of prayer, to which we will return when dealing with the subject of mental prayer. For the moment we may merely note that according to St. John Eudes prayer is primarily an exercise, the object of which is to render to God that tribute of adoration and love, of satisfaction and thanksgiving, to which He has a right. It is only when he has duly performed these duties that a Christian may turn to his own needs and ask for their fulfilment, and he does so less from self-interest than from a desire to be able to love and to serve God. As St. John Eudes (like Cardinal de Bérulle and his followers) frequently reminds us: "the interests of God must be dearer to us than our own." Accordingly prayer in his view is profoundly theocentric.

Saint John Eudes next stresses the excellence of prayer so defined. "Prayer," he says, "is a participation in the life of the angels and saints, in the life of Jesus Christ and of His most holy Mother, even of the life of God and of the Three Divine Persons. For the life of the angels and saints, of Christ and of His most holy Mother is nothing else but a continual practice of prayer and contemplation, in which their uninterrupted occupation is to look upon God, to praise and love Him, to ask Him, on your behalf, for the things you need. And the existence of the Three Divine Persons is a perpetual contemplation, praise and love of one another, which is accomplished first and foremost by prayer. (4)

"Prayer," continues the Saint, "is perfect delight, supreme happiness, a true earthly paradise. It is by this divine exercise of prayer that the Christian soul is united to God, who is the centre of its being, its goal and its supreme good. It is in prayer that God belongs to the soul and the soul to God. It is by praying that the soul pays Him rightful service, homage, adoration and love, and receives from Him His lights, His blessings and a thousand tokens of His exceeding great love. It is during your prayers that God takes His delight in you, according to this word of His: 'My delights were to be with the children of men' (Pr, v. 8, 31), and gives us an experimental knowledge of the fact that our true joy and perfect satisfaction are to be found in God, and

(4). *The Kingdom Of Jesus*, Part 1, P. 25.

XXV1-

## INTRODUCTION

that a hundred, or even a thousand years of the false pleasures of this world are not worth one moment of the true delights which God allows those souls to taste, who seek all their contentment only in conversing with Him in holy prayer."(5)

Of course prayer has its difficulties and trials, as St. John Eudes well knew; he devoted a section of *The Kingdom of Jesus* to spiritual dryness and afflictions(6). But whether it be easy or laborious, delightful or arid, prayer is always an exercise of praise and love of God, and even when we are deprived of the sweetness of sensible devotion, the Saint would have us find all our happiness in conversing with God in prayer.

He adds that prayer is "the one true and proper function of a man and of a Christian, since man is created for God and to be with God, and the Christian is on earth only for the purpose of continuing what Jesus Christ did during His life."(6a) Therefore prayer is the basis of a truly human life, and above all the foundation of a Christian life. It is true that if we are to be really Christian we must add to prayer the practice of virtue and the fulfilment of our daily duties; but it is prayer which makes us love and practise virtue and gives us the necessary courage to face the demands of duty however formidable these may be.

And the Saint concludes with this pressing admonition: "Therefore, with all my power, I urge every one of you who read these words, and in God's name I adjure you, since our dear Jesus condescends to take His delight in being with you and speaking to you through prayer, do not deprive Him of His satisfaction, but learn by your own experience that like holy wisdom 'His conversation hath no bitterness, nor His company any tediousness, but joy and gladness' (Wisd. 8, 16). Look upon prayer as the first, the principal, most necessary, most urgent and most important business of your life, and as far as possible, free yourself from all less necessary duties, to give as much time as you can to prayer . . ." (7)

(5). *The Kingdom of Jesus*, loc. cit.

(6a). Ibid., P. 25.

(6). Ibid., Part 1, p. 83-

(7). Ibid., p. 26.

## INTRODUCTION

XXV11-

## II. MENTAL PRAYER

Mental prayer is inward prayer which consists, not in the recitation of a formula, but of interior acts in which language has a purely accidental part, as, for instance, when we make use of a formula to arouse our attention or to stimulate our devotion.

Mental prayer has always been held in high honor by devout souls in religious communities, but since the fifteenth century the custom has arisen in many institutes of devoting a fixed time every day to the regular practice of mental prayer.

St. John Eudes considered mental prayer of capital importance, and called it "the mother and nurse of true piety;" indeed, in his *A Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life* he boldly declared it "as necessary for the soul of a Christian, and much more so for that of a priest and pastor, as is material bread for the body." So, too, in his *Good Confessor*, after showing that piety is indispensable to all who propose to hear confessions, he adds these strong words: "But what is piety? If you would be acquainted with it and possess it you must practise it. But I declare to you that so long as you do not know what true piety is, you will not be fit to hear confessions."

He is no less outspoken in *The Apostolic Preacher*: "It is in prayer," he says, "that God so enlightens our minds that we are able to see the importance and the beauty of Christian virtue; it is therein, too, that He takes possession of our hearts so that we may taste and love that virtue. And when we are fully persuaded of this and powerfully influenced by it, then we have a wonderful power of making it intelligible to others and of firmly impressing it in their hearts."

The truths with which God enlightens our minds, whose consideration moves us to serve and to love Him, have an incomparably greater power of inflaming our hearts than have those which we derive solely from books without having meditated and pondered upon them before God. There is almost as much difference between these two sets of truths as there is between well-cooked and well-seasoned dishes and those that are totally unprepared."

He considered that religious communities absolutely require mental prayer, and that without it they cannot survive: "Without prayer," he

XXV111-

## INTRODUCTION

one day wrote to the superior of one of his houses, "it is impossible for a Congregation to subsist in the spirit of piety and virtue which is necessary if it is to be pleasing to God and useful to the Church." And he added: "There is little difference between making half an hour's prayer and not making it, yet nothing is more necessary for ecclesiastics, and I know of no seminary in which they do not make an hour's mental prayer." (8)

In *The Kingdom of Jesus* also the Saint strongly recommends pious souls to practise mental prayer. "This kind of prayer," he tells them, "is more holy, more useful and more filled with blessings than words can convey. For this reason, if God draws you to mental prayer and gives you the grace to practise it, you should indeed thank Him for this very great gift. If He has not yet given you this grace, pray that He may do so, and for your part exert all your efforts to correspond with His grace, and cultivate this holy practice. God Himself will instruct you in the ways of this prayer better than all the books and all the teachers in the world, if you cast yourself down at His feet with humility, confidence and purity of heart." (9)

## 111. NATURE OF MENTAL PRAYER

St. John Eudes does not dwell at any length on the nature of mental prayer, but the few lines given to the subject in *The Kingdom of Jesus* have a clarity and precision that leave nothing to be desired. "The first is called mental or interior prayer, in which the soul communes with God, taking as the subject of conversation one of His divine perfections, or some mystery, virtue or word of His Divine Son, whether something He accomplished in the past, or is doing now, in the order

(8). Letters and Minor Works, Letter 228.

(9). *The Kingdom of Jesus*, Part 1, pp. 26-27. These words show that the Saint does not attach very much importance to treatises; and rigid methods of prayer. Not that he despises them. He advises his priests to give retreatants aid beginners in the spiritual life the guidance they require for commencing the practice of prayer, and he even suggests that they should give them the sixth volume of Louis of Grenada's Memorial of the Christian Life. He also advises that beginners should be assigned subjects of prayer suited to their capabilities, and he would have them give an account of their prayer. But in spite of all this he only attaches secondary importance to these means of training. For him, as for everyone else, the true master of prayer is the Holy Spirit, and it is for Him to teach us to pray well.

## INTRODUCTION

XX1X-

of glory, grace or nature, in His Mother, His saints, His Church or in the world. You begin the conversation of prayer by applying your understanding to consider with a determined, yet unstrained, attention and effort the truths to be found in the subjects chosen, truths which can arouse the soul to love God and hate sin. Then make your heart and will produce a few fervent acts of adoration, praise, love, humility, contrition and oblation, with the resolution to avoid evil and do good, according to the prompting of the Spirit of God." (10)



With all their brevity these few lines plainly show the Saint's mind on the subject of prayer; they tell us what should be its subject and of what acts it should be composed. The author's teaching on both these points is succinct. In the first place, he would have us take as the subject of our prayer one of the divine perfections, a mystery, a virtue, or a saying of the Incarnate Word, or else consider how our Divine Master operates in His saints, in His Church, or in the natural world. He seems to exclude purely moral subjects which, instead of drawing a soul to God and His love, throw it back upon itself and plunge it into preoccupation with its own personal interests.

Nor would he have us limit ourselves in our prayers to considering in themselves the Christian virtues, the evangelical truths or the example of the saints, but he wants us always to consider them in relation to the Incarnate Word. In his eyes the Christian virtues are a participation in the virtues of Jesus, the Gospel truths are words of instruction that have fallen from His lips, and the examples left by the saints are the fruits of Christ's sanctifying action in each of them; and thus he was accustomed to consider them in his views on prayer, in perfect harmony with his teaching on devotion to the Incarnate Word and the life of Christ within us.

As for the acts that comprise prayer, these are of two kinds, springing, respectively, from the intellect and the will. It is true that, strictly speaking, prayer consists of affections of the will acting under the influence of grace; but the will is a blind faculty, and, if it is to be attached to what is good, the intellect must present that good and make the will recognize it.

We, therefore, should begin our prayer with acts of the intellect,  
(10). *The Kingdom of Jesus*, Part 1, p. 26.

xxx -

## INTRODUCTION

"applying our understanding," as the Saint says, "to consider with a determined, yet unrestrained, attention and efforts the truths to be found in the subjects chosen . . ." (10a) Thus, we should not dwell on purely speculative truths: to do so would be to make our meditation a study, whereas it ought to be an exercise of piety.

The only truths which should engage our attention are those which can move us to love and serve God, and these we should consider with gentle and insistent attention; gentle, because prayer should be made quietly, without striving or fatigue; and insistent, because otherwise the heart will remain cold and will soon stray off to distractions.

Later on we shall see what the Saint asks us to consider in the mysteries of the Incarnate Word, but for the present we may note that he does not ask of us wise and profound considerations, but very simple and easy reflections. Prayer, in fact, is within the grasp of all devout souls; provided they know enough of the mysteries and the teaching of the Incarnate Word to be able to achieve first-rate prayer. "O Jesus, my Saviour, Thou art all lovable, infinitely lovable and infinitely worthy of love. O my God, I need no other knowledge but this. What concern have I with so many studies and ideas and considerations? It suffices me to know that my Jesus is all lovable, and that there is nothing in Him that is not worthy of being loved beyond measure. Let my mind then be satisfied with this knowledge; but may the hunger of my heart to love Him Who can never be loved enough, never be sated." (11)

There are to be found in the Saint's works, and especially in *The Kingdom of Jesus*, some complete meditations which are models of mental prayer, and it is obvious at a glance that their "points" are extremely simple and well within the range of all minds. This is the case, for example, with the meditations for each day of the week and on the subject of baptism. Unfortunately, for want of understanding these principles, many souls are never trained to prayer, for they try to make use

of learned reflections which are beyond their capacity and have nothing in common with prayer.

The acts of the will demanded by prayer may be reduced to three. The first is an act of adoration united to acts of praise, thanksgiving,

(10a). *Ibid.*, P. 26.

(11). *Ibid.*, Part V, P. 223

## INTRODUCTION XXX1-

reparation and . especially love. We must adore Jesus in all His mysteries , in all His virtues and works because He is our God and, therefore, always has a right to the supreme worship owed by the creature to his Creator. We must praise and glorify Him because of His infinite perfections, we must thank Him for His benefits and above all for the glory that He procures for His Heavenly Father. We must beg His pardon for our ingratitude and our sins, and lastly affirm that we love Him with our whole heart, and seek to employ all that we are and all that we have for the purpose of loving Him.

The second act is what the Saint calls oblation, which means not only the giving and consecration of self to Jesus, but also and more particularly an act by which, renouncing all power of disposing of ourselves or acting of our own accord, we surrender ourselves to Him entirely, so that He can take possession of us, eradicate everything opposed to His influence, make us sharers in His mysteries and virtues, and guide us in everything as the head guides the members that it vivifies.

It is, in short, that "adherence" so strongly recommended by Bérulle and his school. To this oblation is naturally added an invitation to Jesus Christ to take possession of our hearts and to establish therein His life and virtues. It is true that this request is already virtually included in the oblation of which we speak, but St. John Eudes almost always makes it the subject of a formal act, as for instance in his salutation to the Sacred Heart, *Ave Cor Sanctissimum*, (12) and in many of the prayers in *The Kingdom of Jesus* and in the *Manual of Piety* that he composed for his congregation of priests.

The last act involved in prayer is a resolution to shun evil and to do good, imitating the example of the Divine Master and putting His holy teaching into practice. This shows us that the Saint had the same view of prayer as had Father de Condren, Father Olier and all the fol- (12). In the *Ave Cor Sanctissimum*, a prayer written by St. John Eudes in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we find after acts of adoration, praise, thanksgiving and love, these words: "we offer Thou our heart we give it in Thee. We consecrate it to Thee. We immolate it to Thee. Receive it and possess it wholly; purify it, enlighten it, sanctify it, that Thou mayest live and reign in it now, always and forever and ever. Amen."

Cf. *The Sacred Heart of Jesus* (New York, 1946), p. 173.

This is that oblation or adherence which we have just explained.

## XXX11-

## INTRODUCTION

lowers of Cardinal de Bérulle. (13) Prayer, as taught by this school, is but the practical application in our relations with God of the principles that sum up St. John Eudes' spiritual teaching.

The various elements of prayer unite and interact throughout its whole course; therefore, St. John Eudes sees no necessity to make our considerations and our affective acts two distinct matters. The intellect' and the will have to work together, as they do in the meditations given in *The Kingdom of Jesus*. Nor is it necessary to separate the various acts of the will so as to make them in the order we have just shown. They also combine and intermingle, and we may even say that in practice each of them calls up the other two, implicitly contains them and can suffice for the completion of a good

prayer.

#### IV. MEDITATION ON THE MYSTERIES

St. John Eudes says that the mysteries of our holy religion must be "the subject of our contemplation and adoration," "the object of all our pious exercises," the "daily bread and nourishment of our spiritual life" consequently the ordinary subject-matter of our mental prayer. To help us in meditating on these mysteries the Saint points out seven elements which we have to consider and to honor in each mystery.

Of these the first is the body or external aspect of the mystery, which St. John Eudes explains as being "all its outward manifestations. For (13). To grasp his concept of prayer, we must bear in mind the fact that St. John Eudes belongs in the Seventeenth-Century French School of Spirituality, also called "the Berullian School" from the name of its founder and most illustrious member, Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle, who in 1611 organized the French Congregation of the Oratory on the model of the one founded some years before by St. Philip Néri at Rome. In 1623, St. John Eudes entered the Oratory and received his spiritual training from Bérulle himself and from his saintly successor, Father Charles de Condren. These two holy men concentrated their devotion on Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, and on His most holy Mother; they looked upon the Christian life as a continuation and an extension of the life of Christ in each one of us; they stressed the virtue of religion and the supreme worship of adoration that we owe to God in union with His Divine Son. These ideas, so clear to de Bérulle and de Condren, constitute the basis of the spiritual teaching of St. John Eudes to be sure, he sets them forth in his way; nevertheless, they are the essence of his spiritual doctrine. Other distinguished disciples of de Bérulle were Bossuet, St. Vincent de Paul and Father Jean Jacques Olier. In 1643, St. John Eudes left the Oratory to found the Congregation of Jesus and Mary for the training of priests and the preaching of missions. cf. The Spiritual Teaching of St. John Eudes (London, 1934) PP. 49 ff.

#### INTRODUCTION

XXX111-

instance, the visible exterior elements in the mystery of the birth of Jesus are the nakedness, poverty, cold and weakness of the newborn Infant, the little swaddling bands in which He was wrapped, His cradle in the crib and on the straw between the ox and the ass, His tears and baby cries, the tiny movements of His sacred feet and hands, the first gaze of His baby eyes, His slumber in the arms of His Blessed Mother, the nourishment He took from her most holy breasts, the sweet kisses He received from her and from St. Joseph, the visit of the shepherds, and all the other touching incidents that took place outwardly in the stable of Bethlehem, on the night of the birth of the Son of God." (14)

Saint John Eudes then adds, "Every detail deserves your consideration and honor, because there is nothing unimportant in the mysteries of Jesus, but, rather, each aspect is great, divine and worthy of adoration. If the Son of God, therefore, takes the trouble to concentrate His divine Spirit and Heart (which ought not, it seems, to be concerned about anything other than divinity itself), on the consideration of every step you take, even numbering the hairs of your head, as He Himself asserts, and writing and treasuring in His Heart the slightest actions you perform for Him, so that He may do honor and glorify them for all eternity in heaven, how much more should you centre your mind and heart on the consideration, adoration and glorification of the smallest details of the infinite mysteries of His life, seeing that there is not one thing about them which is not infinitely great and admirable, and deserving of infinite honor and adoration !" (15)

The second feature to be considered in each mystery is, in St. John Eudes' words, "the interior spirit of the mystery, that is, the particular virtue, power and grace which inhere in the mystery

and are peculiar to III since each mystery has its own proper virtue and spirit of grace. This includes the thoughts and intentions, the affections, sentiments, dispositions and interior activity accomplishing the mystery. In a word, it includes all that took place inwardly in the mind, Heart and holy soul of Christ, and in the minds and hearts of all those who participated directly in the mystery." (16)

(14). *The kingdom Of Jesus*, Part VI, p. 260.

(15). *Ibid.*, pp. 260-261.

(16). *Ibid.*, Part VI, p. 264.

xxxiv-

## INTRODUCTION

"This spiritual aspect," the Saint proceeds, "ought to engage your principal attention and honor in the mysteries of the life of Our Lord; yet it actually receives the least attention and honor. Many Christians are satisfied to contemplate the body and the externals, without passing on to the inward features of these tremendous mysteries. Yet it is the spirit and the core that are most important, constituting the foundation, the substance, life and truth of the mystery, whereas the exterior is no more than a covering, an accessory, and the accidental being of the mystery. The exterior and body are passing and temporal, but the interior virtue and spirit of grace which dwell in each mystery are permanent and eternal." (17)

The third element to be honored in Our Lord's mysteries comprises the effects He has produced and still continually produces by each of them.

The fourth comprises the particular designs entertained by Jesus in each of His mysteries.

The fifth is the share and the special part taken by the Blessed Virgin in each mystery.

The sixth feature to consider in His mysteries is the part played by the angels and saints particularly connected with each mystery.

Lastly, the seventh matter to be considered and revered is our own participation in these mysteries. "You have a very particular part in each mystery of the Son of God, inasmuch as He had some thought, some plan, some special love for each one of you, and the design to impart to you special graces and special favors, both on earth and in heaven by every mystery of His perfect life." (18)

Obviously St. John Eudes does not attempt to persuade us to include all these considerations in our meditations. Every person is free to choose those which most attract him or correspond to his particular needs, and to concentrate his thoughts and his love on these. In due proportion, these principles apply equally to other possible subjects of prayer, especially to the mysteries of the Blessed Virgin, the Christian virtues, and the teachings of our Divine Master.

(17). *loc. cit.*

(18). *Ibid.*, Part VI, P. 264

INTRODUCTION

xxxv-

## V. HOW TO BEGIN AND END MEDITATION

In his *Manual of Piety*, St. John Eudes indicates four ways to begin and end the regular exercise of morning prayer. Fundamentally they are similar, but their difference purposely preserves us from the monotony which accompanies the constant repetition of any formula and

diminishes its efficacy. The study of the first method will be sufficient for us.

The Saint wishes us to commence our prayer by four preliminary acts:

The first is an act of adoration. "Let us adore God," he says, "and humiliate ourselves deeply before Him, recognizing the fact that we are infinitely unworthy of appearing before His face and of thinking of Him, and that we do not deserve that He think of us, nor that He suffer us in His presence." The greater number of spiritual authors invite us to place ourselves in the presence of God while beginning our prayer. The act of adoration recommended by St. John Eudes presupposes and implies this Divine presence. It is impossible to adore God and to humiliate ourselves before God without feeling that we are in His presence.

The Saint does not ask that we place ourselves by a formal act in the presence of God, because he desires the prayer to be said before the Blessed Sacrament and also because the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity are present everywhere and reside in a special way in the soul of a Christian who is in the state of grace,

The second preparatory act for prayer is an act of purity of intention or of pure love. "Let us humble our spirit and self-love at the feet of our Lord," the Saint tells us, "renouncing all curiosity of mind and all self-satisfaction, confessing to Him that we wish to do this action, by means of His grace, for His pure love and for His sole contentment."

Prayer is an act of faith and of love; therefore we must try to seek first the glory of God and then personal advantage. The Saint puts us on our guard against speculations in which the mind is merely pleased with itself, and against devotion which simply delights the heart. To

xxxvi-

## INTRODUCTION

seek and enjoy these emotions would be to forget that prayer is fundamentally a religious act designed to render to God His due homage of adoration, praise and love, and there is no prayer-value in extravagant speculations nor the pleasantness of sensible devotions. St. John Eudes invites us to renounce them and to resign ourselves in advance to dryness and aridity which, instead of vitiating prayer, renders it more excellent, particularly when the dryness and aridity are involuntary.

The third preparatory act for prayer consists in our surrender to Jesus and His divine spirit. "Let us give our mind and heart to Our Lord, begging Him that He possess them and that He lead them into prayer according to His Holy Will." This act is called the adherence. It is required for every act of Christian life, since the Christian life is the life of Jesus in us, since it emanates from Him, and since we can do nothing without Him. We are like the branches which can produce neither leaves nor fruit without the sap which comes from the trunk of the tree. Here, as always, St. John Eudes invites us to join to the act of oblation and adherence an act of request which follows in the natural sequence.

In *The Kingdom of Jesus* the Saint strongly emphasizes this act of oblation to Jesus: "Finally, to make all the other holy dispositions complete, at the beginning of your prayer, fervently give your mind and heart to Jesus and to His divine spirit, praying Him to inspire in your heart such thoughts and affections as He may desire. Abandon yourself entirely to His holy guidance, that He may guide you as He pleases in this divine activity. Trust in His great goodness to lead you in the most fitting manner, and to give you all that you shall ask . . ." (19)

Finally, remembering that we are the members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, and that we are completely with Him, with His holy Mother and all the saints, Saint John Eudes invites us to unite our prayer to that of Jesus and to all those who pray with Him on earth and in heaven. "Let us

give ourselves to our Lord, Jesus Christ," he says, "in order to enter into the holy dispositions of His continual prayer before His Eternal Father, and to unite ourselves with the prayer now being said by His holy Mother, by St. Joseph, by St. Gabriel, and by our good angels."  
(19).Ibid, P. 32.

## INTRODUCTION

XXXV11-

These preparatory acts are simply the fundamental application of the theory of the Seventeenth-Century School of Spirituality. They find their application everywhere, in the preparation for prayer as well as in the prayer itself.(20)

In finishing the prayer four things should be done.

The first is to give thanks to God and to ask His pardon. "Let us thank God," says St. John Eudes, "for the graces that He gave us in this prayer, let us ask pardon for the faults we have committed during it, and let us beg Our Lord Jesus Christ to amend them and that He Himself be our perpetual prayer before His Father."

Then comes an invitation to make what St. Francis de Sales calls "the spiritual bouquet or nosegay," but St. John Eudes never uses the expression. He prefers to call it an "ejaculatory prayer." "Let us make," he says, "a selection of the principal resolutions and suggestions that God has given us in daily prayer, and as an ejaculatory prayer we shall say: . . . . ."

In the Congregation of Jesus and Mary founded by him, St. John Eudes requested that the ejaculatory prayer be recalled not only at the end of all the community prayers, but also after the Litany of the Blessed Virgin recited in the evening. The Saint desired that his children remain the whole day under the influence of their morning prayer.

In the third place, the Saint invites us to rely entirely on the assistance of Our Lord and His holy Mother for carrying out our resolutions. "Let us guard well," he said, "against depending on our own thoughts and resolutions, but rely on the pure mercy which our Divine Saviour imparts to us in prayer, begging Him to give us the grace to practise them. Let us also place ourselves with this same intention in the hands of the Blessed Virgin."

After that we must beg the angels and saints to continue our prayers. "Let us pray," said St. John Eudes, "to the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, our guardian angels, to all the angels to help us to overcome our faults, to help us continue our prayer for ourselves and to join our prayers with their unceasing chorus of praise and prayer before the face of God."

(20). See footnote 13

xxxviii-

## INTRODUCTION

verbal prayers usually conclude with the expression of sentiments similar to those which we have just indicated, and have as their object to obtain from Our Lord, from His holy Mother, from the angels and from the saints, the grace to spend the day in a spirit of prayer.

## CONCLUSION

Such is the idea of prayer given by St. John Eudes, and his understanding of its practice. We have already mentioned that his views on this point are those of the followers of the Seventeenth-Century French School of Spirituality for whom prayer is paramountly adoration and love and is deeply theocentric. It is, in addition, a way of increasing the life of Jesus in us, and that is why the

offering of ourselves to the Incarnate Word occupies an important place in it. But, as participation in the life of Jesus demands upon our part the comprehending of His feelings and virtues, so it requires the resolutions which assure its efficacy.

We might add that prayer, as the followers of Cardinal deBérulle understand it, leaves little room for the imagination or for human reasoning. It is based entirely upon the principles of faith, such as those furnished us by Holy Scripture; it does not contain anything arbitrary or factitious, and it demands of the intelligence only that it seeks to fathom the truths of Scripture in order that the heart, in its turn, find in them an increase of generosity and love.

We need not try to find out how this concept of prayer agrees with that of Louis of Grenada, of St. Ignatius, and of St. Francis de Sales. There are fewer differences than at first appears to be the case, because they are all only various applications of the Catholic doctrine.

Charles Lebrun, C.J.M.

## PRAYERS BEFORE AND AFTER MEDITATION

1 -

### PRAYERS BEFORE AND AFTER MEDITATION (1)

To prepare your soul for meditation, recite the following vocal prayers:

*Come, O Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.*

*V. Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created.*

*R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.*

*LET US PRAY, O God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit didst instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant us by the same Holy Spirit a love and relish of what is right and just, and a constant enjoyment of His consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Our Father. Hail Mary. I Believe in God.*

<i>Hail, Heart most holy.</i>	<i>We revere Thee.</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most meek.</i>	<i>We praise Thee.</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most humble.</i>	<i>We glorify Thee.</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most pure.</i>	<i>We give Thee thanks.</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most devout.</i>	<i>We love Thee,</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most wise.</i>	<i>With all our heart,</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most patient.</i>	<i>With all our soul,</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most obedient.</i>	<i>And with all our strength.</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most vigilant.</i>	<i>We offer Thee our heart.</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most faithful.</i>	<i>We give it to Thee.</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most blessed.</i>	<i>We consecrate it to Thee.</i>
<i>Hail, Heart most merciful.</i>	<i>We immolate it to Thee.</i>
<i>Hail, most loving Heart of Jesus</i>	<i>Receive it and possess it wholly;</i>
<i>and Mary.</i>	<i>Purify it, enlighten it, sanctify it,</i>
	<i>That Thou mayest live and reign</i>
	<i>in it now, always and forever</i>
	<i>and ever. Amen.</i>

(1). These vocal prayers and acts before and after meditation are taken from a *Manual of Piety* compiled by ST. John Eudes.

2 -

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

*O Angel of God, my guardian, enlighten and protect, direct and govern me.*

*All hail, ye Angels and Saints of the heavenly courts. Deign to intercede for our salvation and for the salvation of the world.*

Select one of the methods to be used before meditation and read it, pausing after each paragraph to make the acts suggested.



**FIRST METHOD(2)****ACTS BEFORE MEDITATION****I**

Let us adore God and humble ourselves profoundly before Him, acknowledging that we are infinitely unworthy to appear before His face or think about His divine Majesty; and that we do not deserve to be thought of by Him or admitted into His presence.

**II**

Let us annihilate our self-love and our pride at the Saviour's feet renouncing all intellectual curiosity and self-satisfaction, and assuring our Lord that we wish to perform this action, with the help of His grace, for the sake of His pure love and His sole satisfaction.

**III**

Let us give our minds and hearts to our Divine Lord, supplicating Him to take complete possession of them and guide them in this prayer, according to His holy will.

**IV**

Let us give ourselves to Our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may enter into the holy dispositions of His continual prayer before His Heavenly Father, and that we may also join in the prayer now being offered by all the holy souls in heaven and on earth, particularly by His Blessed Mother, Saint Joseph, Saint Gabriel and our guardian angels.

(2). To prevent routine in this most important art of the Spiritual life, St. John Eudes gives four methods or ways of beginning and ending meditation. cf. "Introduction," p. xxxv.

**MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECT****ACTS AFTER MEDITATION**

At the end of meditation, read the following paragraphs, pausing after each to make the acts.

**1**

Let us thank God for the inestimable graces He has given us and ask His divine pardon for the faults committed in the course of our prayer; let us implore our Lord Jesus Christ to make amends for them and to be Himself our perpetual prayer before His Father.

**1 1**

Let us consider the principal inspirations and resolutions which God has given us in the prayer, that we may recall them throughout the day; and as an ejaculatory prayer, let us say:

*Here recall a brief and appealing invocation to God or the saints, taken from Sacred Scripture or the Divine Office, or from one of the Fathers, to serve as an ejaculatory prayer during the day.*

### III

Let us take care not to rely solely on our own thoughts and resolutions, but rather on the infinite mercy of God; let us place at Our Lord's disposal whatever blessing He has imparted to us in the prayer, supplicating Him to preserve it and grant us the grace to practise it. Let us also place the same intention in the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### IV

Let us implore the Blessed Virgin, Saint Joseph, Saint Gabriel, our guardian angels and all the angels and saints, to make up our deficiencies, continue our prayer for us and admit us as partners in the prayer which they offer perpetually in God's presence.

### V

Let each one make an examination of conscience in order to foresee customary faults and possible occasions of sin; let him likewise review

## PRAYERS

5 -

the virtues he is especially obliged to practise, particularly humility, obedience, charity and meekness. Let him resolve to avoid any faults against these virtues and let him beg God for the grace to accomplish this end.

6 -

## SECOND METHOD

### ACTS BEFORE MEDITATION

#### I

Let us adore God, humble ourselves before Him and give Him our minds and hearts with the desire to perform this act well, for love of Him alone.

1 1

Let us make an act of self-renunciation, surrendering ourselves to Our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may offer our prayer in His loving Spirit.

Let us pray to the Most Holy Virgin, the angels and saints for assistance to help us to perform this action worthily.

### ACTS AFTER MEDITATION

#### I

Let us thank God for the graces He has given us and ask pardon for our omissions.

1 1

Let us make a selection of the inspiring thoughts and sentiments God has given us; and as an

ejaculatory prayer, let us say:

*Here recall a brief and appealing invocation to God or the saints, taken from Sacred Scripture or the Divine Office, or from one of the Fathers, to serve as an ejaculatory prayer during the day.*

1 1 1

Let us mistrust ourselves and our resolutions, placing all our confidence in Divine Mercy; and let us implore the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and saints to help us.

PRAYERS

7 -

IV

Let each one make a brief examination of conscience to foresee the faults frequently committed in the course of the day.

8 -

### THIRD METHOD

#### ACTS BEFORE MEDITATION

Let each one yield himself to the spirit of God, that he may cultivate the dispositions necessary to prepare his soul for the prayer; and that he may say, to that end, in his heart and with all his heart, what I am about to say.

I

O my God, prostrate at the feet of Thy infinite grandeur and engulfed in the abyss of my nothingness, I adore Thee as my Creator and the universal Lord of all things, acknowledging that I am infinitely unworthy to appear before Thy face and even to think of Thee. I do not deserve that Thou shouldst think of me nor suffer me to come within Thy presence. I ask pardon of Thee, my God, for all the sins which have rendered me so unworthy of Thee.

1 1

O my God, at Thy feet I place my self-love and my pride; deign to annihilate them. I desire to perform this prayer as well as possible, with the help of Thy holy grace, for Thy greater glory and my salvation.

1 1 1

My Divine Jesus, I give Thee my mind and my heart. I implore Thee to take possession of them and guide them throughout this prayer according to Thy holy will.

IV

O Jesus, in complete self-renunciation I give myself to Thee with all my heart, that I may enter into Thy spirit of prayer, uniting myself

PRAYERS

9 -

with the prayer Thou dost offer unceasingly before Thy Father and with that of all the holy souls in heaven and on earth.

## V

O Mother of Jesus, O blessed Saint Joseph, O blessed Saint Gabriel, O my holy guardian angel, all ye angels and saints of Jesus, implore my God to give me the true spirit of prayer, and grant me fellowship in the unceasing prayer which you offer before the throne of His divine Majesty.

### ACTS AFTER MEDITATION

Let each one give himself to the spirit of God, that he may finish his meditation in the dispositions suggested by the following words which everyone should repeat in his heart.

## I

O my God, I thank Thee for the graces Thou hast given me in my prayer, and I ask pardon of Thee for the faults I have committed therein. I implore Thee, O my Jesus, to make reparation for them in my name and to be Thyself my perpetual prayer before Thy Father.

## 1 1

O my Saviour, I trust entirely in Thy boundless mercy, not in my weak and feeble self, nor in my resolutions. In Thy Heart and Thy hands I place the salutary thoughts and inspirations Thou hast given me in this prayer; deign to preserve them and grant me the grace to bring them to fruition. To that end, O Mother of my Jesus, I place them also in thy tender heard

## III

O Blessed Virgin Mary, O Saint Joseph, O Saint Gabriel, all ye angels and saints of Jesus, supply my deficiencies and deign to continue my prayer for me.

1 0 -

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

## IV

Let each one make a selection of the inspiring thoughts and sentiments that God has given him. As an ejaculatory prayer, let us say:

*Here recall a brief and appealing invocation to God or the saints, taken from Sacred Scripture or the Divine Office, or from one of the Fathers, to serve as an ejaculatory prayer during Me day.*

## V

Let each one make the customary examination of conscience.

1 1 -

### FOURTH METHOD

### ACTS BEFORE MEDITATION

After the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, read the following words and then pause for the length of a *Miserere* to make the acts.

Let each one give himself to the spirit of God, that he may enter into the dispositions customary for beginning the prayer, that is, to adore God, to humble ourselves before Him, to

renounce self, to consecrate our being to Our Lord's spirit of prayer, and to invoke the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints.

#### ACTS AFTER MEDITATION

At the end of meditation, read the following words and then pause about the length of a *Miserere*.

Let each one finish the prayer in the usual way, that is, by thanking God, imploring His forgiveness, reviewing the principal thoughts and inclinations He has given us, placing them in the hands of Our Lord and His Holy Mother; by invoking the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints, and by making the recommended spiritual preview of the day.

Conclude your meditation with the following vocal prayers:

*We fly to thy patronage, O Holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin. -*

*Lord Jesus Christ, we are nothing, .  
We can do nothing,  
We are worth nothing,  
We possess nothing but sin;*

1 2 -

#### IMITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

*We are useless servants, We are children of wrath, The last of men and the first of sinners: Upon us be confusion and shame, To Thee be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

*Blessed be forever the most loving Heart and the sweet Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of the most glorious Virgin Mary, His Mother.*

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

1 3 -

1 5 -

1

#### MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK(1)

#### MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK'

#### FIRST MEDITATION

#### Sunday

*The Divine Life of Jesus  
in the Bosom of the Heavenly Father*

#### FIRST POINT

THE LIFE OF JESUS IN THE Bosom OF His FATHER  
Is FILLED with GLORY AND DELIGHT

O JESUS, my Lord and my God, I contemplate, adore and glorify Thee in Thy divine life from all eternity in the bosom of the Eternal Father, before Thine Incarnation in the virginal womb of Thy Mother. What a holy life! How pure, divine, wonderful and filled with glory, greatness and delights! What joy to see Thee living, from all eternity, a life so filled with perfection, contentment and wonders! Blessed be Thou, O Father of Jesus, for having imparted such a life to Thy Wellbeloved Soul O Jesus, I offer Thee all the glory, love and praise Thou dost derive from the Father and the Holy Spirit throughout the eternity of Thy divine life.

(1)."Meditations for Each Day of the Week" are taken from "Part Four' of *The Kingdom of Jesus*.

16-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### SECOND POINT

THE CHIEF FUNCTION OF JESUS From ALL ETERNITY IS  
To CONTEMPLATE AND LOVE His FATHER

O Jesus, when I consider Thy divine and eternal life, I see that Thy chief function for all eternity is to contemplate, glorify and love Thy Father, to refer Thyself to Him as to Thy principle, to give Him Thy being, Thy life, Thy perfections and all that Thou shalt be forever, as gifts received from Him, to be employed in glorifying and loving Him, and to offer Him infinitely worthy praise and love. Blessed be Thou, O Jesus, for all these things. O Most Amiable Father, how I rejoice to behold Thee so loved and glorified by Thy Son! I offer Thee all love and glory that Thou dost receive from Him during all eternity, by His divine life in Thy fatherly bosom before His Incarnation.

### THIRD POINT

From ALL ETERNITY JESUS THINKS OF ME AND LOVES ME

O Good Jesus, Thou hast expended all Thy divine life for my benefit. From all eternity Thou dost think of me, love me and offer me to the Father, and Thou dost offer Thyself also to Him, to come one day upon earth to be made flesh, to suffer and die on earth for love of me. O Dearest Jesus, Thou hast loved me from all eternity, and I hardly know if I have yet begun to love Thee as I ought. Forgive me, my Saviour. From now on, and for all eternity, let me live but to love Thee!

Ejaculatory prayer:

"I have loved Thee with an everlasting love."

In caritate perpetua dilexi te (Jer. 31, 3) -

17 -

## SECOND MEDITATION

### Monday

The Incarnation

### FIRST POINT

JESUS SHOWS HIS LOVE; FOR HIS FATHER  
IN HIS INCARNATION

O JESUS, I adore Thee at the moment of Thy Incarnation, which is the first instant of Thy mortal life. I adore all the marvelous things that took place in Thee at that moment. What great accomplishments were effected in Thee and by Thee, in that blessed instant, in the eyes of the Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy sacred humanity, and Thy Blessed Mother! What thoughts, what affections, what love! How Thy holy soul in that instant devoted itself, before Thy Father's face~ to adore and glorify Him and sacrifice Thee entirely to His glory, and to accomplish all that He willed!

O Good Jesus, I adore Thy first thoughts and Thy first acts of adoration, oblation, love and praise, which Thou didst offer to Thy Father at that time. How exalted and divine were the love and glory Thou gavest Him then! Truly Thou didst give Him infinitely more honor and love in that moment alone than all the angels and all men accorded Him in the five thousand years that preceded Thine Incarnation, or ever shall give Him for all eternity. O Father of Jesus, what satisfaction for my soul to behold Thee so loved and glorified by Thy Soul O Jesus, be Thou blessed, adored and glorified forever for the honor and love Thou didst give to Thy Father at the blessed moment of Thine Incarnation!

18-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### SECOND POINT

#### JESUS SHOWS His LOVE FOR MARY IN His INCARNATION

O Jesus, when I consider Thee in this mystery, I see by the light of faith that Thou dost entertain most exalted thoughts and great designs upon her in whom the Incarnation was accomplished, and that Thou dost indeed effect great and marvelous works in her. O Jesus, I adore the first thoughts, the first acts of love and movements of grace, of light and of eminent sanctity which Thou didst produce in Thy Blessed Mother at the moment of Thine Incarnation. So, too, do I adore the first acts of adoration, praise and love of the most admirable Mother for the Most Adorable Son. Blessed be Thou, O Jesus, Son of Mary, for all the wonders Thou didst work in Thy divine Mother by this stupendous mystery! Blessed be thou, O Mother of Jesus, for all the glory thou hast given thy Son in this same mystery! Unite me, I implore thee, to all the love and honor thou didst give thy Dear Son in the first instant of His life, and grant that I may share in thy peerless love for Him and in thy zeal for His glory.

### THIRD POINT

#### JESUS SHOWS His LOVE FOR ME IN His INCARNATION

O Most Amiable Jesus, at the same instant that Thou didst look up to the Father, after the Incarnation, Thou didst also look upon me. Thou didst begin to think of Him, refer Thyself to Him and love Him and Thou didst likewise begin to think of me, to give Thyself to me and love me. At the very instant Thou didst begin to live, it was to live for me, to prepare and acquire for me most extraordinary graces, and to form plans for my salvation. From that very moment Thou didst plan and desire to create in me an image of the mystery of the Incarnation and to become incarnate in me, that is, to unite me to Thyself, and Thyself most intimately to me, both physically and spiritually by Thy holy grace and Thy divine sacraments, and then to fill me with

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY

19 -

Thyself, and establish Thyself in me to live and reign perfectly in me. O what goodness! What

boundless love! Infinitely blessed be Thou, O Good Jesus! May all Thy mercies and all Thy wonders for the children of men bless Thee forever! I most humbly beg Thy forgiveness for the obstacles which I have put in the way of the accomplishment of the great designs Thou hast deigned to have in my regard. Never allow me to impede Thy grace again. From now on I desire to annihilate, at all costs, everything in me that opposes Thy holy will. My Jesus, may it please Thee to grant me the grace and strength to do this.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"He came down from heaven for us men and our salvation."

*Propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis.*

20 -

### **THIRD MEDITATION**

**Tuesday**

#### **The Holy Childhood of Jesus**

##### **FIRST POINT**

**JESUS BECAME A LITTLE CHILD  
To SANCTIFY HUMAN CHILDHOOD**

O GREAT and Admirable Jesus, Thou wast not satisfied to become man for love of men, but Thou didst also will to become a child, subject to all the lowliness and weakness of infancy, in order to honor the Eternal Father in every condition of human life, and to sanctify all the states of our life. Blessed be Thou, Good Jesus, for these favors! May all Thy angels and saints bless Thee eternally! O most amiable Child, I offer Thee my own childhood, although it is past, imploring Thee most humbly that, by virtue of Thy divine Childhood, Thou mayest wipe out all that was bad or imperfect and cause my whole life as a child to render homage to Thy most adorable Childhood.

##### **SECOND POINT**

**JESUS LOVED His FATHER AND His  
MOTHER DURING His CHILDHOOD**

O Divine Jesus, when I contemplate Thee in Thy holy Childhood, I see that Thou art never idle, but dost effect great things for Thy Eternal Father, contemplating, adoring and loving Him, and also for Thy Blessed Mother, heaping upon her a world of graces and blessings, also for St. Joseph, and little St. John the Baptist and the other saints with whom Thou didst associate as a child, accomplishing in them most wonderful works of illumination and sanctity. I adore Thee, love Thee

**MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY**

21 -

and bless Thee in all Thy divine occupations and in the marvelous effects of Thy divine Childhood. I offer Thee all the honor and love Thou didst receive in Thy holy Childhood from Thy Father, Thy Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, St. Gabriel, and from the other angels and saints who are in any special way associated with Thy divine Childhood.



### THIRD POINT

#### JESUS LOVED ME DURING HIS CHILDHOOD

O most amiable Child, I adore all Thy thoughts and designs and Thy most burning love for me. Thou wast thinking of me, and didst love me without interruption in Thy Childhood. Thou didst cherish the plan and the strong desire to imprint upon my heart an image of Thy divine Childhood, that is, to make me enter upon a state of holy and sacred childhood, which should imitate and honor the meekness, simplicity, humility, purity of body and spirit, the obedience and innocence of Thy holy Childhood. O my Jesus, I give myself to Thee to accomplish Thy plan and desire and to enter into this state. I shall henceforth strive, with the help of Thy holy grace, which I invoke with my whole heart, to become meek, humble, simple, pure, obedient, free of all arrogance, bitterness and malice, like a child, so that I may render some small honor to Thy Childhood which so deserves to be honored.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"He was subject to them."

*Erat subditus illis* (Luke 2, 51).

22 -

### FOURTH MEDITATION

#### Wednesday

#### *The Hidden and Laborious Life of Jesus*

### FIRST POINT

#### DURING His HIDDEN LIFE, JESUS TEACHES US TO LOVE RECOLLECTION AND SOLITUDE

O JESUS, although Thou didst have so many and such great acts to perform on earth, converting so many souls, working so many miracles, doing so much good by Thy blessed example and holy preaching, if Thou hadst gone out among men, yet Thou didst not will to do this until the age of thirty, performing in the meantime no outward act that might make Thee known to men. Thou didst remain hidden and withdrawn into the Father, in Whom Thy mind, heart, thoughts, desires and affections were uninterruptedly enclosed. Thou didst choose this secluded life to honor Thy hidden life from all eternity in the bosom of Thy Father, and to teach us that solitude and recollection are pleasing to Thee. Of the thirty-four years of Thy life upon earth, no more than four were spent in active intercourse among men, while thirty were spent in seclusion and solitude. Blessed be Thou, O Good Jesus, for all the glory Thou didst give Thy Father during these thirty years of Thy hidden life! Grant that I in their honor may henceforth love recollection and solitude, both interior and exterior. Draw me apart and hide me in Thee. Absorb my mind into Thine, my heart into Thy Heart and my life into Thy life. I desire henceforth, with the help of Thy grace, to make every effort to withdraw my thoughts and affections from all things into Thee, O my Jesus, as into my place of refuge, my centre, my element and my paradise, outside of which all else is hell

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY

23 -

and perdition. I wish to dwell ever in Thee, following Thy commandment: "Abide in me" (John 15, 4), that is, in Thy Spirit, Thy love, Thy sentiments and inclinations, never to leave Thee again.

## SECOND POINT

### JESUS IN His LIFE OF LABOR TEACHES US HUMILITY

O Most Great and Most Adorable Jesus, Thou didst will to lead an unknown and despised life, a life lowly and abject in the eyes of men, a life of poverty, labor and suffering, hearing the name and following the trade of carpenter, to teach us first by example what Thou didst later teach us by words, namely, that "what is high to men is an abomination before God;" *quod hominibus altum est, abominatio est ante Deum* (Luke 16, 15). O Jesus, imprint this truth deeply in my mind and firmly implant in my heart a great hatred and horror of an fame, praise, greatness and vanity, and for all that catches and dazzles the eyes of men, giving me a very strong love for all that involves lowliness, abjection and humiliation.

## THIRD POINT

### JESUS IN His HIDDEN LIFE RENDERS INFINITE GLORY To His HEAVENLY FATHER

O Jesus, Thou art God, even as Thy Heavenly Father and Thou art but One God with Him; Thou dost share one power and operation, and with Him Thou art the Creator, Preserver and Governor of our vast universe. From all eternity Thou dost send forth with Him a Divine Person, that is, the Holy Ghost, who is God even as the Father and Thou. This and other exalted marvels worthy of Thy supreme greatness, Thou dost accomplish. Yet in Thy hidden life of labor on earth, I see that Thou dost lower Thyself to the commonest and most lowly actions of human life, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, working, earning Thy living with the toil of Thy hands and in the sweat of Thy brow. I am filled with wonder and consolation because Thou art no less great and admirable in small things than in great. In these

24 -

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

lowly commonplace activities Thou didst tender infinitely great glory to the Omnipotent Father because, O Jesus, Thou didst perform all actions, even the smallest and most ordinary, not with common or ordinary dispositions, but with an infinite love for the Father and for us. Thou didst merit and acquire, by the power of Thy holy actions, a special grace for all our acts, to enable us to perform them meritoriously. Hence we can and must do everything devoutly; otherwise we nullify and waste the graces Thou hast acquired for us in the performance of similar actions. Do not allow this to happen, O Good Jesus! Give me the grace Thou hast acquired for me by Thy holy actions, so that I may perform all my own acts with holiness. This is my desire and my resolve. Grant me grace to fulfil it purely for Thy glory, that in future I may offer up all my acts, even the smallest, in honor of Thine and that I may, as far as possible, perform my tasks with the dispositions and intentions that exalted the lowliness of all Thy most humble-, human deeds.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."

*Vita vestra est abscondita cum Christo in Deo (Col. 3, 3)*

25 -

## FIFTH MEDITATION

Thursday

*The Public Life of Jesus and His Life in the Blessed Eucharist*

FIRST POINT

THERE ARE FIVE POTENT REASONS WHY JESUS  
LIVED His PUBLIC LIFE

O MOST Amiable Jesus, Thou dost live, reign and commune for all eternity with the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit. How rich is this association and how delightful to Thee! What glory and praise Thou dost receive from the Father and Holy Spirit Yet Thou didst will to come forth from the bosom of the Father to appear on earth, to associate, eat and drink in familiar visible companionship, not only with Thy Blessed Mother, St. Joseph and the holy apostles and disciples, but even with sinners, from whom Thou didst sustain all kinds of outrages and indignities. Thou didst will to do this: first, to give homage to Thy divine and holy association with the Father and the Holy Spirit from all eternity by association with Thy Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, the holy apostles and the disciples; secondly, to deliver us from the punishment, so rightly deserved by our sins, of being reduced forever to the wretched company of demons, and to make us worthy to dwell eternally in the company of the angels and saints, Thy Blessed Mother, and the Three Divine Persons; thirdly, to show us the vital truth of Thy words, "My delights were to be with the children of men" (Prov. 8, 31); fourthly, to acquire for us, by the merit of Thy active life, the grace we need to behave virtuously in our relations with one another; fifthly, in order that the perfection of Thy holy and divine conduct in Thy relations with other men might serve as a model and example of the way we should act towards our neighbor.

26 -

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SECOND POINT

DISPOSITIONS WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE  
PUBLIC LIFE OF JESUS

I adore Thee, O Jesus, I bless Thee and love Thee for all these favors. I adore Thee in Thy public life and active ministry, which lasted from Thy thirtieth year to the day of Thy death. I adore and give Thee glory for everything in this period of Thy life, inward and outward, that is, all the actions, words, teachings, miracles, journeys, labors and weariness, and for all Thy thoughts, feelings, intentions, affections and inner dispositions. I bless Thee for all the glory Thou didst render to the Eternal Father. I offer Thee all the love and honor accorded during the time of Thine active life by all the holy souls who came in contact with Thee. I also offer Thee all my own associations and contacts, whether past or future, in homage to Thine own, and I implore Thee to cause all my actions relating to my neighbor to be consecrated to the glory of Thy public life.

O Jesus, I adore the thoroughly holy and divine dispositions which characterized Thy activity among men. With what dignity, charity, meekness, patience, modesty, detachment from creatures and attention to God didst Thou move and act in the world of men! O my Saviour, I desire that such dispositions may henceforth characterize all my relations with my neighbor. Alas! How far I am from such perfection and how many faults I have committed in the days gone by! For all these I beg Thy forgiveness, imploring Thee to implant in me all the dispositions I have requested.

### THIRD POINT

#### JESUS STILL LIVES WITH US IN THE BLESSED EUCHARIST

O Lord, Thou wast not satisfied to live and associate with mankind during Thy mortal life. When Thou wast on the point of returning to heaven, Thy most insatiable love and exceeding great desire to prove the tremendous truth that Thy delight is to be with the children of men inspired Thee to devise a most admirable institution that would

#### MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY

27 -

keep Thee ever with us, and give Thyself to us with all the essence of Thy riches and wonders. All this was accomplished by means of the Holy Eucharist, which is a compendium of all Thy wonders and the greatest of all the effects produced by Thy love for us. O love! O goodness! How is it that I am not utterly transformed into love and praise for Thee? O Jesus, forgive me my past abuse of so great a grace; grant that in the future I may make better use of this Divine Sacrament and that, as Thou dost find Thy delight in being with me, I may also find all my delight in Thy company, in thinking of Thee, in loving and glorifying Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"My delights were to be with the children of men."

Deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum (Prov. 8, 31) -

28 -

### SIXTH MEDITATION

#### Friday

#### *The Passion and Death of Jesus*

### FIRST POINT

#### JESUS PRACTISES SUBMISSION AND PATIENCE THROUGHOUT His PASSION

O JESUS, Thou art the love and the delight of God and the angels, of heaven and earth. Thou art the God of consolation, the source of all joy and bliss, joy and blessedness itself. Yet, when I behold Thee on the final day of Thy mortal life, I see that Thou art the object of the wrath and persecution of heaven, earth, hell, of God, men and all creatures. I see the universe and the powers of evil leagued against Thee, expending all their energies to make Thee suffer. Thou art, as it were, a target exposed to every volley of contradiction and outrage. I behold Thee so filled with sorrow, anguish and torments in every part of Thy body and soul, that Thou dost seem to be transformed into pain and sufferings. Hence the Prophet Isaias calls Thee "the man of sorrows." Virum dolorum (Isa. 53, 3)- O my Dearest Jesus, what has reduced Thee to so pitiable a state? It is Thy goodness, my Saviour, and the excess of Thy love. O my Sweet Jesus, let me adore, love and bless Thee in all Thy sufferings, both interior and exterior; let me adore in Thee the holy and divine dispositions of Thy suffering. With what submission to Thy Father's will, with what deep humiliation under the burden of all the sins of the world, with what charity for us, with what meekness and patience towards Thine enemies Thou didst endure the culmination of all sufferings! How ashamed I am to behold my Jesus suffering so extremely, with such dispositions, while I see how sensitive I am to the slightest pain, and so far from sharing His dispositions! O Good Jesus, I give myself to Thee to suffer all Thou dost will and

I offer Thee all that I have suffered and am yet to suffer in my whole life. May it please Thee to unite my works and trials with Thine; bless them through Thine; use them as Thine own, to glorify the Father and to honor Thy holy Passion. Grant that I may share in the love, humility and other dispositions with which Thou didst suffer!

### SECOND POINT

#### JESUS MANIFESTS His LOVE OF THE ETERNAL FATHER DURING HIS PASSION

O Most Amiable Jesus, Thou didst bear the torments of the Cross and of death with so much love for the Father and for us that the Holy Spirit speaks of the day of Thy Passion as "the day of Thy Heart's joy" (Cant. 3, it), to show that Thou didst find joy and satisfaction in suffering. O my Saviour, let me also find my joy and all my happiness in this world in trials and labors, in contempt and sufferings, if by them I can give Thee greater glory and love. Implant these dispositions in my soul, and imprint upon my heart intense hatred for the delights and pleasures of this earth, and a particular affection for hard work and suffering.

### THIRD POINT

#### THE DEATH OF JESUS IS AN OBJECT OF LOVE AND A MODEL FOR US

O Jesus, I contemplate and adore Thee agonizing and dying on the Cross. I adore Thy last thoughts, words, actions and sufferings, the last use of Thy bodily senses and of the faculties of Thy soul, the last graces Thou didst infuse into the soul of Thy Blessed Mother and the other watchers, who remained at the foot of the Cross; Thy last acts of adoration and love for the Heavenly Father; the last sentiments and dispositions of Thy Heart and Soul and the last breath that yielded up Thy life. I offer Thee the last moment of my life together with my death, in honor of Thy holy death and the consummation of Thy life. Bless my death, O Jesus, my Saviour, and sanctify it by Thine own; unite it to Thine; grant that I may share the holy and divine dis

30-

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

positions with which Thou didst die. Grant that the last moments of my life and my last breath may be consecrated to Thee and that they may be acts of most pure and perfect love for Thee.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Christ died for all."

*Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus* (2 Cor. 5, 15)

31 -

### SEVENTH MEDITATION

#### Saturday

*The Life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus*

FIRST POINT  
JESUS LIVES IN MARY

O JESUS, Thou only Son of God, only Son of Mary, I contemplate and adore Thee, the Divine Author of her existence, living and reigning in Thy most holy Mother. Thou art all and dost all in all things, so surely Thou art and dost all in Thy most holy Mother. Thou art her life, her soul, her heart, her spirit, her riches. Thou art in her, sanctifying her on earth and glorifying her in heaven. Thou art in her, accomplishing greater works and giving to Thyself, in and by her, greater glory than through all the other creatures of heaven and earth. Thou art in her, clothing her with Thy qualities and perfections, inclinations and dispositions, imprinting in her being a most perfect image of Thyself, of all Thy states, mysteries, and virtues, and making her so like Thee, that whoever sees Jesus sees Mary, and he who sees Mary beholds Jesus. Blessed be Thou, O Jesus, for all that Thou art and all that Thou dost accomplish in Thy most holy Mother! I offer Thee all the delights, all the love and all the glory Thou didst ever have or ever shalt have in her perfections.

SECOND POINT  
MARY LIVES IN JESUS

O Mother of Jesus, I honor and venerate thy most holy and admirable life in thy Son Jesus; a life which is resplendent with every kind of virtue and perfection; a life of which one single moment is more

32 -

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

dear to God than the lives of all angels and men; a life that imparts more honor and love to God than all other lives combined in heaven and on earth. This life is none other than the life of thy Son Jesus, which He communicates to thee from moment to moment by a most particular and ineffable favor. Blessed be thou, O holy Virgin, for the wealth of honor thou hast given to thy Well-beloved Son throughout thy life! I offer thee all my life, O Mother of being and grace, and I consecrate it completely to the honor of thy holy life, and with my whole heart I beg thy Son Jesus, the God of being and love, to grant by His great goodness that my whole existence may pay continual and eternal homage to His most holy life and to thine.

THIRD POINT  
JESUS LIVES IN US

O Jesus, God of my life and of my heart, Thou hast a very great desire to dwell in me, and to make me live in Thee an entirely holy and heavenly life. Forgive me for having obstructed the fulfilment of Thy desire by my sins and infidelities. Eradicate the corrupt and depraved life of the old Adam in me, and in its place establish Thy holy and perfect life. Dwell in all Thy fulness in my spirit, heart and soul, and therein accomplish all the works Thou dost desire for Thy glory. Love Thyself in me, and in me glorify Thyself completely according to Thy most holy will. O Mother of Jesus, if it please thee, obtain from thy Son the accomplishment of these designs in me.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"For to me, to live is Christ."

*Mihi vivere Christus est* (Phil. 1, 21).

## EIGHTH MEDITATION

### Sunday

#### *The Glorious life of Jesus in Heaven*

#### FIRST POINT

#### JESUS LIVES A GLORIOUS LIFE WITH THE ETERNAL FATHER

O JESUS, having considered and adored Thee in Thy mortal life, the agony of the Cross, the shadow of death and the chill of the Sepulchre, let me now adore and contemplate Thee in the exaltation, brightness and delights of the life of glory and blessedness Thou didst enter by the Resurrection, which Thou hast enjoyed in heaven in the bosom of the Father since the Ascension. O immortal and glorious life of my Jesus! O life entirely free from the sorrow and suffering of this earth! O life completely rapt and absorbed in God! O life of undiluted love, of love most pure and all-encompassing, because in His heavenly life Jesus finds no thought other than to love His Father, and to love us for His Father, to love, bless and glorify His Father for us, to offer us to His Father and to intercede for us with Him! O life most holy, most pure and most divine! O life replete with unutterable joy and exultation! O life that enjoys the fulness of glory, greatness and bliss which is God! O my Dear Jesus, what joy for my heart to behold Thee living such a radiant life! May Thy Most Lovable Father be blessed forever for having brought Thee into heaven.

#### SECOND POINT

#### JESUS LIVES IN GLORY WITH HIS SAINTS

O Jesus, most worthy of love, not only art Thou in Thyself living a life of glory and blessedness, but so also are all the angels and saints

34-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

who are with Thee in heaven. Thou livest in them; Thou dost communicate to them Thy glorious and immortal life; Thou art glorious and blessed in them, as St. Paul testifies in the words: *omnia in omnibus* (1 Cor. 12, 6). It is Thou who dost adore, praise and love Thy Eternal Father in them and by them. Blessed be Thou for all these things, O Good Jesus! I refer and offer to Thee the glorified and blessed life of all the citizens of heaven, together with all the love and praise they give Thee now and shall give Thee forever, in homage to the life of bliss and glory which Thou hast in Thyself. I beg all Thy angels and saints to love and glorify Thee for me, and to associate me with all the love and glory they give Thee and shall render Thee forever.

#### THIRD POINT

#### JESUS WILL LIVE IN GLORY WITH ME IN HEAVEN

O Jesus, object of all desire, I know that Thy love for me is infinite, that Thy extreme zeal for Thy glory most ardently desires Thy Self to be perfectly loved and glorified in me, and also that Thou hast an infinite desire to draw me to Thee in heaven. I know that Thou mayest live perfectly in me and fully establish in me the kingdom of Thy glory and Thy love. Thou wilt not live and reign perfectly in me so long as I remain on earth. Therefore, O my Saviour, I no longer desire to live on earth except to long without ceasing for my heavenly home. Heaven! O heaven! How desirable art

thou! How thou dost call to our love! O God of heaven, when will the time come for me to see Thy holy face? When wilt Thou live fully in me and when will I love Thee perfectly? O earthly life, how hard, how unbearable art thou! O God of my life and of my heart, how long and cruel is this life in which Thou art so little loved and so much offended!

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Let us dwell in spirit in heaven."  
*Mente in coelestibus habitemus.*

35 -

### **Another Meditation for Sunday**

*The Mysteries of Christ's life*

#### **FIRST POINT**

**WE SHOULD ADORE AND LOVE JESUS  
IN HIS MYSTERIES**

O JESUS my Lord, I cast myself down and efface myself at Thy feet; I surrender myself to the might of Thy divine spirit and Thy holy love, in their immense power and greatness; I adore, glorify and love Thee in Thyself and in all the mysteries and phases of Thy life. I adore Thee in Thy temporal life on earth for thirty-four years. I adore Thee in the first moment of that life, in Thy holy Childhood, in Thy hidden life of labor, in Thy public ministry among men, both when Thou didst live and walk on earth for all to see, and now that Thou art still among us in the Blessed Eucharist. I adore Thee in all Thy sufferings, interior and exterior, and in the last moment of Thy passible life. I adore Thee in Thy Me of glory and bliss in heaven ever since the Ascension. I adore Thee in Thy life in the most Blessed Virgin and in all the angels and saints, whether in heaven or on earth. And, in general, I adore, love and glorify Thee in all the other mysteries and wonders that are embraced in the measureless expanse of Thy life, divine, temporal and glorified. I bless Thee and give Thee infinite thanks for all the glory Thou didst ever and ever shalt render to the Father in all the phases of Thy life.

I offer Thee all the love and honor Thou ever didst or shalt receive forever, in all Thy mysteries and states, from all the angels and all the saints, begging them most humbly to love and glorify Thee, for me, in every way possible and fitting to Thy glory.

36-

### **MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

#### **SECOND POINT**

**WE SHOULD ASK JESUS TO GRANT US A  
PARTICIPATION IN HIS MYSTERIES**

O Jesus, I give myself to Thee and beg Thee with my whole heart to enter into me, there to destroy all that is not Thee, and to imprint a perfect image of Thyself, the states and mysteries of Thy life, Thy qualities and Thy virtues. Come, Lord Jesus, enter into me to destroy all that is not Thee and establish Thyself perfectly, there to be all and do all, that thus my being and my life, in all aspects and ramifications, may be totally dedicated to the honor of Thy life and Thy sovereign being. May my birth in nature and in grace, my childhood, adolescence and my years of activity as a mature man, my agony, death and burial together with all the other phases of my temporal and eternal life, be consecrated to the honor of each successive part of Thy life, Thy birth, Thy childhood, Thy



adolescence, Thy maturity, Thy passion, Thy death and Thy burial, and all the other states of Thy temporal and eternal life. May all my thoughts, words and actions give honor to Thine. May every step I take, all my works and sufferings give honor to every step Thou didst take on earth and all Thy works and sufferings. May all the powers of my soul and all the senses of my body be dedicated to the honor of Thy holy soul and senses of Thy deified body. Finally, may everything that ever was, is and shall be in me be transformed into ceaseless and eternal adoration, praise and love for Thee. Come, Lord Jesus, enter into me; live and reign over me perfectly, and there love and glorify Thyself as befits Thee, to carry out the designs of Thy goodness in my being, to accomplish the work of Thy grace and to establish forever in my heart the kingdom of Thy glory and Thy pure love. *Veni, Domine Jesu, veni in plenitudine virtutis tuae, in sanctitate Spiritus tui, in perfectione mysteriorum tuorum, et in puritate viarum tuarum. Veni, Domine Jesu.*

Come, Lord Jesus, enter into me in the fulness of Thy virtue, to destroy all that displeases Thee and execute all that Thou dost desire for Thy glory. Come in the sanctity of Thy Spirit to detach me entirely from all that is not Thyself, to unite me perfectly with Thee

#### MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY

37 -

and to lead me in the path of holiness in all my actions. Come in the perfection of Thy mysteries, to perfect in me what Thou dost deign to operate by Thy mysteries. Come in the purity of Thy ways, to accomplish in me, no matter at what price, and without sparing me in any way, all the designs of Thy pure love, and lead me in the straight path of that pure love without permitting me to turn aside, without yielding anything to the inclinations and feelings of corrupt nature and self-love. Come, Lord Jesus!

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Come, Lord Jesus." .

*Veni, Domine Jesu (Apoc. 22, 20).*

39 -

11

**INTERIOR COLLOQUIES  
OF  
THE CHRISTIAN SOUL  
WITH GOD**

41 -

11

**INTERIOR COLLOQUIES  
OF THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD(1)**

**FIRST COLLOQUY**

**God's Favors to Me Before My Creation  
and My Consequent Debt to Him**

**FIRST POINT  
GOD HAS LOVED ME WITH AN ETERNAL LOVE**

WITH God there is neither past nor future, and everything has always been before Him as present and visible in His eternal light. He cast His divine gaze upon me from all eternity; He looked upon me with the eye of mercy; He thought of me tenderly and ardently; He disposed and ordained, with wondrous kindness, everything that was to happen to me in body and soul and in every circumstance, development and event of my existence and life, even to the hairs of my head; He formed great designs concerning me. He designed to create me with all the natural advantages and perfections He has given me. He designed to preserve me as He does every moment of my life. He designed to create the world and to preserve it in existence for love of me.

(1). 'The "Interior Colloquies" were first published with the "Meditations on Humility" as Part Eight of *The Kingdom of Jesus*. In 1666 St. John Eudes published both series in one separate volume. There are thirteen colloquies. The first eight deal with man as a creature of God, Who is his principle, model and ultimate end. The last four consider man's duties as a Christian, his relations with the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity and his obligation to renounce Satan and follow Christ. The thirteenth colloquy treats of the choice of a state of life.

42-

**MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

The Eternal Father willed to send His Son and to deliver Him up to the death of the Cross to redeem me.

The Son willed to take human flesh and to do and suffer all that He did and suffered in this world for me.

The Holy Ghost willed to form the humanity which was united to the Son in the sacred womb of the Blessed Virgin for love of me and to come into this world Himself to be my light, my sanctification, the Spirit of my spirit and the Heart of my heart.

Lastly, the Most Holy Trinity willed to bestow upon me all the corporal and spiritual, temporal and eternal favors that He has since given me and will ever give me. And so God had great designs for me from all eternity, Thus, O my God, Thou didst bear me in Thy mind and in Thy heart

from all eternity. Thus Thou didst think of me and love me an eternity before I was capable of knowing and loving Thee. There never was a time, O God of Love, when Thy mind and Thy heart were not concerned about me. "What is a man that thou shouldst magnify him? Or why dost thou set thy heart upon him?" (Job 7, 17). It would almost seem, O Eternal Goodness, that Thou hast no sooner thought of Thyself than Thou hast thought of me, no sooner loved Thyself than Thou hast loved me, since Thou hast thought of me and loved me from all eternity.

My God, what shall I do, what shall I render to Thee for Thy eternal love of me? Surely if I had existed from all eternity I should have given and consecrated to Thee my whole soul, my whole heart, all my thoughts, designs and affections. But not having existed from all eternity, I should at least have turned to Thee with my whole mind and will as soon as I was capable of doing so. Alas! I can truly say with St. Augustine; "Too late have I loved Thee, O Eternal Goodness." Forgive me, I beseech Thee, O my God. I wish to begin now to love, serve and honor Thee with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength; I beg Thee to grant me that grace by the infinite love Thou hast borne me from all eternity and give me grace to return Thy love.

THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

43 -

#### SECOND POINT

##### GOD HAS LOVED ME WITH A CONSTANT LOVE

The love, wherewith God loved me before I existed, is not only eternal; it is also continual, immutable and constant. God began to think of me and love me without beginning and He has not ceased. There has been no interruption in His thought or love for me; His mind and His heart have always been turned to me. In spite of the fact that He foresaw all my offenses and ingratitude, it made no change in His invariable and permanent love for me; He never ceased to wish me an infinity of good. It may truly be said that during the time of His eternal duration, not a single moment elapsed (if there are moments in eternity) without His thinking of me.

O excessive goodness! O eternal and immutable love! May eternal thanks be offered to Thee by all Thy creatures! O my God, too late have I known Thee, too late have I loved Thee! Perhaps I have not even yet begun to do so as I ought; but if I have begun, how many interruptions have there been since? How many infidelities have there been? What coldness and remissness! Have mercy, O my God, have mercy on this ungrateful and perfidious sinner. Henceforth, I wish with the aid of Thy grace to spend every moment of my life in Thy love and service. To this end, I intend to regulate and arrange my time and my occupation so that everything may be consecrated to Thy glory.

#### THIRD POINT

##### GOD HAS LOVED ME WITH AN INFINITE AND PURE LOVE

God has not only loved me from all eternity with a constant and invariable love, but He has also loved me with all that He is, that is to say, He loved me with a most pure love, for nothing obliged Him to love me before I existed except His pure goodness. Thus the love of God for me before my creation has four qualities: it is eternal, immutable, infinite and most pure. I will return thanks for all these blessings; I will humble myself before Him and ask forgiveness for

44-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

all my ingratitude. I will excite a great desire to begin in good earnest, and henceforth to employ my whole life, all my time and all my strength, in loving and honoring Him and causing Him to be loved

and honored by others as far as lies in my power; and I will do so purely for love of Him and for His glory. I will beg Him to destroy in me everything that might oppose these resolutions and to give me the grace requisite for their accomplishment. I will beseech the Blessed Virgin Mary, all the angels and the saints to obtain this great grace for me.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"To Thee be praise, glory and love, O Blessed Trinity." Tibi laus, tibi gloria, tibi amor, O beata Trinitas.

45 -

**SECOND COLLOQUY**  
**God's Favors to Me by My Creation and Preservation**  
**and My Obligations Towards Him**

FIRST POINT

GOD CREATED ME BY HIS INFINITE POWER, WISDOM AND GOODNESS

Who has created me and given me being and life? Not the world, not the evil spirit, nor myself, but God, by the exercise of infinite power, wisdom and goodness. "He made us, and not we ourselves" (Ps. 99, 3). His infinite power drew me from the nothingness from which I could not emerge save by the power of an Almighty hand. His immense wisdom appears in the wondrous order and arrangement of every faculty of my soul and every part of my body. His ineffable goodness is manifested in the fact that He drew me out of nothingness to give me not the nature of a stone, not the vegetative life of a plant or a tree, nor the sensitive life of an animal. This He might have done without wronging me and without my having any reason to complain. He willed instead to create me to His own image and likeness, to give me the many advantages of the time and place of my birth, my parentage, the perfections of body and mind and other favorable circumstances accompanying my birth which I should carefully weigh and consider.

"What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that He hath rendered to me?" (Ps. 115, 12) I will thank Him, bless Him and love Him with all my heart. I will endeavor to realize that, as God is the author and eternal principle of my being and life, I must, therefore, devote my existence entirely, not to my own interests and inclinations, but to God, to His glory and the accomplishment of His holy will. As God is not only the source whence I came, but also the prototype whose living image I am, I am obliged to imitate Him in His sanctity,

46-

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

His charity, His patience, His meekness, His vigilance, His justice and His mercy.

I will examine myself to see if I have spent my past life for Him or for others, and whether I have studied to imitate Him, and show forth in my life His likeness rather than that of His enemy. If I find myself guilty, I will humble myself and ask pardon of God for my past infidelity. I will resolve to live in future solely for the Author of my life; to refer myself wholly to Him as to my Principle, I will study the life and perfections of my Divine Exemplar, so as to imitate them and bear His living image in me, with the help of His grace, which I will earnestly beseech of Him for that intention, humbly desiring Him to destroy in me everything that might oppose His admirable designs, and to imprint a perfect likeness of Himself in my soul.

## SECOND POINT

### GOD CREATED US FOR HIMSELF

Why did God create me? For Himself, to think of Him, to love Him, to speak of Him, to work for Him and to sacrifice myself for His glory. He is not only my principle and prototype but also my sole end. Hence, as God made me for Himself alone, I should consider attentively, weigh carefully and engrave deeply upon my mind the truth that I am in this world only to serve and honor Him. This is my only care and affection. All my thoughts, words and actions, all my time, all I have, all I know, all I can do, should tend towards this purpose of life. God is my last end, and consequently in Him I will find my sovereign good, my centre, my treasure, my glory, my felicity, my repose, and my true paradise; likewise, outside of Him I will find only trouble, anxiety, bitterness, anguish, malediction and hell.

Have I paid attention in the past to this great and important truth? Have I been one of those whom St. Bernard castigates when he says: "Foolish persons who take greatest care of the least things and least care of the greatest." If such is the case with me, I will ask pardon of God and consecrate myself wholly to Him. I will devote myself solely to this work, which is of such consequence that it entails nothing less than an eternity of bliss or misery.

THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

47 -

## THIRD POINT

### PRESERVATION IS A CONTINUOUS CREATION WHICH INCREASES OUR OBLIGATIONS TO GOD

God created me not only once, but as many times as there are moments in my life. From the moment of my creation until now, He has borne me in His arms, in His bosom and in His Heart, with more care and love than a mother carries her child, and not a single moment has passed without His thinking of me, loving and preserving me. The most wonderful fact is that He preserved me even when I was offending Him, when He might justly have crushed me and cast me into hell. Now, preservation is continual creation, so much so that if God were to withdraw His Almighty Hand which sustains me, and were to cease for a single moment to preserve me, I would at that very instant return to the nothingness from which He drew me. Therefore, He gives me at each successive moment the identical being He conferred at the first instant of my life and with the selfsame power and goodness with which He gave it to me then. I belong to Him, therefore, by as many ties as there have been moments in my life and I am deeply indebted to Him for each succeeding moment as for the first.

O my God, since I am Thine by so many claims, and have so many obligations to serve Thee, do not permit sin, the devil, nor the world to have any share in what is Thine, but do Thou take full and entire possession of my being and life. O world, O prince of the world, O detestable sin, I renounce you forever. O my God, I consecrate myself to Thee and I declare that I wish to live, act, speak, think and suffer for love of Thee alone.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Thou hast made me for Thyself, O Lord, and my heart can find no rest except it reposeth in Thee."

*Fecisti me, Domine, ad te, et inquietum est cor meum, donec revertatur in te. St. Augustine, Confessions I, i.*

### THIRD COLLOQUY

#### The Dignity and Sanctity of Our Ultimate End

##### FIRST POINT

##### OUR ULTIMATE END IS THE SAME As THAT OF THE ANGELS

FOR what end did God make us? For the same end as the angels. God placed us in this world to do what the angels constantly accomplish in heaven. Wherefore, being associated with the angels and created for the same duties, namely, to adore, praise, love and serve God and to follow His most holy Will always and everywhere, we should live angelic lives and delight in the fulfilment of these duties. Alas, if we examine our life, we will find that instead of imitating the angels in their purity, sanctity, humility, charity, love, submission to the Will of God and fidelity in His service, we have frequently imitated the demons in their malignity, pride, envy, disobedience, treachery and rebellion against God. In fact, instead of devoting ourselves to the functions of angels, we have actually performed the work of demons.

Let us humble ourselves; let us detest our malice; let us forever renounce the prince of darkness. Let us cultivate a great desire to imitate the angels, and to begin to perform on earth what we shall do in union with them for all eternity in heaven. Let us beg them to associate us in the praise they continually offer to God and to make us share in their love and fidelity.

##### SECOND POINT

##### OUR ULTIMATE END IS THE SAME AS THAT OF THE SAINTS

God placed us in this world for the same end as the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs, the holy bishops, priests and all the other saints who formerly lived upon earth and are now in heaven.

#### THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

49 -

They were men such as we are, men of flesh and blood, frail, mortal, exposed to the same temptations as ourselves. We belong to the same Church as they, we adore the same God, we have the same Saviour and Mediator, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. We share the same Holy Gospel, the same Sacraments, the same faith, the same hope, the same promises. He who sanctified the saints has an infinite desire to sanctify us, too, provided we do not oppose His holy Will. Yet they are saints and they served God "in holiness and justice before Him," all the days of their life (Luke 1, 75)

As for us, who are we and what are we doing? What good reason we have to humble ourselves! What shall we say to the Son of God when, on the day of judgment, He will show us all the saints who were like us, and will reveal to us how much easier it was for us to serve Him with them rather than to follow those who are now forced to cry out in hell: "We have erred from the way of truth ... and have walked through hard ways" (Wisdom 5, 6-7).

Let us, therefore, make a firm resolution to walk in the way of the saints, to read and study their lives, especially the lives of those who have been of our saintly calling, so as to imitate them. Let us beg them to obtain this grace for us.

### THIRD POINT

#### OUR ULTIMATE END IS THE SAME AS THAT OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, OF OUR LORD AND OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS

Not only have we the same destiny as the angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim and all the saints, but we have also the same end as Mary, the Queen of the angels and saints, as Jesus, the Saint of saints, and as the Three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. Why did the Blessed Virgin and our Lord Jesus Christ come upon earth, except to honor and glorify God, and to make Him known and adored? What is the end of the Three Divine Persons but their Divinity? What is their greatest and continuous activity but to praise, bless, love and glorify each other perpetually? God created us for the same end, that is, to honor and glorify Him, to make others know

50-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

and serve Him, in every possible way. Thus, we have one and the same end as the angels, the seraphim, all the saints, the Blessed Virgin, the God-man and the Most Holy Trinity.

How noble, how worthy, how holy is our destiny! How elevated is our status in having so high an end! How happy we are in being created for such exaltation! How miserable we are when we let our minds and hearts, our thoughts and affections, revel in the mud and filth, in the smoke and folly of the base, terrestrial affairs of the children of this world! How deeply we are indebted to our Creator, for having created us for so admirable an end, for having given us such a wondrous alliance with His angels, His saints, His Blessed Mother and Himself! What holy lives we should lead! How pure should be our intentions in every thought, word and action! Yet the majority of men live as if they were only made for earth, honor, wealth, pleasure, self, the world, the devil and bell.

And what have we done so far? Let us stir up a horror of ourselves and our sinful lives. "For in many things we all offend" (James 3, 2). Let us earnestly desire and resolve to be perfectly converted to God, and to live only to tend to our ultimate end and to direct other souls to their eternal destiny.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"What have I in heaven? And besides thee what do I desire upon earth?"

*Quid mihi est in caelo, et a te quid volui super terram* (PS. 72, 25)

51 -

### FOURTH COLLOQUY

#### **Our Obligations to God for the Creation and Preservation of the World**

#### FIRST POINT

#### GOD CREATED THE WORLD FOR US AND GAVE IT TO US WITH AN INFINITE LOVE

THE origin and end of the world is God, its Author and Creator, Who made it for Himself and for His own glory: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. 16, 4). All creatures bless, glorify

and magnify God, each in its own way: "Full of the glory of the Lord is His work" (Ecclus. 42, 16). "His work is praise and magnificence" (Ps. 110, 3) - "All the earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6, 3). All irrational and inanimate creatures do the will of God, following the instincts He has given them, and never swerve from the laws he has prescribed for them: "He hath made a decree, and it shall not pass away" (Ps. 148, 6). "All things serve thee" (Ps. 118, 91). All creatures serve God for the accomplishment of His designs and the manifestation of His power, His wisdom and His infinite goodness. What power is manifest in creating such a multitude and a variety of beings out of nothing! What divine wisdom has established such a wonderful order, harmony and proportion in nature! What goodness has wrought so many wonders for all men in general and for each in particular, even for ungrateful and perfidious men who do not appreciate them, but use these creatures to wage war against their Creator and to dishonor Him.

Let us adore God, inviting all creatures to bless and praise with us His incomprehensible power, wisdom and goodness. "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever" (Dan. 3, 57). This they do incessantly and invite us to do so with them. "For all creatures," says St. Augustine, "are so many tongues and voices

52-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

which cry out incessantly: 'Love, love Him who made us for you.'" O my God, how strange it is that inanimate and irrational creatures glorify Thee, while man, a rational creature who is infinitely more indebted, dishonors Thee!

The ineffable goodness with which God created all things in the universe appears not only in His having created them for our wellbeing and given them to us, but also in His having given them to us with infinite love; so much so, that if every morsel of bread we eat and every drop of water we drink were of infinite value, He would give them to us as lovingly as He does now. Thus it is with everything we use. If we numbered all the creatures in the world, we would count as many obligations to their Creator who gives them to us with infinite love.

O my God, what shall I do for Thee and what return shall I make for so many manifestations of Thy infinite goodness? Let me at least learn from irrational and inanimate creatures to serve and glorify Thee and to submit to Thy laws and orders, if I do not wish to be numbered among those fools against whom Thy creatures will fight in the day of judgment to avenge the wrongs Thou hast endured from ungrateful men: "The whole world shall fight with him against the unwise" (Wisd. 5, 21).

## SECOND POINT

### GOD PRESERVES THE WORLD FOR US WITH AN INFINITE LOVE

God created the world, not only once, but an infinite number of times, that is, as many times as there have been moments of time in the thousands of years since the world was created. At every successive moment, He has prevented it from falling back into the nothingness from which He drew it and He continually preserves it, which preservation is a perpetual creation. If anyone could count the moments which have elapsed from the creation of the world until now, he would count so many infinite obligations on our part to the infinite goodness of our adorable Preserver. For each one of us was present to Him from the beginning of the world and throughout eternity before material

THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

53 -

creation. He created the world for love of each one of us in particular, and likewise He has preserved



it ever since for each one of us with infinite love. Be Thou blessed, O Great God, be Thou infinitely blessed! "Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him: and his wonderful works to the children of men" (Ps. 106, 21).

### THIRD POINT

#### OUR LORD, AT THE PRICE OF HIS PRECIOUS BLOOD, HAS PURCHASED FOR US THE RIGHT TO USE CREATED THINGS

It is true that the world and everything in it was made for man. But man, having been condemned to death on account of his rebellion against God, lost his right to their employment when he sinned, so the sinner has no more right to make use of any creature. If the Son of God had not died to free us from our guilt of sin, all creatures, instead of serving our needs, would rise up against us as they will against the wicked on the day of judgment. But Our Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of His Precious Blood and Redeeming Death, has restored to us the right to use the things of this world for our necessities, although not to the full and copious use man would have enjoyed if he had not sinned. Man is permitted to employ God's creatures as God Himself used them, according to the words of the Holy Ghost: "They that use this world, as if they used it not" (I COR. 7, 31), that is to say, without excess, without being attached to it or taking any undue pleasure in it, but simply according to necessity and insofar as is requisite for the service and glory of God, with thanksgiving to the Creator who made the creatures of the world, and to the Redeemer who acquired for us with His Precious Blood the right to their use which we had lost by our sins.

We would have no right to live a moment, to set foot upon the ground, to breathe the air, to receive light from the sun, warmth from the fire, to be cleansed by water, to be covered by the clothes we wear, to be protected from the inclemency of the weather by the houses in which we live, to rest in our beds, to eat a morsel of food, to drink a drop of water, nor to make use of any creature, if the Son of God had

54-

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

not shed His Precious Life-Blood to deliver us from the punishment of privation which we merited by our sins. Having employed the being and life God gave us to offend Him, we deserve to be deprived of existence and consequently of all our rights. If we now retain some measure of these rights, it is because the Son of God purchased them for us by His Death on the Cross. So we have not a moment of time, we do not eat a morsel of food, nor use anything in this world that has not cost the Blood of Jesus Christ. Wherefore, we are infinitely indebted to Him. If we could count all the service and assistance received from creatures at every moment of our life and our continual use of them, we would count so many infinite obligations to Jesus Christ, who purchased that privilege for us at the infinite cost of His Precious Blood.

Let us beg God to engrave these truths upon our hearts, Let us acknowledge our indebtedness and return thanks to Jesus Christ. Let us think of them frequently and raise our hearts to Him from Whom we receive so many favors every moment. Let us resolve to spend all our time in the honor and service of our most amiable Saviour Who purchased every moment of life so dearly for us. Let us declare to Him that we will never employ anything created except for His glory and in the way He used it while on earth. Let us ask Him to give us this grace for love of Himself.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Let all thy works, O Lord, praise thee."

Confiteantur tibi, Domine, omnia opera tua (Ps. 144, 10).

## FIFTH COLLOQUY

### The Divine Claims upon Our Allegiance Because of Our Creation

#### FIRST POINT

##### THE CLAIMS OF GOD TO OUR ALLEGIANCE

AS A result Of Our creation, God assumes certain all-important claims to our allegiance. He is our origin; He is our last end; he is our centre and our element; He is our supreme good, our monarch and our absolute sovereign; He is our ruler, our protector and our defender; He is our judge.

Let us adore and praise God in all these divine aspects. Let us rejoice that He is so great, that He possesses countless perfections, and has so much power over all His creatures who are dependent upon Him in so many varied ways. Let us also rejoice that we belong to Him by so many claims to our allegiance and that He vouchsafes to exercise all these rights in our regard. It is a marvelous advantage, a great glory and a singular honor for us to have an origin so noble, an end so exalted, a centre so divine, a supreme good so bountiful and provident, a prototype so perfect, a king so powerful, a ruler and protector so prudent and strong, a judge so just and equitable, and a God so great, so admirable and so good.

#### SECOND POINT

##### THESE DIVINE CLAIMS ARE ALWAYS EFFECTUAL

All these claims which God wishes to extend to us are not vain, idle or ineffectual. He exercises them continually over us and over all creatures. He produces wondrous effects through them and would operate even more lavishly if we did not prevent Him.

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

As our origin, He not only gave us being at the moment of our creation, but He imparts it to us continually and produces us incessantly and more incomparably than the fountain produces its gushing waters, the tree its foliage and the sun its rays. Wherefore, we are more dependent upon God than the rivers upon their source, the leaves upon the tree trunk, or the rays upon the sun.

As our end, centre, element and supreme good, He calls and attracts us to Himself continually, saying: "Come to me all you who labour and are burdened: and I will refresh you" (Matt. 11, 28). If there is a secret virtue in the centre of a stone, in the element of the fish and in the sphere of fire, which so strongly attracts them, how much stronger is the virtue of our true centre, our true element and our real sphere, which is God? How is it, then, that we allow ourselves to be so little attracted to Him? Certainly, we must believe that we offer very great resistance and that there must be a terrible weight of sin within us to resist such powerful attraction. O my Sovereign End, my Divine Centre, attract me, draw me completely to Thee, and do not allow me to oppose Thy power in any way.

### THIRD POINT

#### THE RECOGNITION OF THESE DIVINE CLAIMS IS THE MEANS OF HAPPINESS

Moreover, as our last end, our centre, our element, our sphere and supreme good, God alone is capable of giving us true peace, perfect rest, and of filling and satiating the immense capacity of our soul: *Anima rationalis ita facta est capax majestatis tuae, quod a te solo et a nullo alio impleri possit*, says St. Augustine. When our soul renounces everything earthly to give itself entirely to its Creator, He fills it with ineffable repose, with a peace surpassing all understanding and the reward of infinite blessings.

As prototype, He gives us the model and example of admirable perfection and sanctity, saying: "Be holy because I am holy" (Lev. 11, 44) - "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt- 5, 48) - "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6, 36). "Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear chil-

#### THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

57 -

dren" (Eph. 5, 1). Furthermore, He Himself imprints His divine image upon souls who give themselves entirely to Him. O my God, I surrender myself to Thee; engrave in my soul a perfect image of Thy sanctity and Thy divine perfections.

As king, ruler and protector, God rules us by the holiest laws, and He is ceaselessly vigilant in governing and protecting us.

As judge, He continually exercises His justice and His judgment in the world, giving to everyone according to his works, punishing some and rewarding others.

Let us adore and bless God in all the effects He has produced and will produce in creatures by His claims upon man. Let us thank Him for the blessings He has produced in us or would have produced if we had not prevented Him. Let us ask pardon for our resistance. Let us give ourselves to Him, that He may exercise all His divine powers over us as He pleases and make them as fruitful in us as He desires.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever."

*Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in aeternum* (Ps. 72,26).

58 -

### SIXTH COLLOQUY

#### The Rights of God Over Man as a Result of Creation

#### FIRST POINT

#### THE RIGHTS OF GOD BECAUSE HE IS OUR PRINCIPLE, OUR END AND OUR SOVEREIGN GOOD

BY REASON of the preceding aspects, God has many claims upon us which we should study in order not to violate them. If we are so careful to study and maintain our petty rights over our dependents, how much greater reason have we to consider the great and important rights God has over us, that we may fulfil the obligations towards Him that those rights entail. Therefore, let us see what they are.

By every quality of His Infinite Perfection, God has the right to be acknowledged, adored, praised and glorified by us as God, to whom we must sacrifice ourselves and all things.

As our origin, our last end and our supreme good, He is entitled to possess us entirely, as wholly His own, made only for Him and infinitely dependent upon Him.

As He is the origin and end of our being and life, God maintains a right to be the origin and end of all our thoughts, words and actions and of all the customs and functions of our life, that is, we should think, say or do nothing except through Him or for Him, by his command and for His glory.

As the origin who produces us continually and always bears us in His Hand and in His Heart, so that, should He cease to sustain us, we would at that very instant fall back into nothingness, He has the right to exact that, as we always necessarily live in Him, according to the words of St. Paul: "In Him we live, and move, and are" (Acts 17, 28), we should voluntarily abide in Him by means of love in charity: "God

THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

59 -

is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God" (I John 4, 16).

O my God, let me always abide in Thy love and in love of my neighbor so as to be always in Thee.

## SECOND POINT

### OTHER RIGHTS OF GOD OVER US IN VIRTUE OF HIS ALLEGIANCE

As our origin God imparts to us a being and life that are a participation in His being and life, as St. Paul tells us, "We are also his offspring" (Acts 17, 28). He has the right to exact that we lead a life conformable to His, that is, a life all holy and divine, so as not to degenerate from the nobility of our fountainhead, and dishonor the source and origin whence we have sprung.

As our end, Centre, element and divine sphere, God has the right to expect that we should aspire unceasingly to Him, and seek our rest and contentment in Him alone.

As our supreme good, He is entitled to be loved above all things and to have entire possession of our hearts and all our affections.

O my God, in Thee are true good, honor and content and out of Thee, there is no good. Grant that I may love Thee with whole heart! Mayest Thou be henceforth the sole object of all my desires and affections.

### THIRD POINT

#### RIGHTS OF GOD OVER US IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS OTHER CLAIMS

As our prototype, God possesses the right to require us always to walk before Him and in His presence, continually and fixedly watching our Divine Exemplar so as to pattern our life and model our behaviour and actions on the perfection of His life and the sanctity of His principles and actions.

As king, He has the right to legislate and to reign over us.

As ruler, He possesses the right to direct our every act.

60-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

As protector, He has the right to our acknowledgment of the truth that He alone can assist and defend us, and that we should have recourse to Him in all our needs, both corporal and spiritual.

As judge, He has the right to watch over all our actions, examine them, demand an account of even every idle word and reward or punish us according to our merits.

Such are God's rights over us in consequence of these aspects of His divine claims to our allegiance.

O my God, I adore and glorify Thee in all Thy just and lawful rights over all creatures and over me in particular. I rejoice with all my heart and testify that if Thou didst not possess them, I would give them to Thee. How frequently I have prevented Thy enjoyment of those rights over me! I humbly ask Thy pardon. Henceforth, I will endeavor to avoid opposing Thy divine rights any more and to fulfil, with the aid of Thy grace the obligations they entail.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"My God and my All."  
Deus meus et omnia.

61 -

### SEVENTH COLLOQUY

#### Man's Obligations to God by Reason of the Preceding Rights

##### FIRST POINT

##### MAN'S OBLIGATIONS TO GOD

AFTER considering and studying God's divine claims and His rights over us as a result of creation, it is easy to see our consequent obligations.

1. As He is our origin, we should abide in Him, live a life worthy of our origin, continually refer to His authority all that we are and all that we do, sacrificing ourselves unceasingly to Him so that He may possess us entirely. "Look unto the rock whence you are hewn" (Isa. 51, 10)

2. Since He is our end, centre and supreme good, we should continually aspire and long for

Him, choose and seek Him always and in all things, never desiring any rest or content save in Him alone.

3. Since He is our prototype, we should constantly study His life and perfections in order to imitate them and form in ourselves a living image of our adorable exemplar: "Look and make it according to the pattern, that was shown thee on the mount" (Exod. 25, 40).

4. Since He is our king, ruler and protector, we owe Him honor, obedience and confidence.

5. Since He is our sovereign possessing more power over us than the potter over his clay, as holy job says: "Multiply my wounds even without cause" (Job 9, 17), we should abandon ourselves wholly to Him.

6. As He is our sovereign judge, we should submit to His power to judge us. We should adore, bless and glorify Him in all the judgments, known and unknown, manifest and secret, that He daily exercises over all creatures and especially over us. Above all, we should adore and praise Him in the judgment He exercises every moment over

62-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

the souls that appear before His tribunal and in the judgment that He will exercise over us at the hour of death and in the day of judgment. Lastly, we should fear His justice, remembering that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10, 30- We should resolve to live as persons who will shortly have to appear before His dread tribunal, to render an account of each idle word.

Such are our obligations. Let us humble ourselves for neglecting them in the past. Let us plead for mercy, begging our Lord Jesus Christ, who came upon earth to satisfy for our sins, to repair our faults. Let us resolve to live henceforth in accordance with these obligations, invoking the aid of divine grace for that purpose.

#### SECOND POINT

##### MORTAL SIN IS A VIOLATION OF ALL THE RIGHTS OF GOD OVER US

Anyone who offends God mortally not only deprives God of all the homage he owes Him, but also robs Him, so far as possible, of all His claims upon him. He denies Him and disavows all allegiance to God's supreme authority. He usurps and appropriates those essential rights, thus denying God by his works, because the sinner destroys God so far as lies in his power and makes himself his own god. What is God? He is our Supreme Good, who should be loved and esteemed above all things. His glory, pleasure, interest and will should be preferred to every other glory, pleasure, interest and will. He is the beginning, end, Centre, exemplar, king, master and ruler of all things. Consequently, all things should be referred to Him, tend to Him, take their pleasure in Him, follow Him as their rule and obey Him. What does the sinner do? He makes more account of himself than of God; he prefers his own will, interest, pleasure and glory to the will, interest, pleasure and glory of God. He desires to be master and dispose of himself as if he were his own instead of God's possession, as if he were his own beginning, holding his being and life from himself. He wishes to find his pleasure and happiness not in God, but in himself. He wishes to follow no rule but his passion and desires, no laws but his inclinations. He wants no ruler save his own blinded intellect and disordered will.

What is all this? Is it not to usurp God's rights and to rob Him of all His authority to appropriate them to ourselves? Is it not to deny God by our works? Do we not say to God by our depraved actions: "Lord, I am told that Thou art my beginning, end, centre, supreme good, exemplar, guide, king, and ruler, and that Thou hast manifold claims upon me; but I renounce Thee and disavow all these claims~ I am my own beginning, end, rule and guide." Actually, we destroy and annihilate God by our defiance and make a god of self. This is what we do when we commit mortal sin.

O sin how terrible you are! How deeply I detest you! Forgive, my God, pray, forgive all my offenses.

### THIRD POINT

#### BY INDUCING OTHERS TO SIN AND ABUSING CREATED THINGS, MAN ROBBS GOD OF HIS RIGHTS AND MAKES HIMSELF THE GOD OF CREATURES

Anyone who induces others to do anything contrary to the will of God either by word, deed or example, anyone who makes improper use of the things God has put into this world for our necessity, who uses them to excess and to satisfy his own pleasure, ambition, avarice or other passions, instead of using them for God's glory, robs God, so far as lies in his power, of His rights over created things. He appropriates them to himself and makes himself the god of those things. When he encourages other people to do anything contrary to the law of God, he desires them to prefer his will and interest to that of God; and thus he seeks to be put in God's place in their regard. When he abuses the things God has made, he is not ruled by the will and glory of God but by his passions and corrupt inclinations, and he manifestly robs God of His rights over creatures and attributes them to himself. As God is the beginning and end of all things, His will and glory should be the measure and rule of our employment of creatures. Whoever uses anything otherwise, annihilates God in so far as he may, to put himself in His place and make himself god of creatures.

But how does God desire us to use the things of the world? He has declared His Will by the use His Son Jesus Christ made of them, for

He sent Him upon earth to be our model in that as in everything else. O my God, I have followed this Divine Model most miserably I am profoundly guilty of abusing the gifts Thou hast given me! Too often I have despoiled Thee of Thy supreme rights Thou hast over creatures to appropriate them to myself I Forgive me, O my God. I will no longer use anything save for Thy greater glory and in accordance with Thy holy will, in imitation of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

O my God, I have turned away from Thee in the past, from Thee who art my origin, my end and my supreme good. I have turned to myself, to the world and to Satan, preferring their will and mine to Thine. I affirm sincerely that I now desire to renounce entirely Satan, the world and myself to be converted and turn to Thee completely and forever.

O my God, I give myself to Thee as my origin; possess me wholly. May I ever remain in Thee; may I avoid all that may not be worthy of my origin. Mayest Thou be the beginning and the end of all my actions.

O my God, I give myself to Thee as my end, my centre and my supreme good. Draw me to Thee.

Grant that I may continually tend towards Thee. Be Thou alone my pleasure, my glory, my treasure and my aft.

O my God, I give myself to Thee as my king. "Give me the grace to do what Thou commandest and command what Thou dost please" (St. Augustine, *Conf.* 10, 29).

O my God, I give myself to Thee as my prototype. Imprint upon my soul a perfect likeness of Thyself.

I give myself to Thee as my ruler and my protector. Direct me according to Thy holy will and preserve me from sin.

I give and abandon myself to Thee as my sovereign. Do with me what Thou wilt.

I give myself to Thee as my judge. Willingly I submit to all the judgments Thou hast exercised and ever wilt exercise upon me, in time and in eternity, saying with all respect and submission: "Thou art just, O Lord; and thy judgment is right" (Ps. 118, 137). "Yea, O Lord God Almighty, true and just are thy judgments" (Apoc. 16, 7)

Lastly, I give, consecrate and sacrifice myself wholly to Thee as my

THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

65 -

God. If I contained within myself every created being and all the lives of men and angels, and if I had a thousand worlds in my hands, I would sacrifice them all to Thy supreme honor for the accomplishment of Thy most holy will.

O my God, do Thou employ Thy almighty power, Thy most infinite goodness, to take possession of me, to consecrate me to Thee, and to immolate me completely and forever to Thy pure glory.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Satan, I renounce thee: My God, I cling to Thee."

*Abrenuntio tibi, Satana: adhaereo tibi, Deus meus.*

66 -

## **EIGHTH COLLOQUY**

### **Our Obligation to Love, Honor, Imitate and Serve God Because of All That HE Is In Himself**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **GREATNESS OF GOD'S PERFECTIONS**

SUPPOSE that we had never received any favors from God and were not obliged to serve Him by reason of our creation, our preservation, the creation and preservation of the world and all His consequent attributes and claims upon us. Even so we should still have infinite

obligations, much more pressing than the preceding, simply because of the nature of God as He exists in Himself. Let us, therefore, adore God's divine essence and let us open the eyes of our faith, to



behold and consider, with all possible respect and humility, His infinite being, His incomprehensible essence, His ineffable divinity, His supreme and adorable majesty, as follows:

"O divine Essence Who art a fathomless and unlimited abyss of marvels! O immense ocean of grandeur! O incomprehensible world of miracles! O unity of my God! O simplicity! O eternity without beginning and without end, to Whom all things are ever present! O immensity who dost fill and encompass all things and couldst fill a countless number of worlds if they existed! O infinity, who dost contain all perfections! O immutability! O immortality! O invisibility! O inaccessible light! O incomprehensible truth! O abyss of knowledge and wisdom! O truth! O sanctity of God, wholly detached from all things and wholly centered in Himself !

"O sanctity that suffers the destruction of His works in His presence, that will destroy this world by fire, that has even delivered to the death of the Cross the most excellent of His works, the God-Man! O divine strength which bearest all and dost all! O omnipotence!

## THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

67 -

O divine providence governing and ordaining things! O justice! O bounty! O plenitude of good, joy, peace and honor! O divine will accomplishing all that Thou dost please in heaven and on earth! O love! O charity! O divine sufficiency, by which God is so sufficient to Himself that Sacred Scripture says: "I have said to the Lord: thou art my God for thou hast no need of my goods" (Ps. 15, 2). O divine vigilance, all-seeing eye of the power, justice and mercy of God! O thoughts, designs, affections! O divine operations of God in Himself! O infinitely happy and glorious life of my God! O divine sovereignty which can dispose of all things, without anyone being permitted to question Thy decisions!

O my God, I adore Thee, with and through Jesus Christ Thy Son, in union with all the adoration, praise and benediction of His members. I adore all these infinite grandeurs and perfections, and all innumerable and inconceivable attributes that are unknown to me. I adore, praise, glorify and love Thee according to all Thou art. What joy it gives my heart to behold Thee so great and so replete with myriad excellences ! Truly, my God, if all this greatness were mine instead of Thine, I would willingly renounce it to give it to Thee!

## SECOND POINT

### THE MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS

Who are the Three Divine Persons and what do they accomplish for each one of us? The Father is continually communicating to His Eternal Son His being, His life, all His perfections, His glory, His felicity, all His goods and treasures. The Son is constantly referring to His Father as His origin, all that He has received from Him, and enjoys a perpetual state of glory and praise of His Heavenly Father.

The Father and Son give and communicate to the Holy Ghost all that They are, have and know. The Holy Ghost is continually referring to the Father and the Son, as to His source, all that He derives from Them. These divine communications, processions and relations, communications of the Father to the Son, of the Father and Son to the Holy Ghost, processions of the Son proceeding from His Father,

and of the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, relations of the Father to the Son, of the Son to the Father, of the Father and Son to the Holy Ghost, of the Holy Ghost to the Father and the Son are eternal, continual and immense, filling heaven and earth.

With these divine communications and processions, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost have but one and the same essence and divinity, live one and the same existence, possess one and the same power, wisdom, goodness and sanctity, and abide in the most perfect Unity.

The three Divine Persons are continually and mutually considering and perpetually praising, loving and glorifying one another.

O Most Holy Trinity, I adore, bless and glorify Thee in this stupendous mystery. I unite with all the love and praise that the Divine Persons give one another. I offer Thee all the glory Thou hast in Thyself, for which I render infinite thanks with the Holy Church: I give Thee infinite thanks, O Eternal Father, for the divine generation of the Eternal Son. I give thanks exceedingly, O divine Father and Only-begotten Son of the Father, for the procession of the Holy Spirit in unity of Source. I offer infinite thanks, O Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the mutual love, glory and praise of the Trinity. O my God, Heavenly Father, how I rejoice to behold that Thy Son and Holy Spirit love and praise Thee from all eternity and to all eternity, with a love and praise befitting Thy greatness!

O Only-begotten Son of God, how my soul rejoices in contemplating the infinite love and glory Thou dost receive from the Heavenly Father and from the Holy Spirit O Holy Spirit, what joy for my heart, to contemplate the love and blessings which are continually given Thee by the Father and the Son! O divine community, O unity, O society, love and life of the Three Eternal Persons! What rejoicing, what jubilation, what felicity for me to know that Thou art filled with ineffable glory, with inconceivable beatitude and infinity of good, and to know that Thou art God, the one only God living and reigning forever. "Sing joyfully to God, all the earth: serve ye the Lord with gladness. Come in before his presence with exceeding great joy. Know ye that the Lord he is God." (PS. 99, 2 - 3).

THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

69 -

### THIRD POINT

#### OUR OBLIGATION TO HONOR THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS AND THE DIVINE PERSONS

All the perfections of the divine essence and the marvelous mysteries of the Three Eternal Persons constitute so many innumerable obligations for us to serve, honor and love the Blessed Trinity. God is so great and so admirable that His least perfection, if there be any less glorious than the others, merits infinite adoration, service and obedience. What honor does His supreme greatness and majesty demand of us? What love does His goodness and His incomprehensible charity merit? What fear does His dread justice inspire? What obedience is due His sovereignty? What purity of heart and life is required by His sanctity in those who serve Him?

What is our obligation to the Eternal Father for the being and life He imparts to His Divine Son by His Eternal generation, and to the Father and Son for all They impart to the Holy Ghost in his continual procession? Our debt is incomparably greater for this triune mystery than for the creation of a hundred thousand worlds.

What do we owe the Eternal Father for the infinite love of His Only-begotten Son, the Son for the love of His Father, and the Father and Son for their love of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost for the love of the Father and the Son? What do we owe to the Three Divine Persons for the praise and glory they give one another for all eternity and to all eternity? Certainly we owe them more service and obedience for all these mysteries than for all the graces we have received or can receive from Their divine liberality. The glory of the Three Divine Persons must be dearer to us than our own welfare, for we should love them more than ourselves. Let us, therefore, give ourselves to God to serve and honor Him according to His most holy will.

What God most desires of us is that we imitate Him for He is our Exemplar, as Jesus Christ says: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt, 5, 48), and St. Paul enjoins: "Be ye therefore followers of God" (Eph. 5, 1). Let us give ourselves to

70-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Him with a great desire to imitate His sanctity, his purity, charity, mercy, patience, vigilance, meekness and all His other perfections. Let us beg Him to imprint in our soul a perfect image and likeness of His sanctity and His divine virtues.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory."

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

71 -

#### NINTH COLLOQUY

##### **Our Obligations to God as Christians, and What It Means to Be a Christian**

##### FIRST POINT

##### OUR OBLIGATIONS AS CHILDREN OF GOD, BROTHERS, AND CO-HEIRS OF CHRIST

TO BE a Christian is to be a child of God, sharing one and the same Father with Jesus Christ His Only Son. "He gave them power to be made the sons of God" (John 1, 12). "I ascend to my Father and to your Father," says our Saviour (John 20, 17)- "Behold what manner of Charity the Father *hath bestowed* upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God," says St. John (I John 3, 1). By creation, God is our creator, our origin, our efficient cause, our king, our sovereign; and we are His creatures, His handiwork, His subjects and His servants. By our regeneration and the new birth given us in baptism, in which we receive new being and a new and divine life, God becomes Our Father, and we His children, so that we can and must say: "Our Father who art in Heaven."

The consequences of this divine adoption are as follows:

1. By the new birth of baptism we emanated from the bosom of the Father, so we shall always remain there and be borne continually in His bosom. Otherwise, if He ceased to bear us for a single moment, we would lose the new being and life we received in baptism. He also says: "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who are carried by my bowels, are borne up by my womb" (Isa. 46, 3)

2. We are brothers of Jesus Christ, of His royal and divine race, sharers in His heritage. Whence it follows that the Christian, the new man and the new creature who is born only of God, knows no other

72-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

genealogy than that of Jesus Christ, no other Father but God: "And call none your father upon earth" (Mat. 23, 9). "Wherefore henceforth, we know no man according to the flesh," (2 Cor. 5, 16), says St. Paul. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;" says our Lord (John 3, 6).

3. We are co-heirs with Jesus Christ, and heirs of God. O marvels! O dignity! O nobility! O greatness of the Christian! "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God" (1 John 3, 1). What a tremendous favor of God to have made us Christians! How deeply we are indebted to His goodness! How miserable is the wretched creature who denies God for his Father and wishes to be a child of the devil! This is what those do who commit mortal sin. To them our Lord says: "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do" (John 8, 44). Let us humble ourselves at sight of our sins. Let us renounce Satan and give ourselves to God, firmly resolving to live henceforth as true children of God, not to degenerate from the nobility of our birth, not to sully our race, and not to dishonor our Father. The wise son is the glory of his father; he who does not act wisely is the ignominy of his father.

## SECOND POINT

### OUR OBLIGATIONS AS MEMBERS OF JESUS CHRIST

A Christian is a member of Jesus Christ. "Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Cor. 6, 15). Our alliance and union with Jesus Christ is consequently much more noble, more intimate and perfect than the members of a human and natural body with their head. Hence it follows that we belong to Jesus Christ as members to their head; that we are dependent upon Him and under His direction as members are upon their head; that we are one with Him as members are one with their head.

We must not be amazed when He assures us that His Father loves us as He loved Him: "Thou hast loved them, as thou hast also loved me" (John 17, 23); that He will write His name upon us: "I will write upon him the name of my God" (Apoc. 3, 12); that we will

### THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

73 -

share one abode with Him, namely, His Father's bosom: "Where I am, there also shall my minister be" (John 12, 26); and He will let us sit with Him upon His throne (Apoc. 3, 21). What goodness! God is not content to call us His friends, His brothers, His children; He wishes us to be His members.

Let us love and bless Him and consider that this membership obliges us to live the life of our Head, to perpetuate His life upon earth, and to continue all the virtues He practised. How far removed we are from that holy life! How horribly guilty is he who commits a mortal sin! He dismembers Jesus Christ; he tears one of His members from Him to make it a member of Satan. Let us give ourselves to Jesus Christ as His members, and profess to live His life henceforth. It would be an outrage to see a member live any other life than that of its head. Wherefore, St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "Christianity is the profession of the life of Christ" (Ad Harmonium, De professione Christiana).

### THIRD POINT

#### OUR OBLIGATIONS AS TEMPLES OF THE HOLY GHOST

A Christian is a temple of the Holy Ghost. "Know you not," says St. Paul, "that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (I Cor. 6, 19). Being children of God and one with the Son of God as members with their Head, it necessarily follows that we must be animated by the same spirit. St. Paul says: "And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts" (Gal- 4, 6); and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8, 9). Hence the Holy Spirit has been given us to be the Spirit of our spirit, the Heart of our heart and the Soul of our soul, to be always with us and within us, not only as if dwelling in His temple, but actually as part of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, which should be animated by His Spirit, for the members and every part of the body should be animated by the spirit of their Head.

This being so, who can tell or even imagine the excellence of the Christian religion, the dignity of a Christian who is a child of God, a member of Jesus Christ and animated by His Spirit? How great is our obligation to God, what should be the sanctity of our life, and

74-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

how guilty he is who commits mortal sin? For he drives the Holy Ghost from His temple to give entrance to the evil spirit; he crucifies Jesus Christ in himself, stifling His indwelling spirit to establish His enemy, Satan, in his soul.

All these truths are essentially solid and infallible. Let us consider them attentively, weigh them carefully and engrave them deeply upon our hearts, to excite ourselves to bless and love God because of our infinite obligations to Him for having made us Christians. We must resolve to detest our ingratitude and our past sins, and henceforth to lead a life worthy of the perfection of the Father whose children we are, and of the purity of the Spirit whose body we share.

Ejaculatory prayer: -

'Our Father Who art in Heaven, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.'

Pater noster qui es in caelis, fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra.

75 -

### TENTH COLLOQUY

#### **Admirable Accomplishments of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in Making US Christians**

#### FIRST POINT

#### **To MAKE US CHRISTIANS GOD THE FATHER GAVE U HIS DIVINE SON**

Two great achievements, which include many others, were necessary to make us Christians. The first was to break and destroy the unhappy and detestable alliance we had contracted by sin, with Satan, whose slaves, children and members we had become. The second was to reconcile us with God, whose enemies we were, and establish us in a new alliance with Him, nobler and more intimate than the

bond we enjoyed before sin. To accomplish those two things, it was necessary to blot out our sins, to deliver us from the power of Satan, to purify and cleanse our souls from the guilt of their crimes, and clothe them with the graces and gifts befitting the title of children of God and members of the Son of God.

Here is what the Eternal Father accomplished for this purpose. He sent His Only Beloved Son, His Heart, His love, His delight, His treasure, His glory, and His life. He sent Him, I say, and gave Him. But where, to whom and why did He send and give Him?

1. He sent Him into this world, to this land of misery and malediction, a place of darkness, horror, sin and tribulation.

2. He gave His Divine Son to us, that is, to His enemies, to ingrates and perfidious creatures, to Jews, Herods, Judases and executioners who have outraged, persecuted, sold and crucified Him, and who still outrage, persecute, sell and crucify Him every day. By giving His Divine Son to us, He delivered Him up to the torments

#### 76- MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

and death of the Cross. "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son" (John 3, 16).

3. Why did He send and give His Only Son in this way? To deliver us from the tyranny of sin and the devil; to wash our souls in His Precious Blood, to adorn us with His sanctifying grace; to be our redemption, our reparation, our purification, our justification, our sanctification, and to raise us from the horrible position of slaves, children and members of Satan, to the admirable dignity of friends and children of God, brothers and members of Jesus Christ. "O ineffable goodness!" exclaims St. Augustine. "O incomparable mercy! We were not worthy to be slaves of God, and lo! we are numbered among His children!" O Good and Amiable Father, what shall we render to Thee for the infinite gift\*Thou hast bestowed upon us, in giving us that which Thou dost hold most dear and precious, Thy Only Son? We offer Thee Thy same Dearly Beloved Son in thanksgiving, and in union with our obligation, we offer, give, consecrate and sacrifice ourselves to Thee wholly and irrevocably. Take us and possess us perfectly and forever.

#### SECOND POINT

##### TO MAKE US CHRISTIANS GOD THE SON ASSUMED HUMAN NATURE AND DIED ON THE CROSS FOR US

To make us Christians, the Son of God left the bosom of the Eternal Father and came into this world, was made man and lived thirtyfour years upon earth, counting from the time of His Incarnation. How many mysteries and great works He accomplished during those thirty-four years! How many painful things He suffered! What confusion, opprobrium and torments He endured! What bitter tears and Precious Blood He shed! How many fasts, vigils, labors, fatigues and torments and how much weariness, bitterness and anguish He bore! All this He did to make us Christians, children of God and His members.

O my God, Thou didst employ only six days in creating the world, and a moment in making man; but to make him a Christian, Thou didst devote thirty-four years, and thirty-four years of a life of incessant

labor and unspeakable suffering. It cost Thee only a few words for the creation, and it cost Thee all Thy Blood and Thy life with infinite sufferings for the Redemption. Since I have so many obligations to serve Thee because Thou hast created me, how much more am I obligated to Thee for having redeemed me? If I owe myself wholly to Thee for the gifts of being and life by creation, what do I owe Thee for having given Thyself to me by the Incarnation, and for having sacrificed Thyself for me on the Cross? O my Saviour, insignificant as I am, let me at least be wholly Thine! May I live only to love, serve and honor Thee, and to make Thee loved and honored in every possible way!

### THIRD POINT

#### ROLE OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE INCARNATION AND THE SANCTIFICATION OF OUR SOULS

The Holy Ghost also helped to make us Christians. He formed our Saviour, our Redeemer and our Head in the sacred womb of the Blessed Virgin. He animated and directed God the Son in all He thought, said, did and suffered, His consummate Sacrifice on the Cross: "Who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God" (Heb. 9, 14) After our Lord ascended into heaven, the Holy Ghost came into this world, to form and establish the body of Jesus Christ, His Church, and to apply to it the fruits of His life, His Precious Blood, His passion and death; otherwise, our Lord would have suffered and died in vain.

Moreover, the Holy Ghost comes in baptism to form Jesus Christ in our souls, to incorporate us, to give us birth and make us live in Christ, to apply to us the infinite merits of His Precious Blood and His death, and to animate, inspire and direct us in all we think, say, do and suffer as Christians and for God; therefore we cannot pronounce the name of Jesus except by the power of the Holy Ghost, and we are not sufficient to think a holy thought without the grace of God. What great and wondrous marvels have been wrought by the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to make us Christians! O blessed St. John, you were indeed right to say in the name of all Christians: "The world

78-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

knoweth not us" (I John 3, 1). How we should bless and love the Father, Son and Holy Ghost for having called and exalted us to the dignity of Christians! What should be our life! It should be all holy, all divine, all spiritual for our Lord tells us. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit" (John 3, 6). O Divine Spirit, I give myself wholly to Thee: take possession of me and direct me in all things. Grant that I may live as a child of God, as a member of Jesus Christ, and as one born of Thee: "That which is born of the Spirit," who is consequently Thine, and should be possessed, animated and directed by Thy vivifying grace.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Let the mercies of \*the Lord give glory to him: and his wonderful works to the children of men."

*Confiteantur Domino misericordiae ejus: et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum* (Ps. 106,8).

## ELEVENTH COLLOQUY

## By Baptism We Were Made Christians

## FIRST POINT

## BAPTISM IS A NEW CREATION

BAPTISM is a new creation; therefore Sacred Scripture calls the Christian a new creature. Baptism is a second creation of man of which the first is merely a shadow and a figure.

By the first creation, God drew us from utter nothingness; by the second, He drew us from the nothingness of sin which is a much deeper abyss. The former void is not opposed to the power of God; but the latter infinitely resists Him by its infinite malice. When God created us in Jesus Christ, as St. Paul says, when He gave us new being and new life in Jesus Christ by baptism, He found us in the nothingness of sin, in a state of enmity, opposition and contradiction towards Him. But He overcame our malice by His goodness and by His infinite power.

By the first creation God gave us a human, frail and mortal being; by the second He imparted to us heavenly and divine being.

By the first creation He made us to His own image and likeness; by the second He restored His image which sin had effaced, and imprinted it more nobly and more excellently than the original pattern, making us partakers of His divine nature in a much more eminent degree.

By the first creation God placed man in the visible world made at the beginning of time. By the second He placed the Christian in a new world. What is this new world? What is the Christian's world? It is God with all His perfections, the very bosom of God. It is Jesus Christ the God-Man, considered in Himself, in His life, in His mysteries, and considered also in His body which is His Church. This is

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

the world of the new creature, quite different from the first world of the first creature.

The original world is a world of darkness, sin and malediction: "The whole world is seated in wickedness" (1 John 5, 19); but the second is a world of peace, sanctity and benediction, in which there is an infinite number of infinitely beautiful, delightful and *agreeable* treasures. What ravishing and wonderful delights *there are* in God, in the perfections of God, in the sanctity of God, in the eternity of God, in the immensity of God, in His glory, in His felicity, in His riches, in the earthly life of Jesus Christ and in all His *mysteries*, actions, sufferings and virtues; in His glorious and immortal life, in His Church and in the lives of all His saints!

In the world of Adam there are heavens, stars and elements. In the world of the Christian the heaven is God and the bosom of God; the sun is Jesus; the moon is Mary; the planets and the stars are the saints; the earth is the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ; the water is Christian grace; the air is the spirit of the Holy Ghost; the fire is love and charity; the bread is the Body of Jesus Christ; our wine is His Precious Blood; we are clothed with Jesus Christ: "For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3, 27). *There are* no poor, nor mendicants, in the world of the Christian, because all true Christians are infinitely rich: "All things are yours" (1 Cor. 3, 22). We are all magnates, princes and rulers.



Woe to the world of Adam, wholly corrupted by sin! Let us leave it to the children of this world and give our hearts to our Christian world. Let us forsake the world of Adam to enter the world of Jesus Christ. All who belong to Jesus Christ are apart from the world of the old man, as Jesus Christ is not of it: "They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world" (John 17, 16).

We Christians find true riches, honors and pleasures in our *regenerated world*. The children of darkness find pleasure in seeing the things of their world, in speaking of them and hearing of them: "They are of the world. Therefore of the world they speak" (1 John 4, 5)- SO we should find our happiness in studying, describing and learning the wonders and news of our world, which are infinitely more delectable

## THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

81 -

than the news of the sinner's world: "The wicked have told me fables: but not as thy law" (Ps. 118, 85)

Finally, we should die to the world of Adam, to live in our world and the life of our world which is God and Jesus Christ our Lord. We inhere in Him as a part of Himself, consequently to be animated by His spirit and live His life. This death and this life are expressed in St. Paul's words: "You are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God" (COL. 3, 3). Let us give ourselves to God that He may fill us with His lofty sentiments. Let us earnestly entreat Him to render His gifts fruitful in us, and to imprint in our hearts great contempt and aversion for the world of Adam, with a new, profound esteem and love for our own Christian world.

## SECOND POINT

### BAPTISM IS A REGENERATION

Sacred Scripture calls baptism a regeneration and a rebirth: "By the laver of *regeneration*" (Tit, 3, 5) "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost" (John 3, 5). Baptism is a generation and birth, having for exemplar and prototype the eternal generation and birth of the Son of God in His Father's bosom, and His temporal generation and birth in the virginal womb of His Mother.

In His eternal generation, the Heavenly Father communicates to His Divine Son His being, His life and all His divine perfections; so, too, in our baptism, the Father gives us, through His Son and in His Son, a being and life all holy and divine.

In the temporal generation of the Son of God, the Eternal Father gives Him a new being and a new life, a life all holy and divine, yet none the less clothed with mortality, passibility, and all the wretchedness of human life; similarly, the new life which God gives us in baptism is wholly environed and beset by frailty, weakness, mortality and all the infirmities of human life to which it is United.

The Holy Ghost was sent to form the Son of God in the sacred womb of the Blessed Virgin. He is likewise sent to form our Lord and to make Him live by baptism in the depths of our soul, to in

82-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

corporate and unite us with Him and to give us birth and life in Him: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3, 5)

The Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity have cooperated by the same power and goodness in the admirable work of the Incarnation, are present in our baptism, cooperating to give us the new being and new life in Jesus Christ which is conferred upon each neophyte.

Thus baptism is an ineffable generation. "Of his own will hath he begotten us" (James 1, 18), and an admirable birth, a living image of the eternal and temporal generation and birth of the Son of God. Therefore our life should be a perfect image of His life. "We are created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2, 10); We are "born of God" (John 1, 13) We should live only by God, in God and for God; we must live no life but that of Jesus Christ, directed solely by His spirit, which should animate and possess us completely.

Let us be very humbled to find ourselves so removed from this life which should exist in all Christians. Let us give ourselves to God with a great desire to live the real life. Let us implore Him to destroy in us the life of the world and sin, and to establish His admirable life in us, that we may not be like those unhappy beings whom St. Paul says are "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4, 18)

### THIRD POINT

#### BAPTISM IS A DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Baptism is a death and a resurrection. It is death. "If one died for all, then all were dead" (2 Cor. 5, 14), says St. Paul, that is, all who are incorporated in Jesus Christ as His members in baptism, are become members of a dead and crucified Head, and must be crucified and dead to the world, to sin and to self.

It is also a resurrection for by baptism we leave the death of sin to enter the life of grace.

Baptism is a death and a resurrection, having for its prototype the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christians who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in His death. "We are buried together

#### THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

83 -

with him," says St. Paul, "by baptism unto death" (Rom. 6, 4). The Christian likewise participates in His Resurrection: "for, as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6, 4). By baptism we are obliged to die to everything, to live with Jesus Christ an all-heavenly life, as if we are persons no longer of earth, but of heaven, whose mind and heart dwell in heaven, according to the words of the first Christians speaking by St. Paul: "Our conversation is in heaven" (Phil- 3, 20), and his own exhortation: "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (COL. 3, 1-2)

Finally, by baptism we are obliged to verify in ourselves the following words: "You are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God" (COL. 3, 3)- We must be dead to all that is not God, to live only in God and abide with Jesus Christ: "as those that are alive from the dead" (Rom. 6, 13), says St. Paul. We must consequently lead a heavenly life upon earth, that is, a holy life adorned with all kinds of virtue, a continual exercise of love, adoration and praise of God, and of charity to our neighbor.

Such should be the life of all baptized persons. Those who, instead of living this holy Christian life, follow the life of the world which is, as St. Ambrose says, the body of the dragon, the life of pagans, of beasts, of demons, renounce their baptism, and render themselves far more guilty than pagans and demons. How dreadful is sin which extinguishes~ a life so noble and precious as the Christian life we have received by baptism, the life of God, the life of Jesus Christ in our souls, and

establishes instead the horrible life of sin, a diabolical and detestable existence! Let us detest our sins. Let us renounce with all our heart the life of the world and of the old Adam. Let us give ourselves to Jesus Christ, begging Him to destroy the old life in us, and to establish His own all-glorious life in our regenerated souls.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."

Vivo autem, jam non ego; vivit vero in me Christus (Gal. 2, 20).

84 -

## **TWELFTH COLLOQUY**

### **Baptism Is a Divine Contract Between Man and God**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **By BAPTISM WE ENTERED INTO A SUPERNATURAL FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD**

BAPTISM is a divine contract of man with God, containing three great provisos.

First, God by His incomprehensible goodness and mercy delivers us from our cursed alliance with Satan, whose children and members we have become by sin, and permits us to enter into a wonderful fellowship with Him. "By whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor. 1, 9), says St. Paul. "That which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you," says St. John, "that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1, 3)

What is this supernatural fellowship? It is the noblest and most perfect fellowship that can exist. It is not merely the alliance of friend with friend, of brother with brother, of children with their father, of bride with bridegroom, but of member with Head, which is the most intimate of all fellowships.

The natural and corporal union of the branches of a vine with the stalk, and of the members of the human body with the head, although the most intimate of all imaginable unions in nature, is only a figure and a reflection of our spiritual and supernatural union with Jesus Christ by baptism. Corporal and natural things are mere shadows of spiritual and supernatural life.

Furthermore, the union of the branches with the stalk of the vine, and of the members of the body with their corporal head, is in con-

#### **THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD**

85 -

formity with the quality, and the material nature of the things It joins together. But the union of the members of Jesus Christ with their Head is in conformity with the excellent holy and divine nature of the participants. Consequently, the more that divine Head and those sacred members are exalted above the natural head and its members, the more the alliance of Christians with Jesus Christ excels the union existing between the head and the members of the human body.

The friendship we contract with Jesus Christ by baptism, and through Him with the Eternal Father, is so lofty and so divine, that it merits comparison by Jesus Christ Himself to the unity that

exists between the Father and the Son in the words: "That they may be one, as we also are one. I in them, and thou in me: that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17, 22-23). So the unity of the Father and Son is the ideal of the union with God by baptism; and this union is the living image of that adorable unity.

Moreover, the wondrous alliance we enjoy with-God by baptism is exalted and ennobled by being founded, so to speak, on the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ and constituted by the Holy Ghost. Thus the Holy Ghost, who is the unity of the Father and the Son, is the sacred bond of our fellowship and union with Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ with the Eternal Father, a union indicated by the divine words: "That they may be made perfect in one" (John 17, 23) -

Thus we see that, by baptism, we become one with Jesus Christ, and through Jesus **Christ** with God, in the most exalted and most perfect concordance possible, next to the hypostatic union of the human nature with the Eternal Word. O incomparable alliance! O ineffable fellowship! How deeply indebted we are to the infinite goodness of God for a contract so great! What praise and thanksgiving we should offer Him! "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9, 15)

Since we are thus associated with the Saint of saints in so intimate a union, what should be the sanctity of our life? Surely, as we are one with God, we should have but one heart, one mind, one will, one affection: "He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit" (I Cor. 6, 17) We should love only what He loves and hate what He hates. How deserving of hatred is sin! For what is it to sin mortally? It is to violate and break that divine alliance we formed with God by baptism,

86-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

to return to our contract with Satan, His enemy. It is to dishonor the unity of the Father and the Son by destroying its image.

Sin profanes and renders fruitless the adorable Blood of Jesus Christ which is the foundation of our fellowship. It extinguishes the Spirit of God who is its sacred bond, according to the prohibitive: "Extinguish not the spirit" (I Thess. 5, 19). What a horror we should have for our past sins! What fear of relapsing into them! And what care we should exert to preserve the rich and precious alliance we have contracted with God, and to associate with it our entire life and activity.

#### SECOND POINT

##### BY BAPTISM GOD BOUND HIMSELF TO TREAT US As His CHILDREN AND MEMBERS OF HIS SON

The second proviso of our baptismal contract with God is that having received us into fellowship with Him, as His children and as members of His Son, He is bound to consider, love and treat us as His own children, and to regard and love our souls as His spouses. He has faithfully treated us in this way, and bestowed upon us inestimable gifts in conformity with the dignity and sanctity of our alliance with Him. He has endowed, enriched and adorned us with ineffable gifts and treasures. He has given us His grace of which the least degree is worth more than all the empires of earth. He has given us the gift of faith, hope, and charity, three priceless gifts and sources of inestimable blessings.

He has given us also the other virtues, which are all joined to charity, the *seven gifts* of the Holy Ghost and the eight beatitudes. Since our baptism, He has always kept His paternal eyes fixed on us, and His Heart loving us. He gives us everything necessary and suitable for body and soul, and is faithful in fulfilling all His promises to us. And after all that, He again assures us that we are to be

His heirs in heaven, and that we will there possess benefits that eye has never seen, the ear heard, nor the human heart conceived! Oh, what graces! Oh, what mercies! "Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him, and his wonderful works to the children of men" (Ps. 106, 30 -

THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

87 -

### THIRD POINT

By BAPTISM WE CONSECRATED OURSELVES To GOD  
AND PROMISED To ADHERE To JESUS CHRIST

The third proviso in our baptismal contract is that we offered and consecrated ourselves to God through our godfather and godmother. We promised to renounce Satan and his works, that is, all kinds of sin, and his pomps, meaning the world, and to adhere to Jesus Christ. According to the ancient form observed in baptism, the person to be baptized, turning to the West, said: *Abrenuntio tibi Satana: "I renounce thee, Satan."* Then turning to the East, he said: *Adhaereo tibi Christe: «I adhere to Thee, Jesus Christ."* And the same thing is still said to-day in different but equivalent words. Such is our solemn promise to God in baptism, a promise made before the Church, a promise hidden and included in a great Sacrament, a promise so binding that no one can ever dispense us from it, a promise, says St. Augustine, recorded by the angels, according to which we shall be judged at the hour of our death.

Let us judge ourselves now that we may not be judged then, and let us condemn ourselves that we may not be condemned. Let us rigorously examine our life and see if we have lived in accordance with this promise. We shall find that we have frequently acted as if we had promised just the opposite, and instead of renouncing Satan, sin and the world, and following Jesus Christ, we have turned our backs upon Him and denied Him by our works, and chosen the side of His enemies. What *treacherous perfidy!* What base ingratitude after so many favors! Oh, what shame for us! How we should mark our infidelity and renew the promise and profession of our baptism with greater fervor!

This I now wish to do, O my God. For this end I renounce thee, cursed Satan, with all my heart and with all my strength. I renounce abominable sin. I renounce the detestable world. I renounce its false honors and vain pleasure, its deceitful riches, its diabolical spirit, its pernicious maxims and all its corruption and malignity.

I give myself to Thee, O Lord Jesus, wholly and forever. I will adhere

88-

### IMITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

to Thy holy doctrine by faith, to Thy holy promises by hope, to Thy divine commandments and counsels by love and charity. I will follow Thee in the practice of every virtue, and I will follow Thee as my Head, as one of Thy members. I will continue Thy life on earth as far as possible, with the aid of Thy holy grace, which I most earnestly entreat for this intention.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"But it is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God."

*Mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est, ponere in Domino Deo spem meam (Ps. 72, 28).*

## MEDITATION

### The Choice of a State of Life

#### FIRST POINT

#### CONFORMITY TO THE HOLY WILL OF GOD IN THE CHOICE OF YOUR STATE OF LIFE

y. You are not permitted to choose any state of life but the one God has designed for you from all eternity. You must not take up any work except that to which He is pleased to call you. You are not your own, but His, by an infinity of rights: by the claim of creation, preservation, redemption, justification, His complete sovereignty over all creatures, and by as many claims as there were thoughts entertained, words spoken, actions performed, sufferings endured, and drops of blood shed by the Son of God, to redeem you from the slavery of the devil and of sin.

Therefore., it is His divine right to dispose of you, of your life and works, for you belong to Him infinitely more than a subject to his king, a slave to his master, a house to its purchaser, or a child to his father. Hence, renounce yourself, affirm that you desire not only to be His and to serve Him, but to serve Him in the way that will be most pleasing to Him, and in the state to which He deigns to call you. Ask Him to make known His holy will on this point, and resolve to dispose yourself as best you can to know and follow His providential plan.

#### SECOND POINT

#### MEANS OF KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD

You have seven things to do in order to dispose yourself to learn the divine will concerning your vocation.

The first is to humble yourself profoundly, acknowledging that you

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

are infinitely unworthy to serve God in any state or condition whatever. Being involved in darkness, you cannot of yourself know God's will on this point, and you do not deserve that He should communicate His divine light to you.

The second step is to purify your soul from all sin and affection for sin, by means of sincere repentance and an extraordinary confession, to remove everything that might prove an obstacle to the heavenly light and graces you require for this decision.

The third step is to declare to God that you desire to be absolutely His, to serve Him with all your heart, for love of Him, in the kind of life to which He deigns to call you.

Fourthly, you must attain complete neutrality towards the professions in which you might please God, and rid yourself of all sorts of designs and aspirations, placing your ideas, tastes, desires and inclinations at the feet of our Lord, that He may clothe you with His own, fully resigning your liberty that He may dispose of you as He pleases, placing your heart in His hands like soft wax or like a blank page, for Him to engrave or write on it the message of His adorable will.

Fifthly, you must pray earnestly, with greatest confidence, that by His infinite mercy, He may place you in the state He has deigned to choose for you from all eternity, although you are infinitely unworthy of it; and that He may give you the light and grace you need to embrace this state and to serve Him faithfully therein.

Sixthly, you should fortify your prayers with mortification, alms, or other works of mercy, corporal or spiritual.

The seventh and last step is to implore the help of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, of your guardian angel and of all the other angels and saints, that they may obtain for you the grace to know and follow what God asks of you.

These are the seven things you have to do to dispose yourself to know your vocation. Ask Almighty God to give you the grace to follow them; and, on your part, endeavor to dispose yourself with the aid of His holy grace.

THE CHRISTIAN SOUL WITH GOD

91 -

### THIRD POINT

#### SIGNS WHEREBY YOU MAY KNOW THE WILL OF GOD

If after following the preceding steps, and entering into the dispositions indicated, you feel an inclination to a particular kind of life, you must not immediately follow this desire. First, you must examine it thoroughly, for fear of following the attractions of your own will, or of self-love, or of the evil spirit, in place of the inspirations of the Spirit of God. In order not to be deceived, consider carefully: 1. whether the state to which you feel drawn is one in which you can readily serve God and work out your salvation; 2. whether God has given you the necessary physical and mental qualities and the requisite conditions to enter that state; 3. whether your desire is stable and permanent; whether your motive is pure and disinterested, having no other intention but to honor God and accomplish His most holy will; 5. whether your desire is approved and confirmed by the advice of God's earthly representatives, capable of directing you in a matter of such importance.

These are the five marks of a true vocation from God. If they are to be found in your desire for any state, there is nothing left but for you to resolve firmly to embrace it, to seek the means leading to this end, to ask God to give you all the graces necessary to attain it, to serve and honor Him in it in accordance with His omnipotent designs, and to invoke the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels and saints.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Make the way known to me, wherein I should walk: for I have lifted up my soul to thee."

*Notam fac mihi viam in qua ambulem, quia ad te levavi animam meam (Ps. 142, 8)*

93 -

111

### MEDITATIONS ON HUMILITY

95 -

111

#### *MEDITATIONS ON HUMILITY ( 1 )*

It is a daily practice in many religious communities to make a profession of humility. After the morning meditation, one of the members, inclining profoundly, recites it aloud, and at the end, the others, also bowing down, answer: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us."

But, if the truths contained in the words of this profession are to make a deeper impression, and produce greater fruits in souls, it is necessary to study carefully and meditate seriously upon them. This is why I have selected them as material for these meditations.

#### *PROTESTATION OF HUMILITY*

Domine Jesu Christe, nihil sumus,

Lord Jesus Christ, we are nothing,

Nihil possumus,

We can do nothing,

Nihil valemus-,

We are worth nothing,

Nihil habemus, praeter peccatum,

We possess nothing but sin,

Servi inutiles sumus,

We are useless servants,

Natura filii irae,

We are children of wrath,

Novissimi virorum et Primi Peccatorum,

The last of men and the first of sinners,

Nobis igitur confusio et ignominia .

Upon us be confusion and shame,

Tibi autem honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

To Thee be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Domine Jesu Christe, miserere nobis.

Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

(1). See footnotes, P. 41



**FIRST MEDITATION****On the Words: Nihil Sumus-"We Are Nothing."****FIRST POINT****GOD IS THE SOVEREIGN BEING**

LET us adore God, pronouncing the divine words Ego sum Qui sum: I Am Who Am" (Exod. 3, 14). Let us beg Him to make us realize their truth and render them fruitful in us, for all God's words are filled with light and power; light to illumine our minds and power to effect in our hearts the work of grace and sanctification in conformity with their significance.

Let us consider that God alone is worthy to exist and that He alone exists, properly speaking: "See ye that I alone am" (Deut. 32, 39). Any other creature whatsoever not only does not deserve to exist, but does not even exist before God. "All nations are before him as if they had no being at all, and are counted to him as nothing, and vanity" (Isa, 40, 17). His being is eternal, without beginning and without end, immense, filling all space, immutable, infinite, changeless, replete with admirable perfections, infinitely happy, rich and glorious, sovereign and independent, the source of all being, to whom every creature in heaven, on earth and in hell should be referred as to its source, should pay honor, homage, adoration and sacrifice as to the Sovereign Being of all Creation.

Let us rejoice that God is "He Who is." "Come in before his presence with exceeding great joy" (Ps. 99, 2).

Let us adore, bless and glorify Him. Let us offer and sacrifice to Him our being and the existence of all angels, men, irrational creatures and even the demons and damned.

**HUMILITY**

97 -

**SECOND POINT****HOMAGE DUE TO GOD**

Since God alone is He who is, and all that is not God is as nothing before Him, God alone is worthy to be considered, esteemed, loved, desired and honored. We should, therefore, have neither mind nor heart, nor thought nor affection, nor eye, nor tongue, nor hand for anything else. Yet, there is nothing less esteemed, loved, desired, and sought after, nothing of which we think less, of which we speak so little, and for Whom we do so little, as God. What is not, that is, the nothingness of created things, is much more esteemed, desired and sought after than He who is, and we think, speak and do a great deal more for nothing than for our Supreme All.

Let us humble ourselves for having been among those who have preferred the nothing to the All. Let us ask pardon of this great All. Let us protest that, henceforth, we desire to see and love Him alone in all things, beseeching Him to annihilate all things and ourselves in our own eyes, so that He may be All in all to us.

**THIRD POINT****SCORN OF SINNERS FOR GOD**

Let us consider how sinners annihilate "Him Who is." First, the atheists in belief annihilate Him, saying there is no God: "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God" (Ps. 13, 1). Secondly, the atheists in life and morals annihilate Him by living and acting as if they did not believe in Him. Thirdly, all those who commit mortal sin annihilate Him because they annihilate His sovereignty, by refusing to depend upon Him. They destroy His will, desiring the accomplishment of their own whims to the detriment of His eternal will. They impugn His wisdom, desiring that He should have no will to punish them, His power in wishing that He should have no power, His providence in persuading themselves that He has no thought of things here on earth. We have annihilated God in this way if we have sinned mortally.

98-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Let us beseech Him to forgive us. In reparation, let us annihilate ourselves in every possible manner, in our own opinion and in that of others. Let us seek all sorts of opportunities to annihilate ourselves by various practices of humility, begging Him to employ His power and His goodness in extinguishing us and impressing upon our hearts a great affection for nothingness so that our highest ambition may be to become nothing in this world, that God may be All in all things: *Omnia in Omnibus* (I Cor. 15,28)

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

Lord Jesus Christ, we are nothing. *Domine Jesu Christe, nihil sumus.*

99 -

#### SECOND MEDITATION

##### Annihilation of Our Lord Jesus Christ

##### FIRST POINT

##### OUR LORD ANNIHILATED HIMSELF IN HIS HUMANITY

LET US adore our Lord Jesus Christ in the annihilation revealed in these words: "He emptied himself" (Phil. 2, 7), and consider that He annihilated Himself in His humanity and even in His divinity.

In His humanity, He annihilated Himself in thought, interior dispositions, words and actions.

He annihilated Himself in His thoughts and interior dispositions. His sacred humanity clearly realized that of itself it was nothing and His holy soul dwelt in a continual disposition of annihilation before the greatness and supreme Majesty of God.

He annihilated Himself in His words for it was He who said: "My substance is as nothing before thee" (Ps. 38, 6). Whenever He spoke of Himself, He always referred to Himself as "the son of man" that is, the son of nothingness and consequently "nothing."

He annihilated Himself in His actions: during the whole course of His life He abased and humbled Himself as a man of no account. Everything that He did was for His Heavenly Father and nothing for Himself as man, no more than if He had not existed. "Christ is God's" (I Cor. 3, 23)

He also annihilated His will, His intellect and His love of Himself.

Let us, therefore, exalt Jesus as much as He humbled Himself, and, imitating His example, let

us endeavor to annihilate ourselves in thought, word and deed. Beg Him to give us a share in His divine knowledge, that we may realize our nothingness; to imprint upon our souls a lively perception of our nothingness; and to grant us the grace to think, say and do nothing for ourselves, but all for Him, our Supreme All.

100-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### SECOND POINT

#### OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ANNIHILATED Himself IN HIS DIVINITY

Our Lord annihilated Himself even in His divinity. He extinguished in a manner His supreme being in the nothingness of our nature, His divine life in our mortality, His eternity in time, His immensity and infinity in the littleness of childhood, His omnipotence in weakness and importance, His wisdom in the folly of the crib and the Cross, His sanctity in His likeness to sinners, His glory in ignominy, His joy in suffering, His plenitude in poverty, His sovereignty in dependence and subjection.

Adore and glorify Him in this annihilation. Thank Him for the glory rendered to His Eternal Father. He has annihilated such great, holy and divine privileges for us; therefore let us annihilate for Him things base~ abject, evil and corrupt, such as is everything found in us.

### THIRD POINT

#### OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WILLED TO BE TREATED As NOTHING

Consider that while He was on earth, our Divine Saviour willed to be treated as a non-entity, or rather, as if He were less than nothing, for He permitted mankind to treat Him with less respect and humanity, and with more ignominy and cruelty than they would have done if He had been only a nonentity. Consider, too, that even in our day, He is annihilated in His divinity and humanity in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; and is treated there even by the majority of Christians as a nothing, for they behave in His presence with less fear and reverence than if He were nothing.

Let us give ourselves to Him, to honor and imitate Him in this annihilation. Beg Him to blot out our vanity and give us a share in His spirit of humility, so that henceforth we may regard and treat ourselves and be glad to be esteemed and treated as nothings who deserve only contempt and humiliation.

HUMILITY 101 -

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ, we are nothing." *Domine Jesu Christe, nihil sumus.*

102 -

### THIRD MEDITATION

#### Annihilation of the Blessed Virgin and of Holy Church

### FIRST POINT

#### THE BLESSED VIRGIN ANNIHILATED HERSELF IN HER OWN EYES

THE Blessed Virgin resembled her Divine Son in His self-annihilation and imitated perfectly His thoughts, His interior dispositions, His words and actions in the manner we have indicated, and all proportions being observed, she also extinguished her own will, her intellect and her self-love, although all these things were sanctified in her. Let us honor her in this self-effacement and ask her to obtain for us the grace to imitate her profound humility.

## SECOND POINT

### OUR LADY WAS TREATED BY OTHERS AS IF SHE WERE NOTHING

Let us consider that the Blessed Virgin treated herself and was treated by others in this world as if she were nothing. Offer to God all the glory that she rendered Him by this self-abnegation. Let us strive to exalt her in reward for her abasement and endeavor to imitate her.

## THIRD POINT

### OUR LORD WILLED THAT HIS CHURCH SHOULD BE SMALL AND HUMBLE

Let us consider that the Son of God compares His Church to a grain of mustard seed, "which is the least indeed of all seeds" (Matt. 13, 32), and that He willed that it should be small, humble and persecuted in this world. It was small in its foundation, being founded on a crucified

## HUMILITY 103 -

God-Man and twelve poor, weak and ignorant fishermen, all of whom died by the hands of executioners. It was small in its first members. "For see your vocation, brethren," says St. Paul, "that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong. And the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen: and things that are not, that he might bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor. 1, 26-28). The Church is even unpretentious in its tremendous sacraments, which are symbolized by very minor objects: Baptism by water, the Blessed Eucharist by bread and wine.

The Son of God has ordained this for three reasons:

1. To confound human pride which always desires its work to be conspicuous, while He wills that His greatest work, namely, His Church, should be concealed under these apparently insignificant things.

2. To teach us not to be guided by human judgment and reason which esteem and regard only sensible and apparent things, but by the spirit of faith which considers only things invisible and eternal according to the sacred words: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal" (2 Cor- 4, 18)

3. To teach us to despise the ideas and opinions of the world and refrain from efforts to win its acclaim. If our Lord had wished to please the world, He would have founded His Church on the emperors, on the great and the wise of the earth, and would have followed a much more elaborate course with regard to His doctrine and Sacraments. He wished to teach us to despise fame and

worldliness and to employ all our efforts in pleasing God alone in all we do and to serve Him by humbling and abasing ourselves everywhere and always.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ, we are nothing."  
Domine Jesu Christe, nihil sumus.

104 -

#### **FOURTH MEDITATION**

##### **We Are Nothing from Every Point of View**

###### **FIRST POINT**

###### **OUR ORIGIN IS NOTHINGNESS**

LET us adore the Holy Ghost pronouncing these words by the mouth Of St. Paul: "If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. 6, 3). Let us give ourselves to the Holy Spirit and earnestly beseech Him to make us realize this truth and give us grace to draw therefrom the fruit He wishes.

Let us consider that we are nothing in body or in soul, since both have been created out of nothing, so that our origin is nothingness. Worldly men may glory in the status of their ancestors. Let us Christians remember that we descended from nothing from which God draws us forth. What should humble us still more is that we did not deserve that He should draw us from it any more than an infinite number of other creatures who will remain in nothingness forever. God in His pure goodness withdrew us from the void.

Another truth which should confound our pride is that if God did not preserve us every moment, if He were to leave us to ourselves, we would fall back into the nothingness whence we came, so true is it that of ourselves and by ourselves we are nothing. By counting every moment that has elapsed since you came into the world, you may know how many times you would have been annihilated if God had not performed as great a miracle to preserve you as He did to create you. Hence, let us acknowledge that nothingness is our portion and our inheritance. We may glory in this and in nothing else. Let us adore and praise the divine power and goodness for having drawn forth and sustained us at every moment. Let us beg God to engrave these truths

HUMILITY

105 -

profoundly upon our mind, so that they may serve to destroy our vanity and to keep us humble.

###### **SECOND POINT**

###### **BECAUSE OF OUR SINS WE HAVE DESERVED TO BE ANNIHILATED**

Let us consider that as often as we have offended God in any way whatever, we have deserved to lose the being He has given us, and that if He willed to punish us as we deserve, He would have annihilated us, according to these words: "Correct me, O Lord, but yet with judgment: and not in thy fury, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jer. 10, 24)

Now, if we have so often deserved to be annihilated, have we not also deserved all the humiliations, abjections and trials of this life? What would we think of a man who had merited not only death, but extinction, thousands of times? How unbearable are vanity and selfesteem in one who has been drawn from nothing, without any merit on his part, who has been preserved from annihilation as many times as there are moments in his life! How can man be vain when he has justly merited to be returned to nothingness as often as he has offended his Creator and Deliverer!

### THIRD POINT

#### THE GREAT EVIL OF PRIDE

The truth of our nothingness being conceded, let us consider how great an evil is pride, and how very wrong it is to attribute any vanity to oneself in thought, word and action or to seek honor and praise. Pride is an illusion, a lie and a theft. It is a truth of faith that we are nothing; therefore he who esteems himself and thinks himself to be something is a seducer who deceives himself: "he deceiveth himself" (Gal. 6, 3)- He who speaks well of himself is a liar. "For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good" (Rom. 7, 18), says St. Paul. He who attributes anything to himself

106-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

and seeks honor and glory, is a thief who robs of His property God who is All, to appropriate it to him who is nothing.

How often have we committed these faults? Let us ask pardon of God and beg Him to preserve us from them in future. To prevent our relapse, let us frequently reflect on and what we are of ourselves, and where we would be if God did not continually exercise His mercy on our behalf.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Correct me, O Lord.... and not in thy fury, lest thou bring me to nothing."

Corrige me, Domine... verumtamen non in furore tuo, ne forte ad nihilum redigarme (Jer. 10, 24)

107-

### FIFTH MEDITATION

#### on the Words: Nihil Possumus--"We Can Do Nothing."

#### FIRST POINT

#### GOD ALONE IS MIGHTY

LET us consider that God alone is mighty: (1 Tim. 6, 15). His power is eternal, infinite, immense, immutable and essential; that is, everything in Him is omnipotent, His goodness, His justice, His mercy and all His other divine perfections. He could, in a moment, annihilate all things. Heaven and earth cannot resist His power for an instant. "Almighty is -his name" (Exod. 15, 3) - Sin is the only thing He cannot enact; for ability to sin is not power, it is merely impotence.

Let us adore this divine power. Let us rejoice that we belong to a Master and Father Who is omnipotent. Let us give and consecrate ourselves to His divine power and beg Him to extinguish in us all power to do evil and make us powerful to do good: "Mighty in work and word" (Luke 24, 19)

## SECOND POINT

### OUR LORD ACKNOWLEDGED His IMPOTENCE

Let us consider and adore our Lord Jesus Christ uttering these words: "I cannot of myself do any thing" (John 5, 30), not only as man but even as the Son of God. As He received being and life from His Heavenly Father, He likewise received all power from Him and He acknowledged this in His public profession: "I cannot of myself do any thing." This profession He willed to be written in His Gospel in order to confound our pride and to teach us not to appropriate any part of our performance to ourselves; for even the Son of God acknowledged that of Himself and without His Father, He could do

108-

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

nothing, and thus referred to His Heavenly Father everything that He accomplished.

Let us consider also that the Blessed Virgin has perfectly imitated her Son in this humility; and that as a reward the Eternal Father has given all power to the Son, and to the Mother in relative proportion: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth," says our Lord (Matt. 28, 18). And the Blessed Virgin can say the same in due proportion. Let us rejoice over this magnificent reward of humility and surrender ourselves to the Son and His Blessed Mother, begging them to employ their vast power in crushing our pride and making us share in their humility.

## THIRD POINT

### OF OURSELVES WE CAN DO NOTHING

Let us consider attentively the truth of these words: *Nihil possumus*. First, of ourselves we can do nothing pleasing to God. "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15, 5). Secondly, we cannot speak a good word: "O generation of vipers, how can you speak good things, whereas you are evil?" (Matt. 12, 34)- "No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12, 3). Thirdly, of ourselves we cannot entertain a good desire. "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish" (Phil. 2, 13). Fourthly, we cannot have a good thought without the grace of God. "Not that we are sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor 3, 5). Lastly, we cannot perform the least act of Christian virtue, nor resist the slightest temptation in the world, even for a moment. What a source of humiliation for us! Let us rejoice in this abjection and engrave these truths deeply upon our minds, so that everywhere and always we may acknowledge our futility and our great need of God. This will compel us to have recourse to Him continually, saying frequently: "O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me" (Ps. 69, 2).

HUMILITY

109 -

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

*Libenter igitur gloriabor in infirmitatibus meis, ut inhabitet in me virtus Christi* (2 Cor. 12, 9).

**SIXTH MEDITATION****On the Words: Nihil Valemus---'We Are Worth Nothing.'****FIRST POINT****OUR LORD WISHED TO BE TREATED AS IF HE WERE WORTHLESS**

LET us consider that every detail concerning our Lord Jesus Christ is of infinite value. Every aspect of His divinity, His humanity, His body and soul, His thoughts, words and actions, is of infinite value. Let us rejoice in His sublime worth. Let us thank the Eternal Father for having made everything in His Beloved Son Jesus Christ so noble and so precious.

Let us consider that our Lord Jesus Christ, although He is infinitely adorable in all things, willed to be treated as though He were of no account. People despised His words, His works, His sacred humanity, His Precious Blood and His life as if they were of no value. Even in our own day He is similarly treated by Jews, infidels and heretics in the Blessed Sacrament and by many Christians who blaspheme, crucify and trample Him underfoot.

**SECOND POINT****IN CONSEQUENCE OF SIN WE ARE THE MOST WRETCHED OF ALL CREATURES**

Let us consider the essential truth of these words: "We are worth nothing." There is no creature, however wretched it may be, among insensible and inanimate things, that cannot be said to be better and more precious than we are, on account of our corruption from sin. So we should humble ourselves below the mire, the dust, and the most abject things, and make more account of the most contemptible objects in the world. We may regard ourselves like Jonathan, speaking to

**HUMILITY**

111 -

David: "Who am I thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" (2 Kings 9, 8) and say with Solomon: "What shall we be able to do to glorify him?" (Ecclus- 43, 30) -

**THIRD POINT****AS CHILDREN OF ADAM WE DESERVED ETERNAL DEATH**

Let us consider these words of our Divine Lord: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men" (Matt, 5, 13)- Consider that as often as we have offended God, we have fallen into the state signified by these words: "Salt that has lost its savour." Hence, we are good for nothing any more but to be cast out of the house of God and to be trodden underfoot by men. Not only that; but we are fit only to be cast into eternal fire, according to the words which our Lord addressed to Ezechiel the prophet: "What shall be made of the wood of the vine? . . . Shall it be useful for any work?" (Ezech. 15, 2-4). No. As our Lord says in the Gospel, it is only fit for the fire of hell: to be "cast into the fire" (Matt. 3, 10)

This is our fitting destiny as children of Adam. Hence we are good for nothing but to be cast into eternal fire. And what is worse, we do not deserve even that the justice of God should take the



trouble to cast us into hell, nor that God should ascend His mighty throne to judge us. We should cultivate the sentiments of Job, when, after considering the baseness and corruption of man, he exclaims: "And dost thou think it meet to open thy eyes upon such a one, and to bring him into judgment with thee?" (Job 14, 3)

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ, we are worth nothing."  
Domine Jesu Christe, nihil valemus.

112 -

## SEVENTH MEDITATION

**On the Words: Nihil Habemus Praeter peccatum  
"We Possess Nothing Except Sin."**

### FIRST POINT

**ALTHOUGH OUR LORD WAS FILLED WITH VIRTUE AND GRACE  
HE CONSTANTLY HUMILIATED, HIMSELF**

LET us consider and rejoice that God possesses in Himself the infinity of good. Let us consider also that there existed not the least shadow of evil in our Lord; yet He humbled Himself as if there had been all kinds of evil and no good within Him. He appropriated nothing to Himself, but referred everything to His Almighty Father, being regarded and treated as if He were destitute of all good, according to the words of Sacred Scripture: "I am the man that see my poverty" (Lam. 3, 1). Yet we who are full of evil and void of all good cannot humble ourselves! We even strive to rob God of what belongs to Him, and to attribute it to ourselves!

### SECOND POINT

**OF OURSELVES WE ARE NOTHING**

Let us consider and weigh the truth of these words: "We have nothing." This means actually that we have nothing in the order of nature nor of grace, neither in heaven nor on earth, neither in body nor in soul. St. Paul said: "I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good" (Rom. 7, 18). How much more truly may we say it? If we possess any good, any quality, or any advantage, either natural or supernatural, it is not our own. "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why clost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Co. 4, 7. So far

HUMILITY 113 -

from being able to glory in the natural or supernatural gifts that God has bestowed upon us, we should derive from them a sense of humiliation, confusion and fear. The more we have received from God, the more we are obliged to render to Him. Yet if we examine ourselves carefully, we will find that we are making very poor use of the graces of God, and that we have more reason to humble ourselves before His Providence than if we had received no blessings whatsoever.

### THIRD POINT

#### VICE Is DEEPLY ROOTED WITHIN US

Let us consider how destitute we are of every virtue: faith, hope, charity, fortitude, justice, temperance, prudence, humility, obedience, patience, meekness; and how every vice lies deeply rooted within us. Yet we esteem ourselves and wish others to have a good opinion of us. Let us be profoundly humble; let us learn to know ourselves, to treat ourselves and wish others to treat us as persons destitute of all good and filled with every evil.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Lord Jesus Christ, we have nothing except sin."

*Domine Jesu Christe, nihil habemus praeter peccatum.*

114 -

### EIGHTH MEDITATION

#### **On the Words: Servi Inutiles Sumus-We Are Unprofitable Servants."**

#### FIRST POINT

#### GOD IS SUFFICIENT To HIMSELF AND DOES NOT NEED ANY CREATURE

LET US consider that the first reason why we are useless servants arises from the greatness, sufficiency and plenitude of God, Who calls Himself Sadai, that is, "sufficient to Himself," because He is so sufficient to Himself and replete with good, that He has no need of us nor of any creature of heaven or earth. Even the God-Man, Jesus Christ our Lord, says: "I have said to the Lord: Thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods" (Ps. 15, 2).

The fact that God has no need of our goods is an infallible mark of His divinity. That is why, when we offer or give anything to God, we sacrifice it to Him, that is, annihilate it before Him, to testify thereby that He has no need of anything. If anyone presented a valuable horse to a governor and were to kill the animal when offering it, the governor would not be pleased because the gift would be useless to him. But the greatest service we can render to God is to sacrifice and annihilate our offerings, to testify thereby that He has no need of them. This is why Jesus Christ sacrifices Himself on the Cross. Now, if Jesus Christ is not necessary to God, and if all the angels and saints and the Blessed Virgin can say: "We are unprofitable servants," with how much greater truth can we say it?

Let us rejoice that God is so replete with every conceivable good; let us be glad to be useless because He is quite sufficient to Himself.

HUMILITY

115 -

#### SECOND POINT

#### WE ARE NOTHINGNESS IN THE ORDER BOTH OF NATURE AND OF GRACE

The second reason for our uselessness arises from our extreme poverty and our twofold nothingness in the way of nature and grace. Our first portion is the nothingness from which God created us: and the second is the nothingness into which we have fallen by sin, which deprives us of the ability to entertain even a single good thought. Nothing can come from nothing; consequently we are utterly useless and worthless.

Let us ask God to engrave these truths deeply upon our hearts and to preserve us from thinking that we are necessary or useful in any way whatever. God alone is necessary.

### THIRD POINT

#### By SERVING GOD PERFECTLY WE GIVE HIM ONLY WHAT COMES FROM HIM

The third cause of our uselessness is implied in the comparison drawn by our Lord in the Gospel. A servant who accompanies his master on a journey does not rest when he reaches home, but must prepare refreshments for his master and then serve him at table; yet even so his master does not thank him, for he has only done the duty he is paid to do. So, our Lord says: "When you have done all these things that are commanded you, say: 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do'" (Luke 17, 10)

Now, besides this, there are three considerations which should make us deeply humble: 1. When we have done our utmost in the service of our Master, we have done only what we ought to do. 2. We never do all we could, nor practise all the virtues we might. 3. We accomplish nothing as perfectly as we might, but always with many faults. Even if we were to do everything possible as perfectly as we could, we would still do nothing: for it is God who operates in us. Even in our virtuous actions, we actually give nothing to God, but are continually receiving

116-

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

from Him. Therefore, if we were to perform the good works of all the angels and saints and were to practise every virtue to an eminent degree, we should still say: "We are unprofitable servants."

Let us ask God to imprint all these truths deeply upon our souls and make them fruitful, destroying our pride and giving us true humility.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Lord Jesus Christ, we are unprofitable servants."  
*Domine Jesu Christe, servi inutiles sumus.*

117-

### NINTH MEDITATION

#### Natura Filii Irae-"We Were Born Children of Wrath."

### FIRST POINT

#### WE ARE CHILDREN OF WRATH BECAUSE OF ORIGINAL SIN

By OUR own corrupt and depraved nature we are children of wrath, because we are children of sin and iniquity. This is our second portion, our first being nothingness. We are children of sin and perdition for we were born in sin and in damnation. "We were damned before we were born," says St.

Bernard. We have within us the source of every sin. Let everyone examine himself and he will find that he has within him the source of pride, avarice, envy and every other vice. So much so that if God left us to ourselves, we would be as proud as Lucifer, as avaricious as Judas, as envious as Cain, as gluttonous as the rich glutton, who "feasted sumptuously every day" (Luke 16, 19), as choleric and cruel as Herod, as lewd as Anti-Christ, as idle as the unprofitable servant in the Gospel, "the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness" (Matt. 25, 30)

Let us humble ourselves, contemplating the sins of earth and hell as if they were our own. When any one speaks evil of us, or offends us, let us not complain, but take his part against ourselves, remembering that we bear within us seeds of every evil. When we hear of impious and wicked men, let us consider that we have similar taints of sin in our own person, by reason of which the Church obliges the priest celebrating the Holy Mass to strike his breast and say: *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*. "Also to us sinners."

118-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### SECOND POINT

#### WE HAVE A STRONG INCLINATION TO EVIL

We have such a strong inclination to evil that if God did not continually bear us up, we would fall into a hell of every kind of sin with more impetuosity than a mill-stone hurled into the sky would fall if it were not restrained by a miracle. This weight which drags us down to sin is our self-love. "Self-love is my weight. I am carried by it wherever I go" (St. Augustine, Conf- 1, 13, C- 9) - "It almost overcomes the weight of my actions" (*Breviar. rom. Comm. un. Mart., Oratio, Infirmitatem*). Our own enterprise is the work of sinners. Let us not be surprised when we see anyone fall, but thank the mercy of God which sustains us. Let us have compassion on the errors and lapses of others and never prefer ourselves to anyone. Let us reflect that if God were to give other men the same grace that He has given us, they would be far better than we and derive more profit.

### THIRD POINT

#### WE ARE SLAVES OF SIN

We are slaves of sin: "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin" (John 8, 34). Wherefore, if God left us to ourselves, sin would tyrannize over us as it does over the damned, so that we could not think, speak or do anything but sin. We should be wholly transformed into sin as saints in heaven are transformed into sanctity. And so, of ourselves, we are nothing but sin, and we deserve to be treated as sin itself by God and His creatures.

This is how we should esteem ourselves; and we should be glad that others have the same low esteem for us and treat us as sinful men. Let us ask this grace of God.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O Lord, rebuke me not in thy indignation, nor chastise me in thy wrath."

*Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me neque in ira tua corripas me* (Ps. 6, 2).

**TENTH MEDITATION**  
**on the Same Words: "We Were Born Children of Wrath."**

*NOT* only are we the source of every sin, not only have we an original inclination to sin, but we are an abyss of every sin for four reasons. The first is that our sins annihilate God, which is the extreme malice of sin and of the sinner. The three reasons which prove this malice will form the three points of this meditation.

*FIRST POINT*

*THE SINNER USURPS WHAT BELONGS TO GOD  
 AND MAKES HIMSELF His OWN GOD*

We are an abyss of sin because sin and the sinner, so far as possible, drag God from His throne and annihilate Him, and what is still worse, the sinner elevates himself to the throne of God, usurping the dignity belonging only to God. In order to understand this, we must remember that, when God created man and all things, He created them only for Himself: "The Lord hath made all things for himself" (Prov. 16, 4)

Being the principle, the exemplar and the end of man and of all creatures, God wishes men to return to Him as to their origin, to imitate Him, to model their life and their actions on Him as their exemplar, to follow Him as their rule, to work towards Him with all their strength, by every thought, word and action, as to their last end. To render him capable of doing this, God has given man a mind, a heart and a will to know and love Him, to return to Him, to imitate Him and to tend unceasingly to Him as to his center. And in order that man may do so with joy and facility, God has enlightened his mind with the light of faith, has poured divine grace into his soul and enkindled love in his heart.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

But what has ungrateful man done? He has become separated from God and devoted his interests to self. Instead of employing his love for God, he has devoted it to himself and developed self-love. Instead of returning to God as to his principle, he has turned away from Him. Instead of referring to God all the blessings of nature and grace, man appropriates them to himself by complacency and self-esteem, as if they came from himself, who is only nothingness. Instead of following God as his exemplar and his rule, he follows the rule of his passions. Instead of allowing himself to be led by the spirit of God, he desires no other guidance than that of his own inclination. Instead of tending to God as to his end, taking his repose in Him and doing everything for Him, man wishes to tend wholly to himself, and to do everything for self.

Who is God? God is He whose will, interest, pleasure and honor should be preferred before every other will, interest, pleasure and honor. What does the sinner do? He prefers his own will, interest, pleasure and honor to the will, interest, pleasure and honor of God. Thus he usurps the place of God, makes a god of self, falls into self-adoration and pays self the homage which belongs to God alone. This is the extreme iniquity of sin. This is what we have done every time and as often as we have sinned. Hence we should despise ourselves as a bottomless pit of sin.

## SECOND POINT

### THE SINNER MAKES HIMSELF GOD OF ALL CREATURES

Not only does the sinner make a god of self, but he also makes himself the god of all creatures made by God. Man wants other creatures to offer him what belongs only to God; he desires them to prefer his inclinations, interests, pleasure and honor to those of God. Instead of attributing and referring every good to God alone as to its only source, man desires creatures to esteem him as if he possessed good in himself, and to praise and applaud his actions as if he could do good, independently.

He desires created beings to imitate him instead of God. He desires them to have no other rule than his inclinations, to be directed by his spirit, to love him to the prejudice of God and to do everything for

HUMILITY

121 -

him instead of doing everything for God. We have frequently been guilty of this and so we have usurped the place which God alone should hold towards creatures. What an abomination! How true it is that I am an abyss of every sin! O my God, impress these truths upon my mind; grant that I may regard, treat and hate myself as much, and that I may be glad to be so treated by others.

## THIRD POINT

### THE SINNER MAKES Himself THE GOD OF GOD

There is another and a last extremity of sin, the deepest abyss of iniquity, which consists in making oneself the god of God. The sinner would wish God to prefer his interests, will, pleasure and honor to the interest, will, pleasure and honor of His divine majesty. He would wish that his human will might rule the Providence of God and that God should be guided by the sinner's whims and fancies. He would seek to be the end of God and to have God adore him and make him His idol. O abomination of abominations! Behold the bottomless pit of sin! See what we have done every time we have sinned! Here we have an infinite source of infinite humiliation.

O my God, let me see these truths in the light of faith! O my God, enrich their fruitfulness within me! Let me know myself, let me know that I am nothing and that Thou art all! Let me no longer consider myself, let me do nothing for self, but all for Thee. Let no creature think of me, speak to me, nor of me, do anything for me nor give me anything, but all for Thee; and do Thou Thyself give me nothing, do nothing for me, nor consider me any more, but everything for Thyself! For Thou alone shouldst be Thy object! Let nothingness be obliterated with regard to itself, with regard to all Thy creatures and with regard to Thy supreme majesty! Let All be all, in all things and everywhere.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"O Lord rebuke me not in thy indignation, nor chastise me in thy wrath."

Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me, neque in ira tua corripas me (Ps. 6, 2).

## ELEVENTH MEDITATION

### On the Same Words: "We Were Born Children of Wrath."

WE DESERVE to be the object of the wrath of God and all God's creatures and of our own condemnation, for three reasons.

#### FIRST POINT

##### THE EVIL WHICH THE SINNER WORKS UPON HIMSELF

Since by sin the sinner kills his body, so far as he may, and kills his soul, he deserves that God should take away the life and being imparted to him, in punishment for his abuse of existence, in using it to fight against his Creator. Moreover, the sinner robs himself of the grace and friendship of God, and of eternal happiness, meriting the torments of hell. Thus he injures himself far more than the demons in hell and the creatures in the world could harm him even if they all united for his ruin.

Therefore I, a sinner, should despise, humble and hate myself more than all the abominable and contemptible things in the world. If God were to surrender me to the demons, they would exercise upon me the hatred I have merited by my sins and so would perform an act of justice. And I, instead of humbling and hating myself, exalt, love, praise and revere myself.

O my God, what a contradiction! Let it exist no more! Let me hate and fear myself more than death, more than the devil, more than hell. Permit me to hate nothing but myself, who am nothing but sin, and let me vent all my wrath, hatred and vengeance upon myself, out of zeal for Thy divine justice towards sin and the sinner!

HUMILITY

123 -

#### SECOND POINT

##### THE SINNER DESTROYS *ALL THE* WORKS OF *GOD* IN *SO FAR AS IS POSSIBLE*

We have merited God's wrath because the sinner, so far as possible, destroys all the works of God in nature, grace and glory. In nature, since he commits sin, for which God might justly annihilate the whole world. The damnation of a single soul is a greater evil than the destruction of the entire world of nature. Now God may justly damn a soul for a single mortal sin. Therefore He might justly annihilate the world of nature in punishment for a mortal sin. I say, furthermore, that, according to all theologians, the extinction of every natural being is not so great an evil as a venial sin. So he who commits a venial sin works an evil greater than the destruction of the whole world; consequently God might justly destroy the whole world in punishment for a venial sin.

He who sins mortally annihilates also the world of grace and glory. For, if all God's graces were in his soul, by committing mortal sin, he would destroy them all and consequently all the glory destined for him in heaven. Hence, the sinner merits the anger of every creature of nature, grace and glory and they will vent their just wrath upon him in the day of judgment. Even now they would do so if the mercy of God and the Blood of Jesus Christ did not restrain them: "The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed" (Lam. 3, 22)

O my God, let me behold this devastating truth in Thy divine light, so that I may know that no

creature, rational or irrational, owes me anything; no one should consider, nor love, nor give me anything, nor render me any service or assistance, nor even think of me. Rather do I deserve that every creature should employ all his strength in destroying and annihilating me.

124-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### THIRD POINT

#### THE SINNER EVEN ATTEMPTS To DESTROY GOD

We have merited God's wrath because the sinner annihilates not only all the works of the Creator, but also all the works of the Redeemer. The sinner renders void and useless to himself all the meritorious labors, sufferings, the Precious Blood, the life and death of the Divine Son of God, together with all the Sacraments and means of salvation established in Holy Church.

Moreover, the sinner even "annihilates God as far as lies in his power," says St. Bernard. In the first place, the sinful man obliterates the will of God replacing it with his own; secondly, he destroys within himself the Spirit of God Who is God; thirdly, he destroys the life of God in his soul by grace; fourthly, he crucifies Jesus Christ in himself after having already crucified Him with the Jews: "Crucifying again to themselves the Son of God" (Heb. 6, 6). Therefore, we may say that the sinner annihilates all things, since he annihilates, as far as he may, God the author of all things. The sinner deserves to be an object of wrath and malediction to created and uncreated things, and all creatures should unite to crush him. So he may say with the prophet: "Correct me, O Lord, but yet with judgment: and not in thy fury, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jer. 10, 24)

If I carefully consider these truths, O my God, how is it possible that I can still be proud? O Lord, crush this serpent of pride in my soul at any cost.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Correct me, O Lord, but yet with judgment and not in Thy fury, lest thou bring me to nothing."

Corripe me, Domine, verumtamen non in furore tuo, ne forte ad nihilum redigas me (Jer. 10, 24).

125-

## TWELFTH MEDITATION

### On the Same Words: "We Were Born Children of Wrath."

WE ARE unworthy of every good, and deserving of every evil; therefore we should humble and hate ourselves.

### FIRST POINT

#### WE ARE INFINITELY UNWORTHY OF EVERY GOOD

Our existence as children of wrath, death and iniquity makes us unworthy of every good, corporal, spiritual, temporal and eternal, of nature, grace or glory either emanating from the Creator or derived from creatures, unworthy to receive any assistance, gifts or favors from our Creator or from creatures, nay, infinitely unworthy even that they should think of us or speak of us or on our behalf. I say infinitely unworthy, because no human mind is capable of realizing our



unworthiness except the mind of God alone. The following are the reasons:

First, by our sins we have robbed ourselves of blessings, that come from infinity, namely, the grace and friendship of God, the tide of children and heirs of God and the enjoyment of God and all the treasures He possesses in Himself.

Secondly, we have deprived God of a good, that in a way is infinite in depriving Him of the service, honor, love and obedience we owe Him, a good that is eternal in its duration, for anything we do for God renders Him an honor that will last for all eternity. We deprive God of a good, infinite in a way because it is due to God on account of His infinite perfections and our obligations towards Him; infinite because God purchased it at an infinite price, the Precious Blood of His Divine Son.

Thirdly, by sin we have willed to deprive God of Jesus Christ, the God-Man, by crucifying Him anew, and consequently we have also

126-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

willed to deprive Him of the mystical body of Jesus Christ and of all the honor, praise, glory and adoration that Jesus Christ will render to His Father for all eternity, either in Himself or by His mystical body, the Church.

Fourthly, we have willed, as a result of this, to deprive all creatures of their Redeemer.

For these reasons, we have rendered ourselves so to speak infinitely unworthy of every good. Therefore, let us not complain when we are forgotten or when we do not receive the recognition we expect, but let us humble ourselves.

#### SECOND POINT

##### WE ARE DESERVING OF ALL EVIL

We are infinitely deserving of every evil, of contempt, punishment and suffering. I say infinitely because we are so despicable that only God Himself can understand the measure of our guilt, I say that we infinitely deserve every evil, corporal and spiritual, temporal and eternal, from God and from creatures, because by sin we have done an injury to the infinite God, to ourselves and to all creatures, and sin is an evil which may be said to be infinite in its nature, its object, its end and its effects.

The sinner inflicts an injury which we call infinite on God Himself, for as St. Bernard says, "he annihilates God so far as it lies in his power."

Man does an injury to himself for he kills his body, and murders his soul, as completely as possible.

He perpetrates an injury against all creatures in the order of nature, grace and glory since he destroys them to the extent of his ability. Should we not call it an infinite injury?

This being so, let us not be surprised when other creatures injure us by word or act, nor when God chastises us. Let us only be surprised that our Divine Creator and all His faithful creatures suffer us to exist anywhere but in hell and in nothingness.

## THIRD POINT

## WE SHALL NEVER HUMBLE OURSELVES SUFFICIENTLY

From these two truths follow other realities:

1. We shall never completely fathom the abyss of our unworthiness and misery. Even after we are well advanced in this knowledge, we must believe that there is infinitely more left to be known in the unfathomed depths of our nothingness.

2. We can never humble ourselves sufficiently, and even if we were to accomplish our very utmost in this respect, we would still be removed from the humiliation due to our baseness, and from the final degree of humility. Our Lord alone attained this final degree for He alone humbled Himself infinitely.

3. If all the creatures of heaven, earth and hell were to employ all their strength in vilifying us, it would be but a trifle of the shame we deserve.

4. God alone can humble us suitably.

Let us beg Him to engrave these truths upon our mind and make them fruitful in us. O great God, if we believe these truths, how can we still be proud? How can we seek to avoid suffering, or find it so hard to humble ourselves? How can we love honor and dread contempt so much? Lord Jesus, have mercy on us.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"To us sinners therefore be confusion and shame and to Thee be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

*Nobis peccatoribus confusio et ignominia, tibi autem honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

## THIRTEENTH MEDITATION

**On the Same Words: "We Were Born Children of Wrath."**

WE Have merited the wrath of God and of all His creatures, and deserve eternal torments.

## FIRST POINT

## WE HAVE MERITED THE WRATH OF GOD

The greatest torment of the damned is the wrath of God: "They shall be called ... the people with whom the Lord is angry for ever" (Mal. 1, 4). "They would prefer being burned in a fire ten times more intense," says St. Chrysostom, "than see the face of God kindled with wrath against them." Therefore, they will cry out on the day of judgment, "Fall upon us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Apoc. 6, 16-17) and St. Paul tells us: "Who shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction, from the face of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1, 9).

We have merited like condemnation and would infallibly and eternally have become the object of the wrath of God, of the wrath of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, if Our Lord Jesus Christ had not delivered us by bearing the wrath of His Almighty Father for our sake according to His own words: "Thy wrath hath come upon me" (Ps. 87, 17). Let us love and bless our merciful Saviour and humble ourselves at the thought that, since we have incurred the wrath of God, we have, in consequence, merited to be deprived of all His graces and all the effects of His bounty; and much more have we merited all the sufferings of this life and even the torments of hell; yet even these are much less than the wrath of God.

HUMILITY

129 -

## SECOND POINT

### WE HAVE MERITED THE WRATH OF ALL CREATURES

Not only are the damned the object of God's wrath, but also of the wrath of all creatures rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, in heaven, on earth and in hell. For the justice of God arms all His creatures against them: "He will arm the creature for the revenge of His enemies. He will put on justice as a breastplate, and will take true judgment instead of a helmet. He will take equity for an invincible shield. And He will sharpen His severe wrath for a spear: and the whole world shall fight with him against the unwise" (Wisd, 5,18-21).

1. The Blessed Virgin, all the angels and saints in heaven are all animated by God's wrath against the damned. God communicates all His sentiments to His loved ones and the more closely they are united to God, the more they share in His dispositions. They love what God loves and hate what He hates. Whence it follows that the Blessed Virgin is more wrathful against the sins of the damned than all the angels and saints together; and so it is with all the other saints in proportion.

2. All creatures upon earth, even the inanimate things of nature, are enkindled with wrath against the damned. Even every single atom is full of wrath against the damned and aids God's justice in avenging the injuries these sinners perpetrated against their Creator.

3. Even the damned and the demons cooperate with God's justice and are wrathful against one another, so that they are mutual executioners, tearing, cursing and tormenting one another perpetually.

4. Every reprobate is his own executioner raging against himself, hating himself and finding himself more intolerable than all the other demons and damned, because of the just judgment of God and the operation of the wrath of God which animates the lost soul against himself.

We have merited that this punishment should be ours, and we should look upon ourselves as wretches who have merited the eternal wrath of God and of all His creatures forever. We should infallibly have been reduced to such a state if our Lord had not delivered us, by taking our place and willing to be hated and persecuted by the world

130-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

and all creatures. Let us love and bless our Saviour and make Him the only object of our love. Let us be humbled, venting our hatred, anger and contempt upon ourselves. Let us reflect that, having merited the wrath of God and all His creatures, we do not deserve to be well treated by anyone and, if all creatures were to do their utmost to humiliate and persecute us, it would be justly deserved.

### THIRD POINT

#### WE HAVE DESERVED ETERNAL TORMENTS

In addition to the wrath of God and creatures, the damned will also suffer many other eternal torments: the gnawing worm: "their worm dieth not" (Mark 9, 45), the unbearable stench, the shouts, the blasphemies, hunger, thirst, fire, suffering in every part of body and soul, rage, despair, confusion, infamy and the endless eternity of all these torments.

We have merited all these punishments and much more have we merited all the confusion and ignominy of this world. Let us die of shame if we are still proud and vain, and cling to a high esteem of ourselves, after studying these realities, or if we still think anyone owes us anything. Let us beg God to engrave deeply on our mind the knowledge of our three portions, namely, nothingness, sin and the wrath of God, of creatures and eternal torments. This is expressed in our protestation of humility: "We are nothing; we are worth nothing; we are worthless servants; we have nothing but sin; we are born children of wrath." Let us not let a day pass without remembering and reflecting on our just deserts, so that when we have occasion to humble ourselves as we do hourly, we may ever have them in mind and they may serve to keep us constantly humble as the Holy Spirit teaches: "Humble thyself in all things" (Ecclus. 3, 20)

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"To us sinners be confusion and shame, and to Thee be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

*Nobis peccatoribus confusio et ignominia, tibi autem honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

131 -

### FOURTEENTH MEDITATION

#### On the Words: Novissimi Virorum-"The Last of Men."

### FIRST POINT

#### OUR LORD ADVISES US TO TAKE THE LOWEST PLACE

BY THESE words we profess our desire to regard ourselves as the least of men and to rejoice that others should treat us similarly. To enter into this disposition and to realize the truth of these words, let us first consider and adore our Lord pronouncing the words: "Sit down in the lowest place" (Luke 14, 10). Let us adore His admirable designs for each one of us in giving this counsel of humility. Let us humble ourselves and ask His forgiveness for having opposed His holy will and beg the grace not to do so again. Let us give ourselves to the spirit in which He pronounced those words so that they may be faithful in us. And on our part, let us cultivate the desire to practise His counsel in constant lowliness.

### SECOND POINT

#### OUR LORD CHOSE THE LAST PLACE IN ALL HIS WORDS

Let us consider that our Lord taught nothing that He did not first practise, and He always chose the last place in His words, thoughts, interior dispositions and actions.

By His words, He said of Himself, "I am a worm and no man" (Ps. 21, 7). Let us adore Him

uttering these words and consider that the worm is the most abject of creatures. It lives in the ground and everyone tramples it underfoot. In the same way the Son of God abased Himself beneath the feet of every man.

Very frequently, too, He called Himself "the Son of man" (Luke 12, 8), to confound our pride, let us prefer to be called by what is

132-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

most excellent in us, whereas Jesus Christ, God and man, Son of God and Son of man, takes His name from what is lowest in Him, calling Himself the Son of man, that is, the Son of the sinner who, of himself, is only nothingness, sin and damnation. Thus our Lord calls Himself a sinner, which is the greatest of all humiliations.

Moreover, after saying of St. John the Baptist: "Amen I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist," our Saviour says of Himself: "Yet he that is the lesser in the kingdom of heaven (that is, in the Church) is greater than he" (Matt. 11, 11). But how can we reconcile those ideas: "He that is lesser is greater?" If He is greater than St. John the Baptist, how is He lesser in the Church? And if He is the least in the kingdom of heaven, how is He greater than St. John? He is truly and indeed greater, but He calls Himself lesser because He treated Himself and willed to be treated as the last of men.

Lastly, He wished to be called "the most abject of men" in Sacred Scripture (Isa. 53, 3). This was one of His titles of honor. He gloried in it and wished it to be mentioned among His titles in Scripture. Let us adore Him humbling His greatness in this manner and taking the last place by His words.

Let us humble ourselves for having so often in our words exalted ourselves, resolving to refrain carefully from everything contrary to humility, asking God's grace to enable us to do so.

## THIRD POINT

### OUR LORD TOOK THE LAST PLACE IN HIS THOUGHTS AND INTERIOR DISPOSITIONS

The Son of God took the last place in His thoughts and interior dispositions. These thoughts certainly correspond with His words and His Heart was not in opposition to His lips. Therefore, He considered Himself the last of men and always remained in this attitude before God. Interiorly, He always took the lowest place for He regarded Himself as the bearer of the sins of all men, taking the place of all criminals, and obliged to endure the humiliation of their crimes, and

HUMILITY 133 -

consequently, to humble Himself below all creatures. Let us adore Him in these dispositions; let us give ourselves to Him, asking Him to let us share the depths of His sublime Humility.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Lord Jesus, I will sit down in the lowest place."  
*Domine Jesu, recumbam in novissimo loco.*

**FIFTEENTH MEDITATION**  
**On the Same Words: "The Last of Men."**

FIRST POINT

OUR LORD TOOK THE LOWEST PLACE IN His  
 INCARNATION AND CHILDHOOD

OUR Lord took the last place in His actions throughout the whole course of His life, as well as in His words, thoughts and interior dispositions.

In becoming man, He might have assumed the most perfect state of human life at the very moment of His Incarnation, by forming Himself as perfect a body as that of Adam at his creation. Instead He chose the lowest state of human life, that of infancy.

In choosing a mother, He might have chosen one of high rank, a queen, a princess or a titled lady. Instead He chose a woman from the lowest rank, from among the poor who earn their livelihood by manual labor. He chose a virgin who esteemed herself as the least of all His creatures.

He also chose a foster-father of lowly condition, who likewise esteemed himself the least of all men. For, after the Blessed Virgin, no one was so humble as St. Joseph.

Since it was ordained for Him to become incarnate in Judea, Jesus might have chosen Jerusalem or some other famous city; but he chose Nazareth, a despicable place, as these words of Nathaniel show: "Can any thing of good come from Nazareth?" (John 1, 46).

For His birth, He might have chosen a palace or honorable edifice; but He willed to be born in a most abject place, in a stable, in a cave which was a shelter for beasts. And He wished to be laid on the straw in the manger, between an ox and an ass.

Eight days after His birth, He willed to be marked with the seal of

HUMILITY      135 -

sin by circumcision, which was to rank himself amongst the lowest, for there is nothing lower than sin and the quality of sinner whose likeness He assumed.

Then, too, He chose the most trying season and month of the year for His birth; and He willed to be born not as Lord and Master, but enrolled as a subject and vassal of Emperor Augustus.

When He was presented in the Temple, He would not have His parents offer a lamb, the offering of the rich and the first of the nation, but two pigeons or turtle-doves which was the offering of the poor and the last of the people.

When Herod sought His life, He chose flight, the last and most ignominious of all means of escape; He chose the country most unworthy of His presence, Egypt, where idolatry was rife and where Satan held sway.

In the Temple with the doctors, He was not the doctor but the disciple, not learned but ignorant, questioning the doctors as if to learn of them.

Let us adore our Lord in all these mysteries and in all these humiliations. Let us strive to exalt Him the more, the more He has humbled Himself. Let us bless Him for the glory He rendered the Eternal Father by His abasement. Let us ask our Blessed Saviour to give us a share in His spirit of humility.

## SECOND POINT

### OUR LORD TOOK THE LAST PLACE DURING HIS ENTIRE LIFE

In the house of His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, the first place was rightfully His but He took the last. Although He is infinitely higher than either of His parents, He coveted no other rank with them than that of subject: "And (He) was subject to them" (Luke 2, 51).

Among all the conditions of human life, He takes not that of a prince nor of the wealthy, but the last of all, that of a poor man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow: "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matt. 13, 55)

In His baptism in the Jordan He again takes the lowest place, willing

136-

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

to be baptized as if He were a sinner. "For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice" (Matt. 3, 15), that is, all humility.

When He retired into the desert, He spent forty days among wild beasts. He permitted the vilest of creatures, the demon, to approach Him, to tempt Him and consequently to treat Him as if He were a sinner and capable of sin, and even to touch Him and carry Him from one place to another; hence He took the last place, in Satan's hands.

With the apostles and disciples He takes the last place, for He says: "I am in the midst of you, as he that serveth" (Luke 22, 27)

At the Last Supper, He knelt and performed the humblest action possible, which was to wash their feet, even those of Judas, thus placing Himself at the traitor's feet, at the feet of a devil, as He Himself said: "One of you is a devil" (John 6, 71). This was the lowest place in the world, for Judas was the most wicked creature the world has ever known.

In His Passion our Lord subjected Himself to the power of darkness: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22, 53). He was treated as a fool and a madman by Herod and his army and in the streets of Jerusalem, and He died on a Cross. If there is question of poverty, our Lord was born, lived and died in the greatest poverty ever experienced. If there is question of suffering, He suffered extreme torments in body and soul. If there is question of privation, no one has ever endured or will ever endure any lot comparable to His. If there is question of humiliation, there never was and never will be abasement and lowliness like His. He died "with the wicked" (Isa. 53, 12). "He shall be filled with reproaches," says the Prophet Jeremias (Lam. 3, 30)

He also takes the last place in Holy Church where in the Blessed Sacrament, He is the Victim bearing the sins of the world, where He dwells in the greatest humiliation and annihilation imaginable., according to both the manner and duration of this humiliation.

Lastly, even in the midst of His glory in heaven, He wills to bear for all eternity the marks of

the greatest ignominy ever known, His Sacred Wounds-the marks of His Crucifixion and His dreadful death of shame.

Let us adore, bless and exalt the Son who thus first practises what He

HUMILITY

137 -

teaches in the words: "Sit down in the lowest place." Let us give ourselves to Him to enter wholly into His dispositions.

### THIRD POINT

#### REASONS FOR THE DIVINE CHOICE OF THE LAST PLACE

Let us consider the reasons which inspired the Son of God to take the last place. The four chief motives are: (1) To render adequate homage by this extreme abasement to the supreme majesty of His Eternal Father; (2) to repair the dishonor given to His Heavenly Father by the pride of men who always desire the first place everywhere; (3) to confound our pride and to oblige us by His example to humble ourselves; (4) to merit and acquire the grace for us to overcome our pride and imitate Him in His humility.

Let us thank Him for all these lessons. Let us die of shame at finding ourselves so proud. Let us cultivate a great desire to imitate Him and obey His blessed words. In order to do this let us surrender ourselves to His spirit of humility.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Lord Jesus Christ, I will sit down in the lowest place."  
*Domine Jesu Christe, recumbam in novissimo loco.*

138 -

### SIXTEENTH MEDITATION

#### On the Same Words: "The Last of Men."

### FIRST POINT

#### OUR LORD WILLED TO BE TREATED AS THE LAST OF MEN By His CREATURES

NOT only did the Son of God treat Himself as the last of men, but He also willed to receive similar treatment from others.

1. He was so treated by men and by sinners, members of Satan, for never was man treated by men with such ignominy and cruelty as was inflicted on the Son of God.

2. Not only was He reviled by men, but also by the demon in the desert when the evil spirit tempted Him as if He were capable of all types of sin. The devil even carried Him from one place to another, which so far as we know, Satan was never permitted to do to anyone else. Our Lord was also assailed by the demons during His Passion, according to His own words: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22, 53), which show that He subjected Himself to the powers of darkness.



## SECOND POINT

### OUR LORD WILLED TO BE TREATED AS THE LAST OF MEN BY THE HOLY GHOST

Our Lord was also treated as the last of men by the Holy Spirit. The Gospel says that after our Lord was baptized in the River Jordan, that is, after He had taken our sins upon Him, "The Spirit drove him out into the desert" (Mark 1, 12). These words signify ignominy, and that the Holy Spirit treated our Lord as one burdened with all the sins of the world and obliged Him to endure confusion and penance for them.

## HUMILITY

139-

This was prefigured by the emissary goat led yearly to the Temple, over which the high priest confessed all the sins of the people, then committed it to a herdsman who drove it out into the desert (Lev. 16, 5-10). Thus the Eternal Father charged His divine Son with all our sins: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53, 6). And the Holy Ghost drove Him into the desert like a man burdened with all the crimes of men and obliged to endure their humiliation.

## THIRD POINT

### OUR LORD WILLED TO BE TREATED AS THE LAST OF MEN By His FATHER

Our Lord was also treated as the last of men by His Eternal Father. God looked upon His Son as taking the place of sinners and treated Him as such; nay, He treated Him almost as if He were sin itself: "He hath made sin for us" (2 Cor 5, 21). Wherefore He says: "For the wickedness of my people have I struck him" (Isa. 53, 8). "He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8, 32), to the Cross, to death, to the powers of darkness and to the greatest opprobrium that ever was and ever will be. Nay, it would seem that divine justice treated Him with more severity than the reprobate in hell, the vilest of creatures. For it is not unwarranted that those wretches, who are rebels, should be treated as they are, for they assuredly deserve it; but it is a very strange thing to witness the only Son of God treated by His Eternal Father for the crimes of others.

Thus did our Lord take the lowest place and treat Himself as the last of men in His words, thoughts, actions and interior dispositions throughout His whole life. Thus did He will to be treated as the last of men by sinners, members of Satan, by the demons, by the Holy Ghost and by His Eternal Father. He did so in order to glorify His Father absolutely by humbling Himself to the very utmost to repair the dishonor given to His Father by our pride. He stooped to confound our arrogance, to make us hate vanity and love humility.

How pride dishonors God and how horribly displeasing it must be to Him since it was necessary that God-made-man should thus humble Himself in order to repair such dishonor! What a dreadful vice is

140-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

vanity when the Son of God had to lower Himself to such depths of abasement in order to destroy it! How precious is humility in the sight of God, and how pleasing to His divine majesty since the Son of God wished to be treated in this way in order to make us love humility, to attract us to it by His example and obtain for us the grace to practise it! How guilty we are if we still yield to pride, if we will not humble ourselves! How great will be the shame of the ambitious on the day of judgment!

Let us adore our Lord in all these humiliations. Let us desire Him to be exalted in proportion to His abasement. Let us enter into His dispositions. Let us take the lowest place everywhere in mind and heart, and be glad to be treated both by God and creatures as the last of men. Let us beg the Son of God to destroy our pride and imprint in our hearts His dispositions of humility.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Lord Jesus, I will sit down in the lowest place."

*Domine Jesu, recumbam in novissimo loco.*

141 -

## SEVENTEENTH MEDITATION

**on the Words: Primi Peccatorum-"The First of Sinners."**

### FIRST POINT

OUR LORD WILLED TO BE TREATED AS THE CHIEF  
OF SINNERS

LET US consider that the Son of God treated Himself and willed to be treated not only as the last of men, but also as the first of sinners: "(He) was reputed with the wicked" (Isa. 53,12). He willed to die between two criminals as if He had been their leader. He was treated with as much opprobrium as if He had been sin itself: "Being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3, 13), says St. Paul. Our Divine Redeemer regarded Himself as laden with all the crimes of all sinners and He considered all the sins of men as His own. "He willed that our sins should be His own," says St. Augustine.

Let us adore and exalt Him in His profound annihilation. Let us beseech Him to destroy our pride and share His humility, showing us how we should treat ourselves and be glad to be treated, since the Son of God so humbled Himself.

### SECOND POINT

MANY GREAT SAINTS TREATED THEMSELVES AS THE  
FOREMOST OF SINNERS

Let us consider that only the greatest saints shared the dispositions of our Lord and treated themselves as the foremost sinners. Such was St. Paul's opinion of himself: "A faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief" (I Tim. 1, 15). St. Francis, St. Bernard, St. Dominic and many other great saints practised the same self-abasement. The

142-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Holy Ghost inspired them with these thoughts and sentiments; consequently they were founded upon truth. For He is the Spirit of truth and not of lies. We must not ask how we can reconcile the idea that St. Paul is the first of sinners, if St. Francis is the greatest sinner. And how St. Francis is, if St. Bernard is? Although the spirit of human reason does not understand, it nevertheless holds true before God and according to the Spirit of God.

We must not follow our own light, which is nothing but darkness, but we must draw this conclusion and fruit from the verdict of the saints. If I had the light of those saints, I would see

clearly that they were right in believing themselves the first of sinners. And, if those great saints lived in such dispositions and esteemed themselves so vile, what should be my opinion of myself, and how much more reason have I to believe that I am "the first of sinners," and to treat myself as such and rejoice to be so inspired by others?

Let us honor those sentiments in the saints. Let us bless God for their presence and thank Him for their meritorious application. Let us ask our Lord through the intercession of the saints to let us share their abnegation. Let us ask St. Paul, St. Francis and the other saints to engrave similar sentiments of profound humility in our own hearts.

### THIRD POINT

#### REASONS WHY WE SHOULD CONSIDER OURSELVES THE GREATEST OF SINNERS

Although human reason cannot penetrate the things of God, and the truths and maxims of the Gospel, the following reasons may serve to prove that we are: "The first of sinners."

In the first place, we may easily compare ourselves with Lucifer, Judas and Antichrist for, as children of Adam, we have within us the source of every sin of earth and hell. But, in order to put ourselves below Judas, Lucifer and Antichrist, we should believe with St. Francis, that if God gave to the greatest of all sinners the graces He has bestowed upon us, that sinner would become better than we, and if God were to withdraw His graces and leave us to ourselves, as He will withdraw them from Antichrist, we would be worse than His arch-enemy.

### HUMILITY

143 -

We should, moreover, compare our sins not with the sins of other men but with the graces we have received from God. Now, we have received more graces from His divine bounty than all pagans, Jews and heretics together. If we are priests, we have received more graces than all other Christians for the grace of the priesthood surpasses every other. Consequently, the sins of a priest are greater than the sins of all other men; therefore, a single sin of ours makes us as guilty and more so than the sins of all other men put together.

As priests, we are obliged in imitation of our Sovereign Priest, to take the sins of others upon ourselves and to expiate them by humiliation and penance as if they were our own sins. Wherefore, every priest should humbly treat and consider himself as laden with the sins of the whole world and rejoice in being treated as such even as if he were the chief and greatest of sinners.

Let us beg our Lord to imprint these truths upon our minds and engrave these dispositions in our hearts. Let us desire them ardently. Let us give ourselves to the Spirit of God to treat ourselves henceforth, and to wish to be treated by others with lowest esteem.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"O God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori (Luke 18, 13)

145 -

IV

MEDITATIONS  
ON  
OUR BIRTH AND BAPTISM

147 -

IV

MEDITATIONS  
ON OUR BIRTH AND BAPTISM ( 1 )

( 1 ). "*Meditations on Our Birth and Baptism*" are taken from "Part Seven" of *The Kingdom of Jesus*, Pp. 295-312. They may be used very profitably during the Christmas Season as an exercise in honor of the Child Jesus.

Saint John Eudes prefaces the first meditation with the following remarks: "I can never tell you enough, nor should you grow tired of hearing and considering (so important is it) that Jesus Christ, Who is your Head and Whose members you are, passed through all the stages of human life, through which you are passing. He did almost all the things that you do, and performed not only His outward acts but also all His interior actions for Himself and for you. Therefore, Christian sanctity and perfection consist in ceaselessly uniting yourself to Him as His members, and in continuing to do what He did, as He did it, to the best of your ability, uniting yourself with His dispositions and intentions. It likewise consists in consenting and adhering to what He did for you in the presence of His Father and in ratifying it. So, too, it consists; in performing all your inward actions not only for yourself, but also for the whole world, in imitation of the Son of God, and especially for those with whom you have some special connection with respect of God. This Christian devotion inspires similar acts of union and imitation proportionately, towards the Blessed Virgin, never separating the Mother from the Son."

148 -

**FIRST MEDITATION**

**Duties to Be Rendered to God on the Anniversary  
of Our Birth**

*FIRST POINT*

*LET US ADORE JESUS IN HIS ETERNAL AND  
TEMPORAL BIRTH*

O *JESUS*, I adore Thee in Thy eternal birth and Thy divine dwelling for all eternity in the bosom of Thy Father. I also adore Thee in Thy temporal conception, and in Thy presence in the sacred womb of Thy most pure Mother, for the space of nine months, and in Thy birth into this world at the end of that time. I adore and revere the great and admirable occurrence of all these mysteries. I adore and honor the holy dispositions of Thy Divine Person and Thy holy soul in these mysteries. With my whole heart I adore, love and bless all the acts of adoration, love, oblation Thou didst render to the Eternal Father, and all the other divine acts and practices offered Him in these mysteries.

## *SECOND POINT*

### *LET US UNITE OURSELVES TO THE HOMAGE THAT JESUS RENDERED TO His HEAVENLY FATHER FOR US*

Again I adore and glorify Thee, O Good Jesus, as performing all these things for Thyself, for me and for everyone in the world. On this anniversary of my birth I give myself to Thee, O my Dear Jesus, that I may now repeat the acts Thou didst perfect while dwelling from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, and for nine months in the bosom of Thy Mother. I unite myself to Thee to perform this duty as Thou didst perform it, in union with love, humility, purity and other

*OUR BIRTH AND BAPTISM*

149 -

holy dispositions of Thy adorable soul. Since Thou didst perform this act for Thyself and for me and for all men in the world, I also desire to exercise this present devotion, not only for myself, but for all the men in the world.

I now desire, O my Saviour, to render unto Thee as far as I can, with the help of Thy grace, all the rightful homage I should have paid Thee if I had been gifted with the use of reason, from the first moment of my life. So, too, I desire to pay Thee all the due meed of adoration, praise and love, which should have been given to Thee at that same time by all my friends, and by all people who ever were, are, or shall be in the world; and even that which should have been rendered to Thee by the evil angels at the moment of their creation. I give myself again to Thee, my Lord Jesus. Enter into me, and unite me to Thyself in order that in and by Thee I may fulfil these desires for Thy pure glory and satisfaction.

## *THIRD POINT*

### *LET US ADORE, LOVE AND THANK JESUS FOR OUR BIRTH AND BAPTISM*

In union, therefore, with the devotion, love, humility, purity and sanctity, and all the other sublime dispositions with which Thou didst honor, bless, love and glorify the Eternal Father in Thy eternal and temporal birth, and in Thy dwelling from all eternity in the bosom of Thy Father, and during nine months in the bosom of Thy Mother: I acclaim Thee; I adore, love, bless and glorify Thee together with the Father and the Holy Spirit as my God, my Creator and Sovereign Lord. I adore, love and glorify Thee also on behalf of all creatures-angels, men, animals, plants and inanimate things. I wish I could possess in myself the totality of their being, all their strength and all their actual or potential capacity to glorify and love Thee, that I might now use it all in paying Thee this homage for myself and for them, especially those for whom, before Thee, I have both the obligation and desire to pray with special zeal.

I give Thee infinite thanks, O my God, on behalf of myself, all creatures, and especially my particular friends, for the gift of life, and

150 -

## *MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS*

the capacity to know and love Thee. I thank Thee for having preserved our existence and allowed us to be born alive to receive Holy Baptism. If we had died before being delivered from original sin by the grace of Holy Baptism, which has been the misfortune of many souls, we should never have seen Thy divine face, and we should have been deprived forever of Thy holy love. May all the angels and saints bless Thee forever for this most special favor Thou hast accorded us.

*Ejaculatory prayer:* "He made us, and not we ourselves."

*Ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos (Ps. 99, 3)*

## SECOND MEDITATION Our Obligation of Loving and Serving God

### FIRST POINT

#### LET US CONSECRATE OUR BEING AND OUR LIFE TO JESUS

OMNIPOTENT Creator, Thou didst give me being and life solely that I might employ them in Thy love and service. Therefore, I offer my life to Thee. I consecrate and sacrifice it altogether to Thee, together with the being and life of all the angels, all men and all creatures, in testimony that I desire no longer to live save to serve Thee with all the *perfection Thou* dost ask of me.

O my God, what a source of humiliation and pain it is for me to think that, during the first months of my life, I was Thine enemy and under the power of Satan, in a continual state of sin that infinitely *displeased and* dishonored Thee! For this I most humbly beg Thy forgiveness, O my Lord, and in satisfaction for the dishonor I gave Thee while I remained in the state of original sin, I offer Thee, O Father of Jesus, all the glory given Thee by the immaculate Mother during the time she dwelt in the blessed womb of St. Anne, her mother.

O my Jesus, in honor of and in union with the love with which Thou didst accept and bear all the crosses and sufferings that were permitted by the Heavenly Father to attend Thy temporal birth, I offer Thee all the trials and afflictions I have suffered since my birth, and those remaining for me to suffer until the end of my life, accepting and loving them for love of Thee, and begging Thee to consecrate them to the homage of Thine own sufferings.

O Most Kind Jesus, I offer Thee all the circumstances of my birth, and I implore Thee by Thy very great mercy to wipe out all that displeases Thee in the first part of my life. Deign to make up for my faults, giving to Thy Father and to Thyself all the honor I ought to

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

have given Thee at that time, if I had been capable of honoring Thee; and mayest Thou grant that the earliest phase of my life may render an undying homage and glory to the divine state of Thy dwelling in the bosom of Thy Father and in the womb of Thy Mother, and to Thy eternal and temporal birth.

### SECOND POINT

#### LET US RATIFY THE ACTS DONE IN OUR BEHALF BY JESUS ON THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH

Such, O my Lord, is the rightful homage I ought to have rendered to Thee, had I been able, at the moment of my birth, and indeed from the first moment of my life, that I now endeavor to render to Thee, although very tardily and imperfectly. But what gives me infinite consolation, O my Dear Jesus, is that I know Thou didst atone for my deficiencies by Thy temporal birth. Then Thou didst render all this just homage to God the Father, performing in a most holy and divine manner all these acts and devotions for Thyself and for me. Thou didst refer and consecrate to His glory all Thy being and Thy entire life, present and to come, and together with it all my being and every state of my life, and of all creatures that ever were, are, or shall be, all the past, present and future state of created things being just as vividly present to Thee then as now. Thou didst look upon every life as Thine own, as something given to Thee by the Father, according to Thy blessed words: "All things are delivered to

me by my Father" (Matt. 11, 27). Thou wast consequently obliged, by Thy profound love for Him and Thy zeal for His honor, to refer and give and sacrifice everything to Him. And this Thou didst do most excellently.

Thou didst also offer to Thy Father the holy and divine state of Thy dwelling in the sacred womb of the Virgin, all filled with glory and love for Him, in satisfaction for the dishonor that was to be rendered to Him by myself in the state of original sin. And at the same moment when Thou didst accept and offer to Thy Father all the crosses and sufferings of Thy whole life, Thou didst offer Him also all the past, present and future trials and afflictions of all Thy members: for it is the function of the head to act for himself and on behalf of all his

## OUR BIRTH AND BAPTISM

153 -

members, because the head and the members are but one, and also because all that pertains to the members belongs to the head, and conversely all the attributes of the head belong to the members.

And so, O divine Head, Thou hast turned my whole being and the whole condition of my life to meritorious purpose. In Thy temporal birth, Thou didst render for me to Thy Father all the rightful homage I should have rendered Him at my own birth, and Thou didst then practise all the acts and exercises of devotion that I should have practised. Be Thou blessed for ever! How willingly I consent and adhere to all that Thou didst do at that time for me! Indeed I ratify it with my whole will, and would gladly sign that ratification with the last drop of my blood. I also endorse all Thou didst do for me in all the other phases or actions of Thy life, to compensate for the faults Thou didst know I was going to commit.

In imitation of Thee, O my Jesus, in honor of and in union with the same love which led Thee thus to accomplish all things for Thyself and for all Thy brothers, members and children, and for all creatures, I henceforth desire in all my functions and activities to render to Thee all the honor and glory I can, for myself and for all Christians, who are my brothers, and members of the same Head and Body. I desire to honor Thee on behalf of all men and all other creatures that are unworthy or incapable of loving Thee, as if all of them put together had entrusted me with their duties and obligations towards Thee, and had charged me to love and honor Thee on their behalf.

## THIRD POINT

### PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

O Mother of Jesus, I honor thee, as far as I am able, in the moment of thy holy conception, and in the instant of thy birth into the world. I honor all the love, all the adoration, praise, oblations and blessings thou didst offer to God at that time. In union with thy love, purity and humility as thou didst adore, love and glorify Him, and didst refer thy being and thy life to Him, I adore, bless and love my God with thee, my Mother, with my whole heart. I consecrate and sacrifice to Him forever my life, my being and my whole self.

154 -

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

So also, acclaiming thee, O Blessed Virgin, as Mother of God and consequently as my Sovereign Lady, I refer to thee, after God, the whole state of my being and my life. I implore thee most humbly to offer to God, for me, all the love, the glory and rightful homage thou didst render to Him at thy birth, by way of satisfaction for my faults, and to cause, by thy prayers and merits, all the phases, actions, and sufferings of my life to pay undying homage to all the phases, actions and sufferings of thy Son's life and thine own.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"I am thine."

Tuus sum ego (Iss. 118, 94).

155 -

**THIRD MEDITATION (2)**  
**Institution of the Sacrament of Baptism(3)**

FIRST POINT  
LET US ADORE JESUS AS THE INSTITUTOR OF THE  
SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

O Jesus, I adore Thee as divine Author of the holy Sacrament of Baptism, which Thou didst institute for my salvation. Thou didst also acquire and merit the grace contained in that Sacrament, by Thy Incarnation, Thy Baptism in the River Jordan and by Thy holy death.

I adore the exceeding great love with which Thou didst merit and institute this same Sacrament.

I adore all the designs which Thou didst cherish in its institutions for the whole Church and for myself in particular.

I thank Thee countless times for all the glory Thou hast given to Thyself and for all the graces Thou hast transmitted to Thy Church, and to me in particular, by this Sacrament.

I offer Thee all that glory and all the graces Thou hast produced in Thy Holy Church by this means.

(2). Before these Meditations on Baptism, St. John Eudes says:

"Holy Baptism is the beginning of your true life, that is, your life in Jesus Christ, and it is the origin of all happiness. Therefore, it is certain that you would have been obliged to render a very special tribute to your Heavenly Father on the occasion of your baptism. But you were incapable of fulfilling your obligation then because you did not have the use of reason. It is logical that you should each year set apart a little interval near the anniversary of your baptism, or else some other time, to devote yourself to prayer and thanksgiving for this priceless Sacrament." Cf. *The Kingdom of Jesus*, P. 302

(3). Saint John Eudes begins this meditation with the following reflections:

«The author of the holy Sacrament of Baptism is Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the source of all its graces, acquired and merited by His Incarnation, by His Baptism in the River Jordan, by His Passion and Death. He applied these infinite merits to you by virtue, of His Resurrection., out of His exceeding great love.» Ibid., loc. cit.

156-

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SECOND POINT

Act OF REPARATION FOR HAVING SO LITTLE PROFITED  
BY THE GRACE OF BAPTISM

I beg Thee to forgive me for neglecting to take advantage of the grace Thou didst give me in holy Baptism, and for having made it valueless by my cowardice and infidelities in Thy service, and for having even destroyed it entirely in my soul, by my sins.



I give myself to Thee, O Good Jesus; renew in me the treasure of baptismal grace, and accomplish in me, by Thy very great mercy, all the plans of Thy Providence on my behalf in the divine Sacrament of Baptism.

### THIRD POINT

#### LET US ADORE JESUS RECEIVING BAPTISM IN THE RIVER JORDAN

O Jesus, I adore Thee in the mystery of Thy Incarnation, Passion and Death, as meriting the grace of the Sacrament of Baptism; but especially do I adore Thee in the mystery of Thy holy Baptism in the River Jordan. I adore all the dispositions of Thy divine soul in this mystery, and all the designs Thou didst then deign to have in my regard. How different was Thy Baptism, Lord, from ours! In Thy Baptism Thou didst take upon Thyself our sins, to make satisfaction and do penance for them before the Father of heaven, in the desert and on the Cross, while in our baptism Thou didst lift from us the burden of our sins, washing and effacing them in Thy Precious Blood. Baptize me with the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, even as Thy blessed precursor, St. John the Baptist, assures us Thou dost baptize, that is, consume all my sins in the fire of Thy holy love, and by the power of Thy divine spirit.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"We are baptized in Christ Jesus."

In Christo Jesu baptizati sumus (Rom. 6, 3) -

157-

### FOURTH MEDITATION

#### The Mysteries of Which Baptism Makes Us Participants(4)

### FIRST POINT

#### LET US ADORE JESUS AS THE EXEMPLAR OF OUR BAPTISM IN THE MYSTERY OF His TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL BIRTH

O JESUS, Son of God and at the same time Son of man, I adore Thee in Thy temporal and eternal birth. I give Thee infinite thanks for all the glory Thou didst thus render to Thy heavenly Father. I adore the thoughts and designs Thou didst then deign to have for me, thinking of me from the very first, O Good Jesus; Thou didst love me and didst plan to make in me a living image of Thyself, of Thy birth and

The following reflections should be read before the meditation:

(1). "All things outside of God have their idea, their exemplar, and their prototype in God; so also Sacramental Baptism has for prototype and exemplar four great mysteries, namely:

(a) The mystery of our Lord's eternal birth, because His Father, by eternal generation, imparted to Him being, life and all the divine perfections, by reason of which He is the Son of God and the perfect image of His Father. Likewise, by Baptism He imparted to you the celestial and divine life He received from His Father; He implanted in you a living image of Himself, and He made you children of His Own Heavenly Father.

(b) The mystery of our Lord's temporal birth, became at the moment of His Incarnation and birth in the Blessed Virgin, He united our nature with His and His essence with our nature, and filled it with Himself and clad Himself in it as in a garment; similarly in the holy Sacrament of Baptism He united Himself with you and incorporated you with Him; He formed Himself and, as it were, took flesh

in you. He clothed and filled you with Himself, according to these words of St. Paul: "As many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3, 27).

(c) The mystery of His death and burial, for St Paul also tells us that "All we, who have been baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death" (Rom. 6, 3), and that "we are buried together with Him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6, 4). This means precisely the Same as the thought expressed by the same Apostle in other words: "You are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3, 3), that is: You have entered by baptism into a state which obliges you to die to yourself and to the world, and to live no longer except with Jesus Christ, by a totally holy and divine life, hidden and absorbed in God, resembling the life of Jesus Christ.

(d) The mystery of the Resurrection, because by His Resurrection the Son of God entered into a new life, totally heavenly and spiritual, entirely separated from the earth. And so St. Paul instructs the faithful: "We are buried together with him by baptism into death; that, as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may Walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6, 4).

For these reasons, then, we owe our Saviour a great tribute of homage and should lift up our minds and hearts to Him. « *The Kingdom Of Jesus* », P. 303-304

158-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Thy life. just as God the Father communicates to Thee His divine and immortal life, and just as Thou art consequently His Son and His most perfect image, so also Thou didst plan to transmit to me by Baptism Thy holy and celestial life, and to make me a living image of Thyself, and to transform me by grace into what Thou art by nature, that is, a child of God, and by participation and resemblance, God and another Jesus Christ.

Who could ever thank Thee for such great favors! How culpable I am for having, by my sins, so often impeded the perfect fulfilment of Thy divine plan! Forgive me, my Saviour, with all my heart I beg Thee to forgive me, and I give myself to Thee so that Thou mayest make amends for my faults and renew in me that image of Thyself, of Thy birth and of Thy life. Separate me from myself and from all that is not Thee, in order to unite and incorporate me with Thee. Empty me of myself and of all things, destroy me utterly, in order to fill me with Thyself and to form and establish Thyself in me. Cause me henceforth to be a perfect image of Thyself, just as Thou art a most perfect image of Thy Father.

Grant that I may share in Thy filial love for Him, since He is my Father as He is Thine; enable me to live by Thy life, that is, a holy and perfect life, truly worthy of God, since Thou hast made me God by participation; and, finally, invest me so fully with Thy qualities, perfections, virtues and dispositions, and so transform me into Thee that men may see only Jesus in me, only His life, His humility, His meekness, His charity, His love, His spirit, and His other virtues and qualities, since Thou dost will me to be Thy other self on earth.

OUR BIRTH AND BAPTISM

159 -

## SECOND POINT

### LET US ADORE JESUS AS THE EXEMPLAR OF OUR BAPTISM IN THE MYSTERIES OF HIS DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

O Jesus, I adore Thee in the mystery of Thy holy death, Thy burial and Resurrection. I give Thee thanks for the glory Thou didst render to the Eternal Father in these mysteries, and for the thoughts and plans Thou didst have in them for me. For Thou didst constantly think of me in all these mysteries, and at every moment of Thy life, and Thou didst always have a special plan for me. Thy special Providence was to imprint on my soul, by holy Baptism, an image of Thy death, burial and

Resurrection, causing me to die to myself and to the world, hiding me in Thyself, and with Thee in the bosom of the eternal Father, and raising me up again and causing me to live like Thee a new life, altogether celestial and divine. For this, be Thou blessed forever!

Alas, by my sins I have destroyed in myself the great effects produced by Thy goodness, and for this I beg Thee, with all humility and contrition, to forgive me. I give myself to Thee, O Good Jesus, I surrender myself to the spirit and the power of the mystery of Thy death, burial and Resurrection, that Thou mayest cause me to die again to all things; that Thou mayest hide me in Thyself and with Thyself in the bosom of the Heavenly Father; that Thou mayest dissolve my mind in Thy mind, my heart in Thy Heart, my soul in Thy soul, my life in Thy life; and that Thou mayest establish in me the new life into which Thou didst enter by Thy Resurrection, so that I may no longer live, save in Thee, for Thee, and by Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"We are buried together with him by baptism into death." Consepulti sumus cum illo per baptismum in mortem (Rom. 6, 4)

160 -

## **FIFTH MEDITATION**

### **Administration and Ceremonies of Baptism(5)**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **LET US ADORE JESUS AS THE ONE WHO BAPTIZED US IN THE PERSON OF THE PRIEST**

O my Most Beloved Jesus, I adore and recognize Thee as the One who baptized me, in the person of the priest, whom Thou didst use as a living instrument to confer this grace upon me. Alas, Lord, I knew Thee not at that time! I did not think of Thee, I did not love Thee, nor did I appreciate the very great favor conferred upon me. Yet this did not deter Thee from loving me, and receiving me among the number of Thy children, and even of Thy members, by the sanctifying grace of Baptism. O my adorable Saviour, I desire with all my heart to bring back that holy time, that happy moment in which Thou didst baptize me, in order that I may adore, bless, love and glorify Thee infinitely, imploring Thy Eternal Father, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother, all the angels and saints and all creatures to love, bless and thank Thee for me forever.

(5). All the Fathers of the Church teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, by the power of His Holy Spirit, confers all the Sacraments in the person of the priest, who represents Him and acts in His name and by His authority. It is He who consecrates in Holy Mass and gives us absolution in the Sacrament of Penance; also He baptizes us, with various symbolic ceremonies, inspired by His Spirit in Holy Mother Church and filled with mysteries that signify great graces that are conferred upon us in Holy Baptism. We should, therefore~ pay Him homage in this connection. The Kingdom of Jesus, P. 306.

OUR BIRTH AND BAPTISM

161 -

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **LET US ADORE JESUS INSPIRING THE CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM TO THE CHURCH**

O Jesus, I adore Thee as the One who, by Thy Holy Spirit, didst institute and inspire in Thy Church all the ceremonies which accompany the solemn administration of Sacramental Baptism. I adore all Thy admirable designs in their institution. I give myself to Thee that Thou mayest effect them in my person, and that by Thy great mercy Thou mayest produce in me the great and holy effects signified by these symbolic ceremonies.

O Jesus, cast out the evil spirit from me forever and fill me with Thy Divine Spirit. Give me a lively and perfect faith. Fortify my bodily senses and my spiritual faculties against every kind of temptation by the virtue of Thy holy Cross and consecrate them to Thy glory. Fill my soul with Thy divine wisdom, that is, with Thyself; excite in me the most avid hunger, thirst and desire of Thee, the principal and only food of my soul, so that I may no longer find any savor or relish in anything save Thee alone. Keep me safe in Thy Church, as in the bosom of a mother, apart from whom there is no life or salvation, and give me the grace to honor her in all her observances, as in customs taught and inspired by Thee. Give me the grace to obey all her laws and commandments, as those of a mother most worthy of honor who commands nothing save in Thy Holy Name. In all things and everywhere teach me to follow the maxims and guidance of the Spirit of the Church which is entirely Thine own.

### THIRD POINT

#### LET US BEG JESUS TO MAKE US PARTICIPANTS IN THE GRACES SYMBOLIZED BY THE LAST CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM

O Good Jesus, open my ears to Thy word and Thy voice, as Thou didst open the ears of the man possessed by the deaf and dumb spirit, by the application of Thy sacred spittle, and close them altogether to the voice of the world and of Satan. Anoint me with the oil of Thy

162-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

grace so that I may spread abroad, as it were, the divine odor of Thee in every place. Give me a firm and lasting peace with Thee and with every kind of creature. Clothe me in the white robe of Thy holy innocence and divine purity, both bodily and spiritually. Dispel the shadows of my darkness, filling me with Thy heavenly radiance.

Set me on fire with Thy sacred love and cause me to be a shining and a burning light, to illumine and enkindle all my associates with the light of Thy knowledge and the fire of Thy love. Finally, if I became a source of joy to all the citizens of heaven, to the Blessed Virgin, the Eternal Father, Thyself, and the Holy Spirit, when by Baptism I was delivered from the power of Satan and admitted into the divine company of angels and saints, and even of the Three Divine and Eternal Persons, and if in token of this joy the church bells were rung after I was baptized, cause me now to live henceforth in such a way as to continue to be a source of joy and satisfaction to the court of heaven, the Queen of Angels and the Most Blessed Trinity. Grant also that I may find all my satisfaction and joy in serving and loving Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"You are the light of the world."

Vos estis lux mundi (Matt. 5, 14)

## SIXTH MEDITATION Profession of Baptism

### FIRST POINT

#### RENEWAL OF OUR BAPTISMAL PROMISES

O JESUS, my Lord and my God, I adore Thee as the mystical Head whom I must follow and imitate in all things, according to my solemn and public profession made at Baptism. I promise, through my sponsors, before heaven and earth, to renounce Satan utterly with all his works and his pomps, that is, sin and the world, and to adhere to Thee as my Head, and to give and consecrate myself altogether to Thee, to dwell in Thee forever.

Great indeed are this promise and profession, which oblige me, as a Christian, to practise great perfection and sanctity. To profess to dwell in Thee and to adhere to Thee as my Head is to profess to be one with Thee, as the members are one with their head; it is to promise to have but one life, one mind, one heart, one soul, one will and one thought, one devotion and disposition with Thee. It means to profess not merely poverty, chastity and obedience, but to profess Thy very self, that is, Thy life, spirit, humility, charity, purity, poverty, obedience and all other virtues. In a word, it is to make the very profession Thou didst make before the Eternal Father at the moment of the Incarnation, a profession perfectly fulfilled throughout Thy life. It means to make profession never to follow my own will, but to seek all happiness in doing everything willed by God, to remain in a state of perpetual subjection to God, and submissive to men for the love of God. It means existing always as a host and victim continually sacrificed to the pure glory of God.

Such is the vow I made at Baptism, O Jesus my Lord. How holy and divine is that profession! How far is my life from this sanctity

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

and perfection! How often have I failed in every respect to live up to so sacred a promise! Forgive me, most merciful Lord, forgive me. O Divine Redeemer, I implore Thee to repair all my failings, and in satisfaction for them, to offer to Thy Father the inestimable honor Thou didst accord Him all Thy life long, by carrying out perfectly the profession made to Him at the Incarnation.

O my Jesus, in honor of and in union with the very great love and holy dispositions of Thy profession, I now desire to enact in my own person what I promised through others at my baptism, that is, I will to renew the profession then made by my godparents. Therefore, in the virtue and might of Thy Spirit and Thy love, I forever renounce Satan, sin, the world and myself. I give myself to Thee, O Jesus, to adhere to Thee, to remain in Thee, to be but one with Thee in heart, mind, spirit and life. I offer myself to Thee, never to do my own will, but to seek all my happiness in doing everything commanded by Thy holy will. I sacrifice myself to Thee as a host and victim to be immolated to Thy pure glory in any way that may be pleasing to Thee.

O most compassionate Jesus, I implore Thee by Thy great mercy, grant me the grace to carry out this holy profession perfectly. Do Thou fulfil it Thyself in me and for me, or rather for Thyself and for Thine own good pleasure, in all the perfection Thou dost desire; for I offer myself to Thee to do and suffer whatever pleases Thee for this intention.

## SECOND POINT

### PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY TRINITY(6)

O Holy and Adorable Trinity, I adore Thy divine essence and Thy Three Eternal Persons; I adore Thee for having been present at my baptism; I adore all the designs of Thy Providence for me. I beg Thee

(6). St. John Eudes makes the following reflections before this prayer to the Blessed Trinity:

"As has been said, it is our Lord Jesus Christ who baptizes the faithful; but each soul is baptized in the Name and by the power of the Most Holy Trinity. The Three Divine Persons are present at Holy Baptism in a particular manner. The Father is present generating His Son in the soul and imparting to it a new being and new life in His Son. The Son is present, being born and receiving life in the soul, transmitting His divine sonship, by which the neophyte becomes a child of God, just as He is Son of God. The Holy Spirit is present, forming Jesus in each *even as* He was formed in the bosom of the Virgin. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are present, separating the new-born Christian from all things, taking possession of him and consecrating him specially to Themselves, imprinting Their divine character and image on his soul and establishing in his being (as in Their living temple, Their sacred tabernacle, or Their holy throne and heaven) the dwelling-place of the Blessed Trinity, Their glory, kingdom and life. And consequently, if only sin did not stand in the way, the Three Eternal Persons; would dwell always in each Christian heart in a particular and ineffable manner; They would most wonderfully glorify one another by living in the soul a most holy and divine life. So, too, it follows that we belong to God as creatures entirely consecrated to Him and we must consequently pursue no other purpose in life save His glory and service. In this connection it would be well to pay the following tribute of praise to the Holy Trinity.« *The Kingdom of Jesus,*» P. 310

### OUR BIRTH AND BAPTISM

165 -

to forgive me for impeding their fulfilment and in satisfaction I offer Thee the life, actions and sufferings of my Lord Jesus Christ and of His most holy Mother. I give myself to Thee, O Divine Trinity, for the accomplishment of those same designs.

O Eternal Father, O Thou the only Son of God, O Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son, enter into me; enter into my heart and my soul; separate me from all that is not Thyself, draw me to Thyself, live and reign in me, destroy in me all that displeases Thee, and cause my being and my life to be completely consecrated to Thy pure glory.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"I renounce thee, Satan; I adhere to Thee, O Christ."  
*Abrenuntio, Satana; adhaeres tibi, Christe.*

167 -

V

**MEDITATIONS  
ON  
THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH**

169 -

V

**MEDITATIONS  
ON  
THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH (1)**

DEATH is usually preceded by such violent throes of intense weakness that the dying person is unable to direct his thoughts to God and cannot render the homage owed to His divine majesty at that crucial time. Therefore, it is extremely advisable to anticipate this disability by setting aside a few days each year to carry out now what one ought rightfully to render to God at the hour of death. St. Gertrude tells us that when she had once performed this exercise, our Lord revealed that it was most pleasing to Him, and He promised to set aside her preparation and keep it for the day of her death. We should be confident that in His goodness He will give this grace to us also, if we make use of the same exercise. To this end, we may make, during ten consecutive days, the following meditations, or else choose one each month in our retreat.

(1). These meditations are found in "Part Seven" of *The Kingdom Of Jesus*", PP. 312-344. They are both inspiring and practical. Religious communities will find them most useful for the monthly retreat and for the Preparation for death.

170 -

**FIRST MEDITATION**

**Submission to the Will of God**

**FIRST POINT**

**LET US ACCEPT DEATH AS A PUNISHMENT FOR OUR SINS AND  
AS A HOMAGE TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**

O my Lord Jesus, behold me prostrate at Thy feet, adoring my judge and Sovereign, as Thou dost pronounce on me the sentence of death, pronounced to Adam and in his person to all sinners, by Thy words: "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3, 19). In honor of Thy exceeding great love and most profound humility with which Thou didst hear and accept the sentence of death, spoken by Pilate, the Roman Governor, but willed by Thy Eternal Father, in honor of and in homage to His divine justice, I submit with my whole heart to the sentence of death Thou didst pass upon me even at the beginning of the world, recognizing that I have deserved it not only by original sin, but each time I have committed sin.

O my God, I recognize that even if I were guilty of no sin, whether original or actual, nevertheless, by Thy absolute sovereignty and power over me Thou couldst in all holiness take away my life, annihilate me and do with me as Thou wilt.

And so in honor of the very great love and in union with the deep submission with which the Blessed Virgin, Thy Mother, accepted death even though she was not obliged to die, by reason of any

sin, original or actual, I, too, accept death in homage to Thy sovereignty, abandoning myself entirely into Thy hands, that Thou mayest dispose of me in time and in eternity, according to Thy holy will, for Thy greater glory.

## THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

171 -

### SECOND POINT

#### LET US ACCEPT DEATH TO HONOR THE DEATH AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF OUR LORD

O Jesus, Thou art eternal and immortal; Thou art the source of an life, yet Thou dost will to die on the Cross the most cruel and ignominious of all deaths in homage to the justice and sovereignty, the divine and eternal life of Thy Father, and to give me a token of Thy love. And so, my Saviour, even if I were not obliged to die on account of my sins, and even if (to suppose the impossible) I depended in no way upon Thy sovereignty, and even indeed if Thou hadst not died for me in particular, I ought not only to accept death, but even to desire to die, in order to honor Thy holy death, which is so exalted and worthy of honor that all living creatures ought to subject themselves to death voluntarily even if they were not already obliged to die, in homage to the death of their Creator made Man.

Even if Thou hadst not died, O my God, all living things ought most willingly to sacrifice their very existence to pay homage to Thy supreme and eternal being, and to bear witness by this sacrifice that Thou alone art worthy to live, and that no other being or life has any right to show itself, but should be annihilated in Thy presence as the stars of heaven are extinguished in the light of the sun.

Thy death is so worthy of honor and homage, Thy life is most worthy to be adored. With excessive love Thou didst will to die, not only to satisfy the justice of God the Father and to honor His sovereignty, but also to sacrifice Thy human and temporal life for the glory of the divine and eternal life with Thy Father and Holy Spirit. By this sacrifice Thou didst bear witness before heaven and earth, that there is none but the divine life alone that is worthy of existence, and all other created life, however noble and excellent, should be extinguished in the sight and in the presence of this supreme and uncreated life. Therefore, in honor of Thy death, in homage to Thy Life, in union with the infinite love with which Thou didst thus will to die, for such great and divine intentions, and also in honor of the burning love with which Thy Blessed Mother and all Thy saints,

172-

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

especially Thy holy martyrs, embraced death with a very ready will for the same intentions, I accept and embrace death with my whole heart, in whatever form it may please Thee to send it to me, that is, in the place, time, manner and under all the circumstances it shall please Thee to decree.

And so if Thou dost order me to die a painful or even a shameful death, or that I be left desolate and abandoned by all human help, or if I am to be deprived of the use of my senses and reason, provided Thou art always with me, Thy holy will be done. I desire to accept and embrace all this in honor of Thy most sorrowful and ignominious death, in honor of the unspeakable desolation Thou didst suffer on the Cross, abandoned by all when even the face of Thy All-loving Father seemed veiled. I accept it in homage to the surrender of Thy senses-, Thou didst make in earliest childhood. I honor Thee in the humiliation Thou didst suffer, being treated as a madman by Thine own people, at the beginning of the preaching of the Holy Gospel, and by Herod and his court during Thy Passion.

Finally, my Dear Jesus, I place myself entirely in Thy hands. I abandon myself so completely to Thy good pleasure that I no longer desire to have any other will or desire, save to let Thee win,



desire and choose for me, in this and in everything else. Thou dost possess infinite wisdom and power and Thou hast a far greater knowledge and power and will to further Thy glory than I ever could have. One thing alone I beg of Thee, and it is that, since Thou didst die in love, by love and for love, if I am not worthy to die for Thy love or by that love, at least Thou mayest permit me to die in Thy dear love.

O my Jesus, I implore that, just as Thou didst perform all actions and functions for Thyself and for all men, especially for Thy children and friends, I may be permitted, in honor of and in union with Thy love, to perform all these actions and render unto Thee all due homage not only for myself but for all men, especially for all those for whom Thou knowest that I am both bound and anxious to pray with particular fervor.

THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

173 -

### THIRD POINT

#### LET US ACCEPT DEATH TO HONOR THE DEATH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

O Mother of Jesus, surely it would seem that thou shouldst not have died, since thou art the Mother of the Eternal and Immortal Son of God, who is life itself. Yet thou didst willingly submit to death, in homage to the most adorable death of thy Son. Thus, thy death is so exalted and worthy of honor that all creatures ought to subject themselves to death by their own free will, in order to honor the death of their Sovereign Lady, the Mother of their Creator. Therefore, O holy Virgin, even if I were not obliged to die, I should, nevertheless, wish to accept death freely, and offer it to thee together with the death of each one who is dear to me, and of all mankind, in homage to thy most holy death. I most humbly implore thee, O Mother of Life, to unite my death to thine in honor of the death of thy Son and to obtain from Him the grace to die in His favor and in His love.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return."  
Pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris (Gen. 3, 19).

174 -

### SECOND MEDITATION

#### Thanksgiving for Graces Received

### FIRST POINT

#### LET US THANK OUR LORD FOR ALL THE GRACES THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM HIM

AFTER we have made the solemn act of acceptance, we should prepare for a holy death, first by thanking Our Lord for all the favors we have received from Him in our whole lifetime. And it is very wise to devote a day to this exercise as follows:

O Jesus, I contemplate and adore Thee as the principle and source of all good things and all temporal and eternal graces past, present and future, in heaven and on earth, especially those I have received from Thee. I refer all these graces to Thee, for Thou art their source and Thy glory is their destiny. O good Jesus, who could ever describe all the favors that Thou hast done me? They are numberless and I am utterly incapable of thanking Thee for them as Thou dost deserve. O dearest

Lord, may all that ever was, is, or shall be in me, may all earthly and heavenly creatures, all the angels and saints, Thy Holy Mother, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Eternal Father, all the powers of Thy divinity and humanity, and all the graces and mercies which emanated from Thee, may all these be employed in praising Thee forever. May they be entirely transformed into everlasting praise of Thee, of all that Thou art together with Thy Father, Thyself and Thy Holy Spirit, and of all the graces Thou didst ever impart to Thy sacred humanity, Thy Blessed Mother, the angels and saints, and all creatures, and especially the graces Thou hast given me, or would have given me if I had not stood in Thy way.

O Father of Jesus, Holy Spirit of Jesus, Mother of Jesus, angels of Jesus, saints of Jesus, and all creatures of Jesus, bless and give thanks

#### THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

175 -

to Him for me forever. O Divine Jesus, do Thou glorify Thyself for me and return to Thyself a hundredfold all the thanks I ought to render to Thee.

#### SECOND POINT

LET US THANK OUR LADY, AND ALL THE ANGELS AND SAINTS  
FOR THE MANY FAVORS RECEIVED THROUGH THEM

O Good Jesus, Thou knowest how many favors and benefits I have received from Thy Blessed Mother, the angels and saints in heaven, and from many persons on earth. Thou knowest also how incapable I am of acknowledging them and giving thanks for them as I ought. And so I have recourse to Thee, imploring Thee most humbly to make up for my deficiencies and to give, on my behalf, to all those Souls, both in heaven and on earth, all that I ought to render to them for the benefits I have received through their intercession.

O Mother of Grace, Mother of my God, it is through thy mediation that I have received all the graces ever bestowed on me from heaven. May heaven and earth bless thee for them all, on behalf of myself and of all the thoughtless persons who have received favors from thee and give thee no thanks whatever.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Let us return thanks to the Lord our God."

Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.

176 -

#### THIRD MEDITATION

**Confession, Satisfaction for Our Sins**

#### FIRST POINT

IN REPARATION FOR OUR SINS LET US OFFER Jesus ALL THE GLORY  
THAT HE RECEIVED From His FATHER, His HOLY SPIRIT,  
THE BLESSED VIRGIN, THE ANGELS AND THE SAINTS

HAVING set aside one day to thank God for all the graces He has given us in our lifetime, it is most necessary that we devote another day to ask forgiveness for our sins and to make satisfaction to Him. To that end, we ought on this day to make a good confession, either an extraordinary confession or one

marked by unusual contrition and selfabasement, with as much care as if it were to be our last confession. As a preparation for this confession we should set aside a little time during the day to meditate on this matter, in the presence of God, in the following way:

O Most Lovable Jesus, infinitely worthy of all service and love, to Whom I owe debts without number, Thou didst create me only to love and serve Thee.. Yet I have done scarcely anything but offend Thee by thought, word and deed, by all my bodily senses and spiritual faculties, by my misuse of Thy creatures, against all Thy commandments, in countless different ways. O what sins! What ingratitude! What betrayals! Lord Jesus, I cast all my offenses upon Thy divine love, into the abyss of Thy mercies. Grant that I may be utterly transformed into sorrow and contrition, with tears of blood to detest and wipe out the sins I have committed against that immense Goodness, so deserving of love and honor! My God, what is there that I could ever do to make reparation for my sins? But even if I were to suffer all the torments and martyrdom in the world, I still could not of myself alone repair the insult given Thee by even the least of my faults.

THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

177 -

## SECOND POINT

### LET US OFFER TO GOD IN REPARATION FOR OUR SINS THE HONOR WHICH JESUS RENDERED TO HIM

O Good Jesus, I offer Thee instead all the glory, love and service given Thee by all the saints and Thy most Blessed Mother, by their holy thought~ words and actions, by holy use of their bodily senses and their spiritual Powers, by their eminent virtues and sufferings, in satisfaction for the failures of my lifetime. I offer Thee likewise an the honor given Thee forever by all the angels, by the Holy Spirit, by Thyself, and by the Eternal Father, in reparation for the dishonor I have given Thee all my life.

O Heavenly Father, O Holy Spirit, O ye angels and saints, offer up for me, to my Saviour, all the love and glory you ever gave Him, in satisfaction for the wrong I have done Him by my offenses.

Miserable sinner that I am, by offending my God I have offended all things. I have offended the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, the Mother of God, all the angels and saints, and all creation, for all are concerned and offended in offense to their Creator. How, O my God, how can I make reparation for so many offenses, make satisfaction to so many persons and pay off so many debts? I know what I will do: I have my Jesus who is in Himself an infinite wealth of virtues, merits and good works. He has been given me to be my riches, my virtue, my sanctification, my redemption and reparation. I shall offer Him to the Eternal Father, to the Holy Ghost, to the Blessed Virgin, to all the angels and all the saints in reparation and satisfaction for all the faults I have committed. O Holy Father, O Divine Spirit, I offer all the love and honor that my Jesus gave you by all His divine thoughts, words and actions, by His divine employment of all the members of His body and of His soul, by all His glorious virtues and heroic sufferings, in satisfaction for all the offenses I have committed against you all my life long.

O holy Virgin, O holy angels, O blessed saints, I offer you my treasure and my all, my Saviour Jesus Christ; I conjure you to draw from His infinite storehouse of merit whatever you require in payment and

satisfaction for all the debts I owe you, by reason of my sins and negligence.

O my Jesus, my divine Redeemer, do Thou make reparation for all my faults, and by Thy very great mercy atone for all my sins committed against the Eternal Father, Thyself the Son, the Holy Spirit, Thy most Blessed Mother, the angels and saints and all persons I have offended. I give myself to Thee to do and suffer in atonement whatsoever may be pleasing to Thy holy will, accepting now all the sufferings of body or spirit that I may have to bear, whether in this world or in the next, in satisfaction for my sins.

O most holy Virgin, I have so many obligations to serve and venerate thee; yet I have so little honored and so greatly offended thee by offending thy Son! I beg thy forgiveness, O Mother of Mercy, and I offer thee in satisfaction all the honor ever accorded thee in heaven and on earth. I implore all the angels and saints, the Holy Ghost, thy Son, and the Eternal Father to supply for my deficiencies, and fill up the measure of glory I ought to have rendered to thee all my life long.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"My sin is always before me."

Peccatum meum contra me est semper (Ps. 50, 5)

#### **FOURTH MEDITATION**

##### **Holy Communion**

##### **FIRST POINT**

##### **INTENTIONS FOR OUR LAST HOLY COMMUNION**

HOLY COMMUNION is the most precious and effective means given us by God to render to Him all the honor and service we owe to Him. To prepare for a holy death, we should make a point of taking one day of this exercise to dispose ourselves for an exceptionally well prepared Communion, marked by extraordinary devotion and approached with as much care and recollection as if it were to be our last.

We should offer this special Communion to our Lord:

1. In honor of all that He is in Himself and towards us.
2. In thanksgiving for all the effects of His love for His Father and for all creatures, but especially for us.
3. In satisfaction for all the dishonor and pain given Him by all the sins of the world, especially by our own.
4. For the fulfilment of the plans of His Divine Providence for all men, especially for us.

## SECOND POINT

### DISPOSITIONS FOR OUR LAST HOLY COMMUNION

Let us offer ourselves to the Eternal Father, begging Him to unite us with the surpassing love of His paternal heart when He received His Son Jesus Christ into His bosom on the day of the Ascension. Let us give ourselves to Jesus and beg Him to unite us with the most ardent love and profound humility with which He instituted the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, on the eve of His death. Let us offer ourselves to the

180-

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Blessed Virgin, to St. John the Evangelist, to St. Mary Magdalen and St. Mary of Egypt, and all the other saints, praying that they may cause us to participate in the love and fervor, the humility, purity and sanctity with which they received Holy Viaticum.

## THIRD POINT

### LET US ASK OUR DEAR LORD TO ACCOMPLISH AND COMPLETE ALL HIS HOLY DESIGNS IN US

After we have received Communion and made the usual thanksgiving to our Lord with unusual fervor, let us adore His divine plans from all eternity for us. Let us beg Him to remove all the obstructions we have ever placed in the way of their operation. Let us beg Him fervently not to let us die until He has completed the plans of His goodness and the work of His grace in our souls. Let us give ourselves to Him with a great desire and mighty resolution to work manfully to consummate His work in us, and to destroy in ourselves everything that might stand in His way, so that we may be able to repeat to Him, on the last day of our life, His words to the heavenly Father on Good Friday: *Opus consummavi quod dedisti mihi ut faciam*, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do" (John 17, 4).

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"He that eateth this bread shall live for ever."

*Qui manducat hunc panem vivet in aeternum* (John 6, 59).

181 -

### FIFTH MEDITATION Extreme Unction

## FIRST POINT

### LET US ADORE JESUS AS AUTHOR OF EXTREME UNCTION

O JESUS, I adore Thee as the author of the Holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and as the source of its priceless graces, which Thou hast acquired and merited for us by the shedding of Thy Precious Blood. I refer to Thee all the graces Thou didst ever produce in souls through Extreme Unction. I bless Thee a thousand times for all the glory Thou hast given to Thyself by this last Sacrament. I adore the infinite design of Thy Providence in the institution of Extreme Unction and I surrender myself to the accomplishment of Thy divine Plan for me according to Thy holy will. I implore Thee most humbly to grant me the grace of receiving this Sacrament at the end of my life. And if I should not be able to receive it, I implore Thee to produce in my soul, by Thy great mercy, the same graces I would

acquire by its reception.

O Jesus, I adore Thee in the holy anointing of Thy sacred body in the last days of Thy life by St. Mary Magdalen, and at Thy burial by St. Nicodemus and St. Joseph of Arimathea. I offer Thee all the holy unctions ever performed, in this last Sacrament, upon the bodies of all Christians who have received it or ever shall do so, in honor of and homage to the divine anointing of Thy deified body.

## SECOND POINT

### LET US ASK JESUS TO PREPARE OUR SOULS TO RECEIVE EXTREME UNCTION AND ALL ITS ATTENDANT GRACES

O Good Jesus, I adore Thee as High Priest to Whom, before all others, belongs the right of conferring all the Sacraments. I give my

182 -

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

self to Thee as High Priest and implore Thee to inspire in my soul the dispositions required for the fruitful reception of Extreme Unction and to produce in me all the graces represented by its consoling ceremonies.

In order to dispose myself for its reception, O my Saviour, behold and cast myself down at Thy feet, accusing myself most humbly before Thee and Thy heavenly court of all my sins, most humbly begging Thy forgiveness with all the humility and contrition I can muster, with my whole heart imploring Thee, together with Thy Blessed Mother and all the angels and saints, to ask forgiveness from Thy Eternal Father, and to offer to Him in satisfaction for my sins the full measure of Thy infinite merits and sufferings.

O Good Jesus, come into my soul and into my heart. Come to bring me Thy holy peace and to destroy in me all that might disturb the peace and repose of my spirit. Come unto me, and with Thy Precious Blood purify me of the foulness of my sins. Come to grant me full and total absolution, indulgence and remission of all my sins.

O Most Kind Jesus, I offer Thee all the senses and members of my body and all the powers of my soul. Anoint me, I beg Thee, with the sacred oil that ever flows from Thy divine Heart, that is, with the oil of Thy grace and mercy and, by this heavenly anointing, cleanse me of the evil effects of my sins. O Dearest Jesus, I offer Thee the holy employment of bodily senses and spiritual powers ever made by Thy Divine Self, by Thy Blessed Mother and all the saints, in satisfaction for my abuse or misuse of the members and senses of my body and the faculties of my soul. May it please Thee to grant me the grace to employ them in future only for Thy pure glory.

Finally, O Most Amiable Jesus, may it please Thee to give me Thy holy blessing. Ask the Beneficent Father and the Holy Spirit to bless me with Thee, so that this divine and mighty benediction may destroy in me all that displeases Thee, and transform me utterly into eternal benediction and praise of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Come, Lord Jesus."

Veni, Domine Jesu (Apoc. 22, 20).

## SIXTH MEDITATION

**The Last Will and Testament of Jesus and the One Which  
We Should Make in Its Honor**

## FIRST POINT

## THE FIRST THREE BEQUESTS OF CHRIST'S LAST WILL

O JESUS, I adore Thee in the last days of Thy life. I adore every aspect and event of these last days, but especially Thy divine Testament pronounced in the Canacle, on Mount Olivet and from the Cross. I adore, bless and glorify the supreme love for Thy Father, the most burning charity towards us and all the other holy dispositions of Thy last Testament to mankind.

The last will of Our Saviour comprises five bequests:

The first bequest is to His enemies, for, O wonder of wonders, O immensity of goodness, His first word and first prayer on the Cross is for His enemies, begging the Father to pardon them, in the very hour when they were blaspheming and crucifying Him.

The second bequest is to the Heavenly Father, the final gift of His holy soul with these words- "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23, 46). These words were uttered not only with reference to His deified soul, but to my soul and the souls of all who belong to Him, which were present at that moment before His sight, and He looked upon them as His veritable possession, forming all together but one soul by virtue of their most intimate union with Himself. When our dying Saviour said to the Father: *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum*, He spoke for Himself and for me; He didst commend my soul together with His into the hands of the Eternal Father, addressing this prayer to Him who is at once Thy Father and mine, in Thy Name and my own, against the hour when my soul shall leave my

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

body. And He made the offering of my soul with the same love with which He said *Pater* or *Father* in general, not *My Father* in particular, to show that He regarded Him not only as His special Father, but as the common and universal Father of all His brethren and members. He prayed to Him not only for Himself in particular, but also in general for all who belong to Him, with filial confidence and love, as much for Himself as for them, for which may He be loved and blessed forever.

The *third* bequest in His will concerns the Blessed Mother, to whom He didst give the friend who was most dear to Him after herself, the beloved disciple, St. John the Evangelist. At the same time there were represented in the person of St. John all the other disciples and children until the end of Time. When He said to Mary the words, "Woman, behold thy son" (John 19, 26), He gave her not only St. John, but all other Christians to be her children. Reciprocally, in saying to St. John the words: "Behold thy Mother" (John 19, 27), He gave to him and also to all Christians, represented in his person, His most precious possession in the order of created beings, namely, His most Blessed Mother, He gave her to them to be their Mother just as she was His Mother, imparting to them His precious relationship and character with her. That was the reason He called her no longer His Mother, but *Mulier*, "woman" to show the transfer to us of His relationship to her as Son, and the gift to us, as Mother, of her who was to cease to be His Mother for a time by reason of her Son's death. And so, Jesus bequeathed me in His will to His Blessed Mother, not only as a servant and subject, but actually as a son: *Mulier, ecce filius tuus*. He gave her to me not only as my Queen and Lady, but in the

most honorable and lovable character there is--that of a Mother. O love! O excess of goodness! May the whole world be transformed into love for so great a goodness!

## THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

185 -

### SECOND POINT

#### THE LAST TWO BEQUESTS OF CHRIST'S WILL

The *fourth* bequest in His will is particularly ours and concerns us so diversely that it seems to have been made for us alone.

1. During His last days on earth, He expressed a surpassing and extraordinary love, assuring us that the Father loves us as He loves Him (John 17, 23), and that He does love us as the Father loves Him (John 17, 9). And He consequently urges us to love one another as He has loved us (John 13, 34)

2. He likewise commended us with most particular affection to the most exalted and powerful persons most dear to Him, by Whom He is most loved in heaven and on earth--that is, His Eternal Father and His divine Mother. Just before setting out on the road to Calvary, He addressed a beautiful prayer to the Father: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me.... Not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me" (John 17, 11-20). While hanging on the Cross, He placed our souls in His hands together with His own, as has been said. He also commended us to His divine Mother.

3. We share in His will because in His last, solemn and public prayer, He obtained from the Heavenly Father the greatest favors that we could ask for, or could obtain from God. Here are the prayers He addressed to Him for us: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me" (John 17, 24), that is, that they should have their dwelling and take their rest with Him forever in the bosom and Heart of His Father. "Just Father .... that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me, may be in them" (John 17, 25-26), that is, to say: Love them as Thou lovest Him, love them with the greatest, the most burning and most divine love that could ever possibly exist. Look upon them as Thou dost regard Him; love them with the very heart with which Thou lovest Him; treat them as Thou dost treat Him; give them all that Thou givest Him. "That they may be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us ... I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect

186-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

in one" (John 17, 21-23). What love! What more could He ask the Father for us?

4. We share in Thy will because He gave us the most rare and precious gift, His Eternal Father to be our Father, praying Him to love us as He loves Thee, as His children with sublime paternal love. He gave us His Blessed Mother to be our Mother. He gave us His most Holy Body in the Eucharist, His holy Soul on the Cross in death with the words: "I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10, 15). He gave His Precious Blood to the very last drop, His life, merits, sufferings, humanity and divinity, as expressed in these words: "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them" (John 17, 22). He gave us all without reserve. How admirable is His goodness, poured forth for us in the very hour when we were causing Him to suffer so many evils! How can we love Him so little and think so seldom of Him? How can so great a love be held so cheap and be so despised by those whom He so loves?

The *fifth* and last bequest in His will was made on Mount Olivet when, departing from the



apostles and ascending into heaven, He gave His holy blessing. We share in this bequest also, for in imparting His blessing to the holy apostles and disciples He blessed all of us, each one in particular, for we were all just as much present in His sight then as we are now. May heaven and earth bless the Author of all gifts, and may all things in heaven and earth be transformed into eternal blessings of Him!

Such are the five clauses of His admirable will, in honor of which I desire to draw up My own testament.

### THIRD POINT

#### OUR SPIRITUAL W.U.L SHOULD BE MADE IN HONOR AND IMITATION OF THE WILL OF JESUS

1. O Most Kind Jesus, in honor of and in union with the love with which Thou didst shed Thy Precious Blood and die for Thine enemies and pray to the Eternal Father to pardon those who crucified Thee, with my whole heart I fully forgive all those who have ever offended or

#### THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

187 -

injured me, and I implore Thee to grant them full pardon. I offer myself to Thee to do and suffer whatever may please Thee for their sake, even to shed my blood and die for them, if necessary. So, too, in all the humility I can muster, I beg all whom I have ever offended or displeased in my whole life to forgive me, and I give myself to Thee to make whatever satisfaction to them Thou mayest desire.

2. In honor of and in union with the exceeding great love, the most perfect confidence and all the other dispositions with which Thou didst commend Thy soul and all the souls that belong to Thee into the hands of the Father, I surrender my soul, with the souls of all those for whom I am bound to have special concern, into the gentle hands and the most loving heart of the Divine Father, who is my God, my Creator and my Most Lovable Father, that He may dispose of them according to His good pleasure. I trust that His infinite goodness will place them with Thy soul, Good Jesus, in His fatherly bosom, there to love and bless Him eternally with Thee, according to the desire of Thy soul, expressed in the words: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me" (John 17, 24).

3. In honor of and in union with Thy great charity in giving all Thy friends and children to Thy most Blessed Mother, I resign into her hands all those entrusted to my care, imploring Thee, good Jesus, to commend them Thyself to Thy Virgin Mother. I implore her with my whole heart, by Thy very great love for her and hers for Thee, and by the same love with which Thou didst give her Thy friends and children, to look upon them henceforth as her children in a more special way, and to be their Mother.

4. In honor of and in union with the exceedingly powerful love whereby Thou didst commend me to Thy Father on Thy last day, and didst beg Him, on my behalf, for such great favors, giving me all that was most dear to Thee, with such extraordinary tokens of that love, urging me also to love my neighbor as Thou didst love me: I commend to Thee all those whom Thou knowest I should commend particularly to Thee, and I beg Thee on their behalf for all that Thou didst ask for me on Good Friday from Thy Eternal Father. I abandon myself to Thee to love Thee as Thou lovest the Father and as the Father loves

Thee. I give myself also to Thee to love my neighbor as Thou didst love me, and to shed my blood and give my life for him, if it is Thy holy will.

5. O Jesus, God of all blessings, I adore Thee in the last moment of Thy sojourn on earth, upon Mount Olivet, as Thou didst leave the earth to ascend into heaven. I adore Thee giving Thy most holy blessing to Thy Blessed Mother, Thy apostles and disciples; I adore the exceeding great love and all the other dispositions which filled Thy divine soul when Thou didst impart this supreme blessing as is related in the Holy Gospel (Luke, 24,50).

O Good Jesus, behold me prostrate at Thy feet, in union with the humility and the other holy dispositions of the Blessed Mother and the holy apostles and disciples as they received Thy blessing. I most humbly implore Thee, by all Thy love for them, and theirs for Thee, to give now to me and to all I have commended to Thee, Thy most holy blessing, so that by the power of that divine blessing all that displeases Thee in me may be destroyed and I may be altogether transformed into everlasting praise, love and benediction of Thee.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Father into thy hands I commend my spirit."  
In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum (Luke, 23, 46).

## SEVENTH MEDITATION

### Our Last Agony and the Moment of Death

#### FIRST POINT

WE SHOULD LOOK UPON THIS DAY AS THE LAST OF OUR LIFE AND  
UNITE OURSELVES TO JESUS AND HIS HOLY MOTHER

WE SHALL consider this day as if it were to be our last. We must strive to spend it with as much care and devotion as if we had only this one day in which to love God. For this purpose, we should apply ourselves to the contemplation and adoration of Our Lord in the last day of His life on earth, and to do everything in union with the holy and divine dispositions of His last actions. With the last day of our life in view, we should implore Jesus to unite us to His Dispositions and foster them in our hearts, that we may be of the number of those of whom it is said: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Apoc. 14, 13), that is, who die in the dispositions of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Similarly we should consider and honor the Blessed Virgin on the last day of her life, uniting ourselves to her dispositions, offering her the last day of our life. The prayers addressed to Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother for the end of the year should also serve our purpose here.

#### SECOND POINT

WE SHOULD ADORE JESUS IN His AGONY AND OFFER Him  
OUR AGONY AND DEATH IN HONOR OF His

I may also add at this point that it is a good thing on this day to adore Jesus and honor His most holy Mother in their agony and death,

offering our agony and death in union with theirs, imploring them to bless and sanctify our death by their own. It is also most beneficial to adore the infinite power of the divine love that caused the death of Jesus and of His most holy Mother, for they both died of love and by love. We should implore that divine love to cause us to die with Jesus and His divine Mother, and to consume and sacrifice our life in its sacred flames.

We should also honor the holy martyrs and all saints in their agony and death. Let us offer them our agony and death, in union with their own, begging them to unite us with their holy dispositions as they prepared for death. Let us implore them specially to associate us with all the love and glory they gave to Our Lord on the last day of their life and at the moment they died for Him.

We should pray specially to St. John the Evangelist, St. Mary Mag. dalen and the good thief who died with Jesus, and all the other saints who were present at the death of the Son of God, that through the merits of their privilege in being near Him in death, they may give us special assistance at the hour of our own death.

On this same day it would be most advisable to read the Passion of Our Lord, the seventeenth chapter of St. John, containing His last words and prayers before setting forth to be crucified, as well as the prayers of Holy Mother Church for the agonizing soul, which are to be found at the end of the Breviary. We do not know whether we will be in a fit state on the last day of our life to complete these preparations for a holy death. Hence, it is a good thing to anticipate that day, and to read the Passion of Our Lord and the above-mentioned prayers with all the devotion we would wish to put into them at the hour of death, and all the devotion with which they have ever been read by the whole Church.

But above all, when we read the seventeenth chapter of St. John, which contains the last words and prayers of Jesus, let us give ourselves to Him in a sincere effort to pronounce these words and prayers in union with His love, dispositions and intentions when He spoke them, imploring Him to foster in our hearts these sublime dispositions in preparation for the last day of our life and to produce the effects of these holy words.

#### THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

191 -

Finally, let us cast ourselves down at the feet of Jesus and His most holy Mother, to implore them to give us their blessing. "O Jesus, O Mother of Jesus, give me your blessing for the last moment of my life. By your great goodness, grant that the last moment of my life may be consecrated to the glory of the last moment of yours, and that my last breath may be an act of most pure love of you."

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."  
Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur (Apoc. 14, 13)

192 -  
**EIGHTH MEDITATION**

**The Particular judgment**

FIRST POINT

LET US ADORE JESUS IN THE JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED  
AGAINST HIM BY HIS HEAVENLY FATHER

O JESUS, Thou art the Saint of Saints and Sanctity Itself, infinitely above all sin and imperfection. Yet, I behold Thee prostrate with Thy face to the earth at the feet of the All-just Father in the Garden of Olives, and the following day at the feet of Pilate, where the Eternal Father contemplates Thee as the Victim who has taken upon Himself all the sins of the world, giving Himself without reserve for the ransom of mankind. Thou hast taken the place of all sinners and borne the heavy judgment of our sins by dying on the Cross for our salvation. Thou dost accept that judgment with most perfect submission, most profound humility and most ardent love for Thy Father and for us. O Jesus, I adore and glorify Thee in this judgment and in all holy dispositions of humiliation, contrition, submission and love with which Thou didst suffer to be judged and condemned to save us.

SECOND POINT

LET US SUBMIT OURSELVES IN ADVANCE TO THE SENTENCE  
PRONOUNCED AGAINST US AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH

In honor of and in union with these dispositions, behold me prostrate at Thy feet, great Jesus, adoring Thee as my sovereign judge. I most willingly submit myself to Thy supreme power. I infinitely rejoice that Thou hast sovereign power over me and over all men and angels. A thousand times I praise the Eternal Father for having given Thee this power. I affirm sincerely that if, to imagine the impossible,

THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

193 -

Thou didst not have this power, and I did have it, I would want to strip myself of it to give it to Thee; if I were not subject to Thy power to judge me, I should wish to subject myself voluntarily to that power, out of homage to Thy divine justice and to the condemnation Thou didst undergo from Thy Father during Thy holy Passion.

O Jesus, I adore Thee in Thy coming at the hour of my death and at the moment of Thy judgment of my soul. I adore now every aspect and detail of my particular judgment. May it please Thee to grant me now some measure of the divine light by which Thou wilt clearly show me every event of my whole life, compelling me to give an account of everything. Grant me a share in the zeal for justice with which Thou wilt be avenged for my offenses, so that I may from now on see my sins clearly and make reparation by perfect contrition, horror and detestation for these same sins.

O my God, how many sins I have committed against Thee all my life long, by thought, word and deed, in every way I can. They can not be numbered, I confess; and I accuse myself before Thee, before Thy Blessed Mother, before all the angels and saints, and, if it be Thy holy will, before the whole world. I accuse myself of my sins, just as they are in Thy sight, as Thou knowest them. If only I could see my offenses as Thou seest them! If only I knew myself as Thou knowest me, and as I shall see and know myself in Thy light at the moment of judgment! How I shall be confounded and humiliated then by the realization of what I am! What horror my crimes will awaken in me! What regret, what anguish at

having so little loved and so greatly offended so transcendent a goodness as Thine I How quickly will I then accuse and condemn my own self I Indeed there will be no need of any other judge, for I shall be the first to pass sentence upon my own misdeeds and ignominy.

But why wait until that final hour? Lord, at this very moment I surrender myself to the zeal of Thy divine justice and to the spirit of Thy just hatred and righteous horror for sin. In honor of and in union with Thy extreme hatred of sin, I hate and detest all my sins; I hold them in abhorrence; I renounce them forever; I offer myself to Thee to suffer for them all the penance Thou shalt order. Casting myself down before Thy face, in the ultimate depths of abjection, to which,

194-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

O great God, I have deserved to be reduced by my sins, I pronounce against myself, in the presence of heaven and earth, that final sentence. Since I, who am nothing but a worm of the earth, a handful of ashes and mere nothingness, have in so many ways offended so exalted and great a majesty, there are no tortures, either on earth, in purgatory or in hell, capable of worthily expiating my sin, without the intervention of Thy mercy and the power of Thy Precious Blood. For all these torments are finite, while the offense of my sins is infinite, since they offend an infinite majesty, and consequently deserve an infinite punishment.

So, my sovereign judge, falling down once more at Thy feet, and in the lowest depths of the bottomless pit of my sins, I adore and bless and love Thee with my whole heart, as pronouncing the sentence that Thou shalt pronounce at the hour of my death, and I voluntarily, with all the love possible to me, submit to this sentence, whatever it may be, telling Thee with the Royal Prophet, with all the power of my will: "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right" (Ps. 118, 137) And I most obediently accept anything it may please Thee to ordain in my regard, in time and eternity, giving myself to Thee to bear not only all the sufferings of Purgatory, in homage to Thy divine justice; but any other penalty Thou mayest impose upon me. I take no thought of what is to become of me nor what is to be done to me in time and eternity, provided only that the wrong and dishonor I have done Thee may be made good, no matter what the cost.

#### THIRD POINT

#### LET US BEG JESUS TO BE MERCIFUL

And yet, O God of mercy, do not permit that I should be numbered among those who will never love Thee. O most merciful Lord, what am I that Thou deignest to open Thy blessed eyes to look upon me, to summon me into Thy presence in judgment and to exercise Thy justice upon me? It is all too true that I deserve Thy mercy far less than Thy justice. But, O Thou Saviour of my soul, remember that Thou didst will to be judged for me~ and that Thou art most worthy that my sins should be forgiven in Thee, since Thou didst ask the All-merciful

#### THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

195 -

Father to pardon them for me. And yet, Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy miserable and unworthy servant, but offer for me to Thy Father the judgment Thou didst sustain for my sins, and pray that His divine forgiveness be granted, not to me but to Thee.

O Father of mercy, I confess that I have deserved to bear the stern weight of Thy judgments, and that I am not worthy that Thou shouldst give me the least grace, nor that Thou shouldst pardon the very smallest of my sins. I offer Thee the terrible judgment Thy Son sustained for my faults, and I implore Thee to pardon them, not to me, but to Thy Beloved Son, Who begs Thy forgiveness on my

behalf, and to give Him, also, all the graces I need for Thy service. All possible punishments in the world, visited upon me, are incapable of giving Thee fitting satisfaction for the very least of my crimes. Thy Son alone can make perfect reparation for the dishonor I have given Thee. And so I offer to Thee, and I implore Him to offer with me, all that He did and suffered in His whole life, and all the honor He ever rendered to Thee, whether by Himself or through His Blessed Mother, His angels and all His saints.

O Mother of Mercy, Mother of Jesus, O angels and saints of Jesus, offer to God all your merits and works on my behalf and all the glory you ever gave Him, in satisfaction for my offenses and implore Him to treat me not according to the rigor of His justice, but the multitude of His mercies, in order that I may love and bless Him with you forever.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity."

Secundum multitudinem misericordiarum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam (Ps. 50, 3)

196 -

## **NINTH MEDITATION**

### **Death and Burial**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **LET US OFFER OUR DEATH TO JESUS IN HONOR OF HIS**

O JESUS, Thou art eternal life and the source of all life, yet I behold Thee cold in the darkness and shadow of death. I see Thee bid farewell, for a little while, to Thy most lovable Mother, to Thy dearly beloved apostles and disciples, and to all Thy friends left bathed in tears, in the greatest mourning and lamentation of all time. I contemplate Thy holy soul separated from Thy divine body, with which it had so holy, so close and so sublime a union. I see this same body, more holy and sacred than all the heavenly bodies-I mean than all heaven itself, - lying in a sepulchre, among the rocks in the dust.

O my Jesus, I adore, praise and glorify Thee thus. I offer Thee an the honor rendered to Thee in this state by Thy holy Mother, by St. Mary Magdalen, by the holy apostles and disciples, by the angels, by the holy souls Thou didst free from Limbo and by the whole Church, with all the glory Thy Father gave Thee, and which Thou now enjoyest in heaven, in recompense for that humiliation Thou didst bear on earth. I offer Thee the state of death which will one day be mine, in honor of that state of death in which Thou didst remain before the, Resurrection.

I offer Thee the separation from the company of my friends and relatives that I shall one day have to bear, in honor of the most bitter separation which Thou didst suffer, torn from the most sweet company of Thy dearest Mother, of Thy dearly beloved apostles and disciples. I offer Thee all the sorrow and the tears of my relatives and friends in honor of the sorrow and tears of Thy harrowed Mother and sorrowing apostles. I offer Thee the separation of my soul from Thy sacred body.

#### **THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH**

197 -

I offer Thee all the states of my soul, until its reunion with its body, whatever they may be, in homage to the state in which Thy holy soul existed during the time it was separated from Thy body. I offer Thee the burial of my body and all the actions that shall be done in performing this burial, in

honor of the burial of Thy holy Body.

In honor of and in union with the same love with which Thou, O good Jesus, didst will that Thy sacred body should lie upon the dust within a hollow rock, and by which Thou hast so often given me this same body in Holy Communion, although I am nothing but a worm of the earth, I most willingly surrender my body to the ground, and to the worms. I consent to be reduced to ashes and dust, but only on condition, O crucified Saviour, that all the grains of dust into which my flesh and bones shall crumble, may be so many voices praising and glorifying without interruption the adorable mystery of Thy burial, and that I may thus sing with the holy psalmist: "All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to thee?" (Ps. 34, 10).

## SECOND POINT

### LET US ADORE JESUS BURIED IN THE SEPULCHRE

O Divine Jesus, even though Thy body and soul were separated, nevertheless they are continually united to Thy divinity. Thus, they never ceased to be worthy of infinite honor and adoration. Therefore, I adore Thy holy soul in its descent into Limbo. I adore all that happened in Thy soul and all the effects produced in the souls of the Holy Patriarchs in Limbo. I also adore Thy body in the tomb, in all its members, for there is no part of it that is not infinitely adorable. I adore you, O most holy eyes of my Saviour's body. I adore you, O sacred ears of my God. I adore and praise you, O most blessed mouth and tongue of Him who is the Word and eternal utterance of the Father. I adore and bless you, O most divine hands and feet of my Lord. I adore and love you, O most amiable Heart of Jesus.

Alas, my Beloved! Thy perfect ~body is lifeless because of my sins! Those sacred eyes, that by their sweet aspect gave joy to all who came in contact with Thee, are now darkened by the shadow of death. Those holy ears, always open to hear the cries and prayers of all unhappy

198-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

creatures, are now closed and hear no more. Those divine lips, which pronounced the words of life, have become mute and speak no words. Those blessed hands that wrought so many miracles are lifeless and still. Those holy feet, so often wearied for the salvation of the world, are no longer able to walk. But above all, the most loving Heart of my Jesus, the most exalted and noble throne of divine love, is without life or feeling. Ah! My dear Jesus, who has brought Thee to this pitiable state? My sins and Thy love! Cursed and detestable sin, how I abhor you! O love of my Saviour, may I love you, may I bless you without ceasing!

## THIRD POINT

### LET US GIVE OURSELVES TO JESUS, BEGGING HIM TO MAKE US DIE TO OURSELVES IN ORDER TO LEAD A HIDDEN LIFE WITH GOD

O Good Jesus, I surrender myself completely to the power of Thy holy love, I implore Thee by that love, to reduce me now into a state of death that may imitate and honor Thy state of death. Utterly extinguish in me the life of sin and of the old Adam. Cause me to die to the world, to myself and to all that is not Thee. Mortify my eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, heart and all the other powers of my body and soul, so that I may no longer be able to see, nor hear, speak, taste, act, walk, love, think, will, nor make any other use of all the parts of my body or the faculties of my soul, save in accordance with Thy good pleasure, led by the guidance of Thy divine spirit,

O my Well-beloved Jesus, I give myself to Thee to derive the benefits of these words of Thine apostle: "You are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col, 3, 3). Hide me utterly with Thee in God. Bury my mind, my heart, my will and my being, so that I may no longer have any thoughts, desires, or affections, any sentiments and dispositions other than Thine own. And just as the earth changes and transforms into itself the bodies buried within it, do Thou change and transform me completely into Thyself. Bury my pride in Thy humility, my coldness and tepidity in the fervor of Thy divine love, and all my other vices and imperfections in Thy virtues so that, just as the earth

#### THE PREPARATION FOR DEATH

199 -

consumes all the corruption of the body buried in it, so all the corruption of my soul may be consumed and annihilated in Thy divine perfections.

O Mother of Jesus, I honor and revere thee in the state of thy death and burial. I offer thee all the honor then given thee by the angels and holy apostles. I thank thee for all the glory thou didst give to the death and burial of Thy Son by thine own. I offer thee my own death and burial, imploring thee to obtain for me, by thy holy prayers, the grace that every aspect of my earthly end may pay everlasting homage to the death and burial of thy Spotless self and of thy beloved Son, our Saviour.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"For you are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Mortui estis, et vita vestra est *abscondite cum Christo in Deo* (Col. 3, 3)

200 -

#### TENTH MEDITATION

##### The Entrance of the Soul into Heaven

##### FIRST POINT

LET US OFFER JESUS CHRIST OUR ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN IN HONOR OF  
HIS ASCENSION AND OF THE ASSUMPTION OF HIS HOLY MOTHER

O JESUS, I adore, praise and glorify Thee countless times at the moment of Thy triumphant entrance into heaven. I offer Thee all the glory, love and praises that were given to Thee in welcome by the Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother and all the angels. I also honor Thy Blessed Mother in the moment of her assumption into Paradise. I offer her to the glory and praises that were bestowed upon her by the Omnipotent Father, by her Beloved Son, Thyself, Thy Holy Spirit, all the angels and all the saints. I offer to Thee and to Thy glorious Mother, my own entrance into Paradise, which, I hope, by Thy great mercy, to make one day, in honor of the glorious and triumphant entry of Thy ascension and her assumption. O my Most Adorable Jesus, I desire to consecrate everything that ever was, is, and shall be in me, in time and in eternity, to the honor and homage of Thee and Thy most holy Mother.

##### SECOND POINT

LET US OFFER PRAISE AND LOVE TO THE THREE DIVINE  
PERSONS, TO JESUS, MARY, THE ANGELS  
AND THE SAINTS

O Most Admirable and Most Adorable Trinity, I adore, bless and magnify Thee infinitely for all that Thou art in Thy manifold works of mercy and justice toward me and to all Thy creatures, in



heaven, on earth and in hell. I offer Thee all the adoration, love, glory, praise and benediction accorded Thee forever. O my God, how I rejoice to behold Thee so full of greatness, of marvels, of glory and joy! It is enough. I desire no other glory, felicity or happiness in eternity save to behold the incomprehensible glory, felicity and happiness of Him whom I love more than myself. O my glory and my love, may all heaven and earth be transformed into glory and love for Thee! Finally, I sacrifice myself all to Thee to be sacredly annihilated and consumed forever in the most pure fire of Thy divine love.

O Jesus, Thou only object of my love, with what love, with what praises can I ever repay Thee for all that Thou art in Thyself, and for all the innumerable effects of Thy goodness towards all Thy creatures, myself in particular? Lord, may all Thy creatures, all Thy angels and saints, Thy Blessed Mother, and all the powers of Thy divinity and humanity be employed in blessing and loving Thee forever.

O Mother of God, O holy angels, O blessed saints, I hail, honor and thank you all in general, and each one in particular, especially those to whom I owe some special obligation and with whom I am to be most closely associated in eternity. In thanksgiving for all the favors I have received from you, and much more for all the glory and services you have rendered to my God, I offer to each one of you the most amiable Heart of my Jesus, source of all joy, all glory and all praise. I give you my mind and my heart; unite them with your minds and hearts and associate me in your constant chorus of praise to Him who created me, that I may praise and love Him eternally with you. Pray ardently that I may bless and love Him through you, while awaiting the day when it may please Him to unite me with you to love and glorify Him to perfection.

O blessed day, when I shall begin to love most purely and perfectly my Lord and Saviour who is infinitely amiable! O thousand times happy day in which I shall begin to be all love for Him who is all love for me! O Jesus, my sweet love, how consoled I am when I think that I shall love and bless Thee eternally! My eyes dissolve in tears and my heart melts with joy at the sweetness of the thought that some day I shall be completely transformed into praise and love for Thee. But, alas, when will it come, this day, so longed for and a thousand times

desired? Will it yet delay for long? "Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged" (PS. 119, 5) - "How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me unto the end? How long dost thou turn away thy face from me" (PS. 12, 1)?

No more the hunted stag desires,  
Fleeing in woe and weariness,  
Waters to quench his burning thirst,  
Than my poor heart with sadness pressed  
Sighs after Thee, O Lord, my rest.

My heart is driven nigh to death  
By cruel desires, merciless,  
And longs for Thee, Lord, Mighty God,  
And in its longing, cries apace:  
When shall my eyes behold Thy face?  
When, ah, when will come that day  
To take my earthly woes away  
And bring me home at last to Thee?

### THIRD POINT

#### LET US RESOLVE To LEAD A HEAVENLY LIFE HERE BELOW

While waiting for that day, I desire, O my Saviour, to realize in my self St. Paul's words: "Our conversation is in heaven" (Phil- 3, 20), as well as Thy words of reassurance and guidance: "The kingdom of heaven is within you" (Luke 17, 21). I desire to live on earth as though I were not here, but living by my heart and spirit in heaven. I desire to concentrate all my powers on -the establishment Of the kingdom of Thy glory and holy love within myself. But Thou knowest, Lord, that of myself I can do nothing; therefore, I give myself to Thee, that Thou mayest destroy every obstacle and perfectly establish the kingdom Of Thy pure love in my body, in my soul, and in all my thoughts, words and actions.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Our conversation is in heaven"

*Conversatio nostra in caelo est (Phil. 3, 20)*

203-

**VI**

**MEDITATIONS  
ON  
THE ADMIRABLE CHILDHOOD  
OF  
THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN  
MARY**

205-

**V 1**

**MEDITATIONS  
ON THE  
ADMIRABLE CHILDHOOD OF THE  
MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY(1)**

**FIRST MEDITATION**

**The Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary**

**FIRST POINT**

**ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE HOLY NAME OF MARY**

THE most holy name of Mary was sent from heaven from the adorable Heart of the Most Holy Trinity, where it was cherished from all eternity. It was carried to earth by the Archangel Gabriel, who announced it to St. Joachim and St. Anne. This blessed name is a marvelous treasure containing within itself all riches.

It embraces the divine maternity, since Mary, according to St. Ambrose, signifies "God born of my race."

Mary signifies also "enlightened" and enlightening," which is most fitting. For the infant Mary was so replenished with the light of grace from the first moment of her life, that she knew the Creator and all creatures, and all things necessary to Almighty God. If she was so enlightened at the commencement of her life, judge what progress she

(1). At the end of his work, *The Admirable Childhood of The Most Holy Mother of God*, St. John Eudes added this series of meditations on the holy childhood of Mary. He recommended them for the days following September 8, the Feast of the Nativity of Our lady, and for the eighth day of each month, which he dedicated to the childhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

206-

**MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

must have made during the years of her childhood, inasmuch as her light and grace continually grew and multiplied from moment to moment.

Return thanks to the Father of Light and supplicate Him to make you feel the effects of that precious name, Mary, which not only signifies "enlightened" but also "enlightener" and "enlightening." Pray Our Lady of Light to give you a share in that radiance that you may know the infinite goodness of God, in order to love Him; the frightful horror of sin, in order to hate it; the vanity of the things of this world, in order to despise them, and the abyss of your own nothingness,

that you may humble yourself.

## SECOND POINT

### ANOTHER MEANING OF THE NAME OF MARY

The name, Mary, also signifies "Imitator of God." The most holy Virgin imitated God perfectly throughout her holy childhood, in the love God bears Himself, in His charity towards men, in His goodness, His liberality, His mercy, purity, sanctity and other perfections, appearing as a more perfect image of the Divinity than all the saints together.

St. Thomas calls Our Lady "a perfect image of the divine Goodness,"

Rejoice then with her; thank with her the most Holy Trinity, offering all the honor this holy maiden tendered the Blessed Trinity by her marvelous imitation. Weigh well the words of the Holy Ghost, speaking by the mouth of St. Paul: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children" (Eph. 5, 1). Humble yourself for having until now so inadequately practised His counsel. Resolve to do better, especially in imitating the Blessed Virgin in the virtues most necessary for you, and supplicate her constantly to assist you by her powerful prayers.

## THIRD POINT

### THIRD MEANING OF THE NAME OF MARY

Mary signifies Lady. From her infancy this holy maiden was Sovereign Lady of heaven and earth, of men, of angels and of all creatures.

### THE CHILDHOOD OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

207 -

Her power is absolute in heaven, earth and hell, over the demons and in all things, spiritual and corporal. Her power is threefold: first by her title of eldest daughter, and, consequently, of heiress to all the estates of the Eternal Father; second, by title of Mother of God, having been chosen by the Son of God, from the first moment of her life, to be His Mother; third, by title of Spouse of the Holy Ghost, as endowed with all the rights of spouse of the omnipotent Sanctifier.

Mankind, Christians included, tends generally to rob this glorious lady in so far as possible, of the authority and power God has given her over them, and bestow their authority and power upon Satan, her enemy. This is what you have done every time and as often as you have been guilty of mortal sin.

Beg pardon of the Son and the Mother, and endeavor to establish their reign in your heart, removing every obstacle and imploring the Blessed Virgin Mary to employ in your behalf the power God has given her.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O clement, O loyng, O sweet Virgin Mary."  
*O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.*

## SECOND MEDITATION

### Our Obligations to Honor and Imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary in Her Admirable Childhood

#### FIRST POINT

##### EXCELLENCE OF THE HOLY CHILDHOOD OF MARY

WE are obliged to honor the sacred Virgin in her childhood. First, because the twelve years of this sacred period contain in themselves almost an infinitude of greatness and holiness, which merits the highest honor, and will be for eternity the object of the praises of the denizens of heaven. Count the mysteries, the virtues, the thoughts, affections, words, actions and mortifications of this maiden. Reflect upon her holy use of the powers of her soul, and of her interior and exterior senses. You will find herein sufficient reasons for entertaining a singular devotion to her. For all that passed in the interior or exterior of this blessed child was filled with perfection and sanctity, worthy of most particular veneration.

Secondly, we should revere this admirable maiden because her infancy was a continual exercise of adoration, praise and love towards God. She was full of grace, therefore she gave more glory to God by the smallest action than the chief among the saints by the practice of most heroic virtue.

Thirdly, we should render all possible honor to her pure sanctity because all the virtues of her infancy were employed in preparing her to give us a Saviour and to cooperate with Him in our salvation. May all these reasons inspire in us a singular devotion and particular love for this inviolate and amiable maiden.

THE CHILDHOOD OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

209 -

#### SECOND POINT

##### ADVANTAGES DERIVED FROM THE HOLY CHILDHOOD OF MARY

Among other considerations, We Must remark that we are *indebted* to the holy childhood of Mary for three great favors. The Son of God when about to be born into the world could have *created a* virgin of perfect age and *become incarnate* in her. But His infinite goodness towards us obliged Him to choose for His Mother a daughter of Adam, thus to honor all the human race with *three signal* favors.

First, by this birth of the Infant Mary, divine Bounty gave us two treasures of sanctity, St. Joachim and St. Anne.

The second favor is that, by the birth of the holy Infant Mary, God bestowed upon the race of Adam another inestimable gift, an *immense* treasure of good, the holy and precious Mother of God, born of Adam's race, our sister and our Mother.

The third favor consists in the *treasure our* lady herself has given us, the God-man, our Brother.

Weigh well *these three great* favors God has given us in the birth of the most holy Infant Mary and let *these considerations* excite in us a great *desire to* honor our Blessed Lady in every possible way.

### THIRD POINT

#### THE HOLY CHILDHOOD OF MARY IS A MODEL FOR ALL CHRISTIANS

The Son of God wished His admirable Mother to pass through the state of infancy that she might give an *example and* rule of life for all Christians to follow. For all men are obliged by the laws of the Gospel to be children in innocence, in simplicity, in humility, in obedience and in all virtues. "Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not *enter into* the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18, 3)

Render thanks to the Son of God for having given us an *example so* noble and so charming, and a rule so holy and so sweet. Venerate this divine *example, love* this amiable rule. See if you have followed it in the

210 -

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

past. Humble yourself and ask pardon for the shortcomings of which you have been guilty. Begin carefully to imitate the virtues of the precious infancy of your most holy Mother. Beg her to assist you to eradicate in yourself any obstacle to your loving imitation of her virtue.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Unless you ... become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

*Nisi efficiamini sicut parvuli, non intrabitis in regnum caelorum* (Matt. 18, 3)

211 -

### THIRD MEDITATION

#### The Innocence and Simplicity of the Blessed Virgin in Her Admirable Childhood

#### FIRST POINT

#### INNOCENCE OF MARY DURING HER CHILDHOOD

AN INNOCENT person is an individual who does not know what it is to injure another, or, in different words, to commit sin, because sin alone dishonors God and injures men.

Consider that, among all pure creatures, the Immaculate Virgin alone was conceived, born and lived until her last breath in perfect innocence. She was not only preserved from all sin, but was in reality impeccable. The goodness of God endowed her will with this happy impossibility. First, by a singular favor of His divine Providence, God preserved her from all perils, and occasions of danger, as much by His immediate protection as by the ministry of millions of angels who accompanied her everywhere and guarded her most carefully. This privilege was most appropriate to the dignity of the Mother of the Saint of saints and Sovereign Monarch of the universe.

Secondly, the great and marvelous light within her soul revealed, with unerring clearness, the tiniest atom of imperfection, and the superabundance of the grace which filled her vanquished the very shadow of sin. St. Augustine says: "*Ad vincendum omni ex parte peccatum.*"

Thirdly, the sacred fire of divine love so inflamed her heart that she lived in the continual exercise of most pure love, without fatigue or interruption. This held her will under a moral inability to choose any fault, even the slightest.

Thank God for the marvelous innocence with which He clothed this most holy Virgin from the first moment of her life. Ask the grace to imitate this shining innocence, carefully avoiding any offense against

212-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

God, against your neighbor, against your own soul. Endeavor to apply yourself as ardently as possible to the exercise of divine love, for the greater your love for God, the farther removed you are from sin. Offer your heart to this Mother of Fair Love, and beseech her to kindle therein one spark of the ardent fire of love with which her own heart is consumed.

### SECOND POINT

#### SIMPLICITY OF MARY DURING HER CHILDHOOD

The virtue of Christian simplicity is most pleasing to God. The divine Word assures us that He takes His pleasure and delight in those who walk in simplicity before His Countenance: "His will is in them that walk sincerely" (Prov: 11, 20). This virtue shuns multiplicity in thoughts, desires, affections, words and actions, and employs all the exertions of the soul, mind and heart in pleasing God. It causes moderation in speech, it eliminates useless actions which serve to dissipate the mind and distract the heart from Him who should be the only object of its thoughts and affections.

Simplicity detests that curiosity which is eager to see, to hear and to know things that are not at all necessary to render it more pleasing to God. It is the sworn enemy of duplicity, artifice and disguise, of lying and deceit. It causes the soul to pursue the straight road of candor, frankness and dove-like sincerity, turning neither to the right nor the left. It chooses by preference simple and plain taste in eating, speaking, walking and dressing, and has a horror of the novel fashions of the world, which are vain and frivolous.

To what an eminent degree this holy simplicity adorned our amiable Mary! The Holy Spirit says of her. "Thy eyes are as those of doves" (Cant. 1, 14)

Give thanks to God for the glory tendered Him by this most Holy maiden in her practice of the virtue of shining simplicity.

THE CHILDHOOD OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

213-

### THIRD POINT

#### OUR OBLIGATION TO IMITATE THE INNOCENCE AND SIMPLICITY OF MARY

Adore the designs of the Son of God towards you when He pronounced these words: "Be ye therefore as wise as serpents and simple as doves" (Matt. 10, 16). For you were present before His eyes, He bore you in His mind and in His heart, which was filled with ardent desire to behold you adorned with simplicity for the glory of His Father and the salvation of your soul.

Endeavor to acquire this virtue. Examine your failure to observe simplicity in your

intentions, desires and affections; by excess in words; by curiosity of the eyes, ears and mind; by artifice, lying and deceit; by aversion to simple food, clothing, lodging or furniture; by your inclination to follow worldly vanities. All these vanities are opposed to the spirit of the Blessed Virgin

Ask pardon for all your faults and promise to eliminate all that is contrary to Christian simplicity. Imitate the simplicity of your heavenly Queen, that you may be of the number of those whom St. Paul calls the simple children of God, who are without reproach (Phil. 2, 15), in whom He delights. You may repeat: "For our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity of heart and sincerity of God, and not in carnal wisdom, but in the grace of God, we have conversed in this world" (2 Cor. 1, 12).

Ejaculatory prayer:

"(Be) blameless, and sincere children of God."

Simplices filii Dei (Phil. 2, 15)

214 -

#### **FOURTH MEDITATION**

##### **The Humility of the Blessed Virgin in Her Admirable Childhood**

###### **FIRST POINT**

###### **WHY GOD LOVES HUMILITY**

THERE are three reasons why God loves humility and hates presumption, pride and ambition.

God, who is the essential Truth, loves truth. He hates lying because it is the enemy of truth. As truth and humility are one, so pride and falsehood are one.

Humility is simply a lowly opinion of ourselves and true consciousness of our own misery and nothingness. It is only the truth to assert that we are nothing but sin and misery. What is pride but a high esteem of ourselves in the belief that we are something, which belief is only falsehood and deceit? "For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself," says St. Paul (Gal. 6, 3) -

God who is infinite Justice, hates injustice as the enemy of justice and, consequently, His own enemy. Humility is that justice which renders to God the honor and glory which are His due, and pride is that injustice which robs God of His glory to attribute it to self.

Idolatry is an abomination in the sight of God for it renders to creature the sovereign honor due to God alone; the virtue of religion is loved by God because it renders Him His due. Now, pride causes the sinner to make an idol of self, and put himself in God's place, since he prefers himself to God when his own interests, his satisfactions, his own will and desires are at stake. But, God loves humility, inasmuch as it is animated by the spirit of religion, which refers to God the honor and glory of all things.



Adore in the heart of the great God His infinite love for humility and His hatred of pride. Beg Him to enkindle in your heart some portion of His love for humility and His detestation of pride.

## SECOND POINT

### HUMILITY OF MARY DURING HER CHILDHOOD

God inspired in the heart of the pure Virgin Mary His own intense love for humility, and abhorrence of pride. She possessed, even from her infancy, a far greater horror of pride and ambition, and a far deeper love for humility than did all the saints together. It was the first virtue that she practised. She abased and humbled herself before all. She esteemed herself, and would have been happy to be treated by others, as the last of all creatures.

By the marvelous radiance of her Immaculate Conception, she beheld herself susceptible to the guilt of the children of Adam, except that God miraculously preserved her, and she considered that she might have been capable of all the sins in the world, whose source is original sin.

It was this humility which attracted to her the countless graces which rendered her worthy to be the Mother of God, Queen of heaven and earth. Give thanks to Almighty God who resists the proud and gives grace to the humble, and offer Him all the glory that this maiden accorded to His majesty by her practice of richest humility during her childhood and throughout the rest of her life.

## THIRD POINT

### OUR NEED OF HUMILITY

The practice of humility is not only a counsel of perfection but also a precept of obligation, since our Saviour Himself has declared that unless we become little and humble as children, we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18, 3)

Consider the frightful castigation the just anger of God has hurled upon the apostate angels, upon Core, Dathan and Abiron and many other proud persons. This realization should help us to hate pride,

216-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

which is so detestable before God. On the other hand, consider the prodigious humility of our Saviour, of His Blessed Mother and of all the Saints.

Excite in yourself a true desire to practise this virtue and to shun its opposite. Examine well your thoughts, desires, affections, your words and actions, to see if they reveal anything contrary to humility. See what esteem you hold for yourself, what motives actuate you, how you bear humiliations and corrections, how you react to honor and praise. See if you love to speak about yourself and to your own advantage, if you obey without murmuring, if you prefer yourself to others or indulge in envy of them, if you perform your actions to gain applause and esteem, if you are vain and worldly in your choice of clothing and lodging.

Humble yourself profoundly before God at sight of all the faults of which you have been guilty. Beg Our Lord and His Holy Mother to repair them. Offer to the Eternal Father the glorious honor of their profound humility. Take a strong resolution for the future to guard yourself against pride and to

practise this counsel of the Holy Ghost: "Humble thyself in all things: and thou shalt find grace before God: for ... he is honored by the humble" (Ecclus. 3, 20-20)

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Humble thyself in all things: and thou shalt find grace before God." *Humilia te in omnibus, et coram Deo invenies gratiam* (Ecclus. 3, 20).

217 -

## **FIFTH MEDITATION**

### **The Obedience of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Her Admirable Childhood**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **SUBMISSION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN TO GOD'S WILL**

WE HAVE been placed in the world for one purpose only, to do God's will. This is our first beginning and our last end, and consequently our sovereign good. In His holy will as in our centre, we ought to find repose of mind, peace of heart, our perfect felicity and true paradise. As our own will is opposed to the will of God, we should regard and hate it as His sworn enemy and our own foe. We should treat self-will as a beast of prey, a ravening wolf, a ferocious lioness, the source of hell, for without it there would be no hell. It is the mother of all the abominations of the earth. Self-will is a venomous serpent, a detestable homicide that kills body and soul at the same time, an execrable deicide that kills God insofar as it is able.

Our blessed Lady, by the light of her incomparable grace, saw clearly this monster of self-will and renounced it utterly, although she was not corrupted nor depraved by sin as we are. She united herself inseparably to the divine will, seeking all her glory and contentment and joy in following it everywhere and in all things, with entire submission and perfect obedience.

Let us praise Almighty God for having given her this grace, and offer to His Divine Majesty all the glory she rendered Him by the practice of obedience, in reparation for our rebellion against God and our disobedience to the divine will.

218 -

## **MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **OBEDIENCE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN TO HER PARENTS AND SUPERIORS**

Let us consider that the Blessed Virgin was obedient, not only directly to God, but to His will as manifested by His commandments, by the law of Moses, by her parents and superiors, in whom she perceived and honored God, whose voice she obeyed as the voice of God. She followed literally the injunction of St. Peter: "Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake" (1 Peter 2, 13). Never was there obedience so simple because never was there humility so profound. Her obedience was unquestioning, prompt and joyous for this thrice holy maiden had no other delight than to follow the most adorable will of God, pointed out to her by those who held His place.

Give thanks to the divine majesty, and offer God the honor tendered Him by the obedience

constantly practised by His little Handmaid in reparation for your faults against this virtue.

### THIRD POINT

#### NEED TO RENOUNCE OUR OWN WILL TO Do THE WILL OF GOD

Let us consider that all our happiness consists in following the divine will of God, manifested to us by His commandments and those of His Church, by the obligations of our state of life and by those who represent God to us. Obedience is the mother of happiness.

To follow God's will we must renounce our own, for they are diametrically opposed, since man's will is perverted, corrupted and poisoned by sin.

Let us regard our own will as the sworn enemy of our salvation, and even of our happiness in this life. There is nothing on earth nor in hell we should fear more than self-will for it is the source of all the miseries and evils of earth and hell. It is a dragon which will strangle us if we do not crush it. Fear it more than all the demons for they are chained

### THE CHILDHOOD OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

219 -

dogs that can bite only those who come within their reach, but self-will is a serpent which we bear in our very selves.

Let us work, then, to crush this reptile. Examine the faults we have committed through self-will, in thought, word, deed and omission. Let us ask God's pardon, pray to Him and to His most holy Mother for the grace of amendment.

Finally, let us engrave upon our heart these words: "The blessing of God follows the obedient everywhere, and His malediction is inseparable from disobedience." Follow the example of Jesus and Mary in their submission to the divine will, that you may become like Jesus Christ: "The man of my own will" (Isa. 46, it).

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"An obedient man shall speak of victory."

*Vir obediens loquetur victorias* (PROV. 21, 28).

220 -

### SIXTH MEDITATION

#### The Charity and Meekness of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Her Admirable Childhood

### FIRST POINT

#### LOVE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN FOR ALL MANKIND

CONSIDER that God chose the Blessed Virgin from the first moment of her life to establish her in the place of Eve, as Queen and Mother of all the living. He bestowed upon her at the same time a universal love for all mankind. Grace and charity are one and the same thing, therefore it follows that the charity of the infant Mary at the commencement of her life was far greater than that of all the saints. And as her grace multiplied from moment to moment, so did her charity, until it reached so high a

degree that it was comprehensible only to that of God Himself.

Consider also that when the Eternal Father chose this glorious Mary, to communicate to her His divine Paternity, He made her at the same time a participant in His paternal love for His Well-beloved Son and for all His other children. Therefore, her heart burned with a love proportionate to her dignity of Mother of God, and of the children of God.

It was this charity which drew her, when yet an infant, to solicit with tears and prayers the advent of the Saviour, and by her ardor to advance the moment of the Incarnation. It was this charity, joined to her humility and virginal purity, that disposed her to become the Mother of the Redeemer.

Let us thank the God of charity, and offer Him the glory which accrued to Him from the love of the Immaculate maiden for Him and her charity towards mankind. Let us ask her to repair our deficits in the love of God and of our fellowmen.

THE CHILDHOOD OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

221 -

## SECOND POINT

### MEEKNESS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

The holy Virgin, among all pure creatures, is the most powerful in heaven and on earth. She shares in the infinite omnipotence of God. She participates in the immense wisdom of the Son of God, and in the sweetness, benignity and gentleness of the Holy Ghost, the infusion of Whose potent and benign gifts has filled her virginal heart with incomprehensible sweetness. Except the Son of God, never has there been beheld upon earth, nor will there ever be again one so gentle, so gracious, so delectable, so merciful as this lovely maiden. Her benign charity extended itself even to her cruelest enemies, the enemies of the Saviour of the world, for she knew by divine revelation, and by reading the Prophets, that the Messiah was to be persecuted and crucified by the perfidious Jews, who would vent upon the Saviour all their hatred and cruelty. Instead of praying heaven to punish these murderers, the spirit of charity and benignity animated His most sweet handmaid to pray for these miserable wretches in the words which the all-merciful Redeemer would one day utter from His Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23, 34)

O all amiable maiden, I am not astonished that the divine Spouse exclaims: "Thy lips, my Spouse, are as a dropping honey-comb, honey and milk are under thy tongue" (Cant. 4, it). And He continues, "Thy spirit is sweet above honey" (ECCLUS. 2. 27). Holy Mother Church cries out in the same strain: "O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary." Immortal thanks be given to the Holy Spirit for having filled thee with the nectar of heavenly sweetness and transformed thee into His own divine gentleness. May the Eternal Father receive in satisfaction for my sins against meekness, the honor thou hast given Him by its perfect practice.

222-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

## THIRD POINT

### WE SHOULD STRIVE TO IMITATE THE CHARITY AND MEEKNESS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

If we desire to be among the true children of the benign Jesus and the gentle Mary, let us strive to imitate them in these virtues. Let us weigh often these words of the Holy Ghost: "But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves" (1 Peter 4, 8). "God is charity: and he

that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4, 16). "Shewing all mildness towards all men" (Tit. 3, 2). "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13, 4-7)

Above all, let us listen to the Saviour, who says: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15, 12). "Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart" (Matt. 11, 29).

Let us make profitable use of these holy precepts. Examine the faults we have committed against them in any way. Pray the Son of God and His holy Mother to repair our defects, and to impart to us a share in their admirable charity and incomparable sweetness.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"For my spirit is sweet above honey."

Spiritus enim meus super mel dulcis (Ecclus. 24, 27)

223 -

## **SEVENTH MEDITATION**

### **The Silence of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Her Admirable Childhood**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **SILENCE OF OUR LORD DURING HIS LIFE**

THE virtue of silence is most agreeable to God. The Son of God, the Eternal Word of the Father, came into the world to converse with men. He had many great and important things to say to them, yet He was silent throughout the greater part of His life. His Infancy passed in silence, He was silent in His hidden life up to the age of thirty years, in the solitude of the desert and in the anguish of His bitter Passion, without ever dispensing Himself, although He had weighty reasons for so doing.

When the holy kings came from afar to adore Him, when cruel Herod sought to kill Him, He maintained His wonderful silence. And not content with observing it in His mortal and passible life, He yet continues it in His glorious life, in the holy Sacrament of the Altar, where He has resided in the continual silence of two thousand years.

Among the reasons for our Saviour's observation of silence there are three Principal ones.

By silence He wishes to teach us that He came upon earth principally and primarily to honor His Eternal Father. He knew perfectly well the means by which He could best accomplish this, and His choice of silence is an infallible proof that it is a most excellent means of honoring God and pleasing Him.

Again, He lived a silent life to repair the dishonor done to God by sins of the tongue.

Finally, by the practice of silence He merited and acquired for us the grace to make beneficial and worthy use of the gift of speech.

Let us thank the Son of God for the example He has given us of this virtue, and beg of Him the grace to profit thereby.

## SECOND POINT

### SILENCE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

The Blessed Virgin was animated by the same spirit as her Son in the practice of silence, as of every other virtue. She was eminently fitted to repeat those words of St. Paul: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2, 5). This caused her to love silence, and to hate a multitude of words. We do not read anywhere that she ever broke the sacred silence of her holy childhood. And, we find in the Holy Gospel seven instances of her having spoken at any time of her life, and even then her words are few.

O most holy Virgin, I consecrate to thee my powers of speech. Grant that I may henceforth use them to speak only the language of my Most Adorable Father and my most amiable Mother.

## THIRD POINT

### IMPORTANCE OF SILENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Consider these words of St. James: "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity" (James 3, 6). It is the source of blasphemy, impiety, malediction, calumny, detraction, false testimony, perjury and lying; of deceit, murmuring, raillery, injurious and lascivious words. Silence preserves the soul from all these sins, and a multitude of others that follow in their train. Therefore: "If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue but deceiving his own heart, that man's religion is vain" (James 1, 26). And on the contrary: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man" (James 3, 2).

God loves silence. For, it is a sacrifice we make of our constant inclination to talk. So eminently agreeable to Him is this silence, that He is pleased when we abstain sometimes even from good words. "I was dumb and was humbled and kept silence from good things," says the Prophet David. Thus, in their silence Our Saviour and His holy Mother abstained from speaking good and holy things for they could

### THE CHILDHOOD OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

225 -

speak naught else. St. John the Baptist retired into the desert to avoid staining the purity of life by a single useless word.

Thousands of saints have spent their lives in silence and solitude for the same reason. This is why all the founders of religious Orders have recommended silence and mortification of the tongue in their established rules, for even the praises of our tongue to God are no better than hypocrisy when the tongue alone recites them and the heart is not united thereto (Matt. 15, 7-8). "The voice of the tongue is not heard by God if that of the heart is not present," says St. Augustine. This being so, we should cultivate a deep esteem and affection for the virtue of silence. What a desire to imitate our most holy Mary! What care to guard our tongue against the least injurious word! For we must remember that our Lord has declared that on judgment Day He will demand a severe account of every idle word.

Let us crave pardon for the sins we have committed by our tongue. Let us implore the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us the grace to imitate her and her Divine Son in the devout use of speech and in their singular love for holy silence.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"In silence and quiet the devout soul maketh progress."

*In silentio et quiete proficit anima devota (Imitation of Christ, Ch. 20,6).*

226 -

## **EIGHTH MEDITATION**

### **The Modesty of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Her Admirable Childhood**

#### **FIRST POINT**

##### *EXCELLENCE OF MODESTY*

Modesty is a virtue which regulates the exterior of the individual in a manner edifying to the beholder. It is one of the fruits of the Holy Ghost, and, where modesty is, there is the Holy Spirit.

Modesty, according to St. Paul, is a visible mark of predestination. It is one of the recognizable characteristics of the elect, the saints, and the well-beloved of God: "Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience" (Col. 3, 12).

in the early days of the Church when the Christians were very few, they were recognized by their great modesty, which converted many of the pagans.

Let these considerations fill your mind and heart with a high esteem and great love for this virtue, and with an ardent desire to acquire it.

#### **SECOND POINT**

##### **ADMIRABLE MODESTY OF OUR LORD DURING His LIFE ON EARTH**

Endeavor to picture the Son of God upon earth, conversing with men. Behold the marvelous modesty which appeared in His visage, His eyes, His speech, His gait, His gestures and His entire person. The Blessed Virgin declared to St. Bridget that her Divine Son was endowed with such beauty, sweetness and modesty that His aspect gave comfort and joy not only to the good, but even to the wicked and His enemies, and that the Jews, when they were in distress and affliction,

THE CHILDHOOD OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

227 -

would say to one another: "Let us go and gaze upon Mary's Son: the sight of Him will console us."

Let us adore the admirable modesty of the Saviour. Let us give thanks for the honor He rendered the Eternal Father by the practice of this virtue. Let us entreat Him to grant us grace to eradicate from ourself whatever is contrary to holy modesty.

### *THIRD POINT*

#### *ANGELIC MODESTY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN*

Picture the angelic modesty of Mary, the little Handmaid of God. Never was there anything comparable in any creature. Her carriage, her speech and gestures, her whole exterior, whether standing or seated, whether reposing or at work, whether conversing with her neighbor or praying to God in the Temple, her angelic visage, and simple dress and manner suggested a visible angel in whom modesty had become incarnate.

The modesty of this most holy maiden proceeded from three causes.

First, from the virginal chastity which enveloped her whole exterior. Second, from her constant dwelling in the presence of God and conversing with Him in her mind and heart. Third, from her complete possession of this gift of the Holy Ghost, who was the rule of all her actions, and imprinted in her being a living and perfect image of the adorable modesty befitting the Mother of God.

Let us give thanks to God for having clothed Mary with such incomparable modesty. Let us offer this peerless modesty in reparation for our faults against this virtue. Let us resolve to practice earnestly these words of the Apostle: "Let your modesty be known to all men; the Lord is nigh."

Let us examine our own behaviour in all the exterior acts of our life, and ask the grace to correct our faults against modesty. Let us beg the Blessed Virgin to obtain this grace for us for the sole glory of her Son.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Let your modesty be known to all men."

*Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus* (Phil. 4, 5)



229 -

V 1 1

**MEDITATIONS  
ON  
THE HOLY HEART OF MARY**

231 -

V 1 1

*MEDITATIONS  
ON  
THE HOLY HEART OF MARY ( 1 )*

*Meditations for the Feast and Octave  
of the Holy Heart of Mary*

**FIRST MEDITATION**

**The Vigil of the Feast**

**Preparation for the Feast**

**FIRST POINT**

**THE FIRST DISPOSITION FOR THE FEAST OF THE  
HOLY HEART OF MARY IS HUMILITY**

LET us bear in mind that all the feasts celebrated in the Church are fountains of grace, especially those of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. But among the feasts of our Lady that of her admirable Heart is the essence and queen of all, for the heart is the seat of love and charity, the queen of all virtues and the source of every grace. This solemnity is a veritable ocean of graces and blessings which are most valued by Our Saviour, having been acquired at the cost of His Pre

(1). The two series of meditations on the Holy Heart of Mary are found in the eleventh book of St. John Eudes's work, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*. The first series is made up of nine meditations for the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary and for the Octave of the Feast. The second series dealing with the perfections of the Heart of Mary may be used on any occasion for private devotion or community meditation. These beautiful meditations contain an excellent summary of St. John Eudes's doctrine of the devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary.

232 -

**MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

cious Blood and countless torments. For this reason Our Lord desires that we, too, should have a great esteem and singular veneration for these graces, and, consequently, that we should prepare, with much care and diligence, to receive the gifts He wishes to bestow on this great solemnity, to enable us to celebrate it worthily.

For this end there are three things to be done. First, we must humble ourselves profoundly, recognizing that we are most unworthy to participate in such a wonderful solemnity, which being the feast of a heart totally on fire with divine love, belongs rather to the Seraphim than to sinful souls such as we are, and in our position as sinners we cannot, humble ourselves too deeply.

Then, again, we are deeply unworthy to share in the graces and blessings of this feast an account of our inadequate and faulty use of the graces God has already showered upon us, and by the obstacles we have put in the way of those He would have given us, had we not prevented Him. Let us humble ourselves most profoundly before God at the sight of these defects, which are only too true.

## SECOND POINT

### THE SECOND DISPOSITION IS PURITY OF CONSCIENCE

The second thing to be done in preparation for the Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary is to excite a lively desire to celebrate it with appropriate devotion, divesting ourselves of all that is displeasing to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. For this end, let us carefully and seriously examine our failings, in thought, word, deed and affection, also the misuse we have made of the powers of our soul, and our interior and exterior senses, in order to humble ourselves, beg God's pardon for our offenses, confess them faithfully and correct them in our lives.

## THIRD POINT

### THE THIRD DISPOSITION IS UNION WITH THE ANGELS, SAINTS AND THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS OF THE BLESSED TRINITY

In order to celebrate worthily the feast of the Heart of the Mother of Fair Love, it is little or rather, it is nothing, if we employ only the

## THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

233 -

affections of our own hearts; so, as far as possible, we must make use of the complete treasures of love in heaven and on earth. The Holy Spirit, speaking by the lips of St. Paul, assures us that all things are ours (I Cor3, 22), our Heavenly Father having given us all in giving us His Son. "How hath he not also, with him, given us all things?" (Rom. 8, 32). We have the right to employ all hearts as our own in celebrating the praises of our heavenly Mother.

Very particularly should we ask our good angels and all the other choirs of heavenly spirits-- especially the Seraphim- also the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, all holy priests and levites, and those saints who belong in a special way to the Heart of the Queen of Heaven, to unite our love with theirs, to make us sharers in their devotion to their glorious Queen, and do their utmost to help us to celebrate this rich solemnity worthily, as far as poor, weak human nature is capable of doing so.

Above all, let us offer our hearts, our bodies, our souls, our whole existence, to the infinite love of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost for the spotless Mother of our Saviour, begging Them to associate us in their divine love, and to prepare us to celebrate this feast in the way most pleasing to the Most Holy Trinity.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready."

Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum (Ps. 107, 2).

## SECOND MEDITATION

### The Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary

#### The Holy Heart of Mary

##### FIRST POINT

##### EXCELLENCE OF THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

LET us concentrate on the subject of this feast. It is the Immaculate Heart of the Queen of Heaven and earth, the sovereign empress of the universe; it is the Heart of the only and beloved daughter of the Eternal Father, the Heart of the Mother of God, the Heart of the Spouse of the Holy Ghost; it is the Heart of the most dear Mother of all the faithful; a Heart the most worthy, noble, august, and generous, the most magnificent and charitable, the most lovable, most loved and most loving heart of all pure creatures; a heart on fire with love of God, inflamed with ardent charity towards us, deserving as many feasts as it has made acts of love and charity. Unite to it, also, the Divine Heart of Jesus~ whose heart was one with His dearest Mother, through unity of spirit, affection and will. Add to these the love of all the saints and angels, who are so closely united in thought and affection with Jesus and Mary.

Such is the subject of this great and admirable feast, which is worthy of boundless veneration and praise. Be eager to celebrate it with all possible devotion.

##### SECOND POINT

##### THE ETERNAL FATHER GAVE US THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

We should regard this feast as a day of extraordinary joy for ourselves, the Heart of our heavenly Mother being ours on four accounts,

##### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

235 -

being given to us by the Eternal Father, by the Son of God, by the Holy Ghost, and by our Lady herself, therefore, the love of the Heart of Jesus and that of the saints and angels are ours also, being all united and one in the fire of charity.

What a treasure, and what happiness for us to possess such riches! How great should be our joy and delight! O, Dear Jesus, what return shall I make for the innumerable and tremendous favors I am constantly receiving from Thy holy Mother? I offer Thee my heart, which belongs to Thee~ but what is it to offer Thee the love of one so worthless? I offer Thee the hearts of all Thy angels and saints, but this again is inadequate in comparison with the immense treasure Thou hast given me in the Heart of Thy Blessed Mother.

I offer Thee her pure Heart, which is more pleasing to Thee than all the hearts in the universe; but even that offering is not enough to fulfill my obligations entirely. I offer Thee Thine own Adorable Heart, which is all on fire with infinite and boundless love for Thyself and Thy Eternal Father. O Mary, Queen of my heart, I offer thee likewise, the Sacred Heart of thy Divine Son, so lovable and overflowing with love, in thanksgiving for the inestimable treasures thou hast given me in thine own maternal Heart.

### THIRD POINT

#### GRATITUDE TO JESUS AND MARY FOR THIS PRECIOUS GIFT

How would we feel if a great monarch opened his vaults, all filled with money and precious stones, giving us permission to take as much as we wanted?

This favor would be nothing in comparison with the indescribably rich gift the King of kings has bestowed in giving us the most lovable Heart of His glorious Mother.

If our Holy Father the Pope allowed us to have the choice of the most precious relics in the city of Rome, it would undoubtedly be a very great favor, but, again, it would be slight compared with the unspeakable favor of our Lord in granting to men the treasure of the Heart of the Queen of all Saints.

236-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

If Our Lord were to take from each one of us our own heart of flesh and blood and miraculously substitute the love of a seraph, it would be wonderful indeed, but the gift He has made of the Heart of His Blessed Mother is, in comparison, more magnificently noble and more precious.

O my Jesus, would that the hearts of all Thy creatures were employed to praise and love Thee for this incomprehensible favor! O Mother of my God, Mother of Fair Love, may all the creatures in the universe be changed into so many tongues and hearts blessing thee with constant love throughout eternity. Since thou hast given me thy most admirable Heart, do thou take complete possession of my poor heart, to sacrifice it without reserve to the undiluted love and pure glory of Thy Divine Son.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Infinite thanks to Jesus and Mary for their unspeakable gift."  
Gratias infinitas Jesu et Mariae, pro inenarrabili dono ipsorum.

237-

#### **THIRD MEDITATION** **Second Day of the Octave** **The Holy Heart of Mary Reflects the Adorable Love** **of the Eternal Father**

#### FIRST POINT

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS WITH THE HEART OF THE ETERNAL FATHER THE PRINCIPLE OF THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

WE SHOULD look upon and honor the most pure Heart of the Blessed Virgin as a living portrait and perfect image of the infinite love of the Eternal Father. The divine love of the Father of Jesus was the first cause of the Incarnation and of His Son's birth on earth, and the most pure Heart of the Mother of Jesus is its second principle. For it was the love of the Father of Mercies that moved Him to send His Son into this world to become incarnate for the salvation of men, and it was the most pure and burning love of the virginal Heart of the Mother of Grace, inflamed with charity towards God and our souls, that drew down the Eternal Son from the bosom of His Father to be born of her and thus

accomplish our salvation.

## SECOND POINT

### OTHER REASONS WHICH MAKE THE HOLY HEART OF MARY THE IMAGE OF THE HEART OF THE ETERNAL FATHER

The holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin is the living image of the adorable love of the Eternal Father, because as the Son of God has ever dwelt and will never cease to dwell in His Father's love, so, too, He has always lived and will ever live and dwell in the Heart of His Mother. His Father's divine felicity is a paradise of delight, love and glory for Him, and His Mother's Heart as a heaven, a heaven of heavens, in

238 -

### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

which He is, in a way, far more loved and glorified than in the empyrean sphere.

Furthermore, the Father of Mercies and the God of all consolation, in His *exceedingly great* and Fatherly love, gave us His Well-beloved Son at the time of His Incarnation, and gives Him to us daily in the most Blessed Sacrament. So, too, the most Blessed Mother of Mercy and Consolation, in the boundless charity of her maternal Heart, gave us her dear Jesus at His birth, and does so continually in the Holy Eucharist, because being one with Him in spirit, in love and in will, she wills all that He wills and does all that He does.

Finally, the Eternal Father Himself accomplished in the holy Heart of His beloved daughter, the glorious Virgin Mary, that which He commands all faithful souls to do when He says: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart" (Cant. 8, 6). With His own hand He has impressed on her Heart a perfect semblance of the divine qualities of His love, which consequently is a perfect image of the sanctity, wisdom, goodness, mercy, benignity, charity and all the other perfections of the infinite love of our Heavenly Father.

O wondrous goodness of our eternal King, may all men and angels bless, love and praise Thee to all eternity, for having imprinted Thy likeness on the Heart of the Queen of my heart! O lovable Heart of my heavenly Mother, how I rejoice to see thee so noble, so royal, so holy, so perfect and so like unto the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of all hearts I

O holy Mother of God, art thou not my true Mother, and am not I thy poor child, although unutterably unworthy? And should not the heart of the child resemble that of the Mother? Thou seest, nevertheless, how unlike mine is to thine! O Mother of Mercy, take pity on my misery. I offer and give thee my wretched heart, whole and entire. I beseech thee by all the goodness of thy motherly Heart completely to destroy in thy unworthy child all that is displeasing to thee, and to imprint a perfect image of the holiness reigning in the Heart of its *revered Mother*.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Jesus, Fruit of the Heart of Mary, have mercy on us."  
Jesu, fructus cordis Mariae, miserere nobis.

**FOURTH MEDITATION**  
**Third Day of the Octave**  
**The Holy Heart of Mary Is One with the Eternal Father**  
**and Is the Mirror of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

FIRST POINT

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS BUT ONE HEART WITH  
 THE HEART OF THE ETERNAL FATHER

THE Holy Heart of the glorious Virgin Mary is not only a vivid likeness of the infinite love of the Eternal Father, the Father of Virgins, but is one with it, one, not in unity of nature or essence, but in unity of spirit, with love and affection. For the Mother of Jesus never had any other spirit, will, or affections but those of the Father of Jesus, and attained that union, or rather that unity, by three means:

1. By entire separation from all sin.
2. By perfect detachment from the world, from self-love and from all created things.
3. By a most ardent love for the Divine Will, and by a prompt and cordial submission and abandonment to all its designs and orders.

O dearest Mother, I rejoice unspeakably to see thy blessed Heart thus united and conformed to the adorable will of our Heavenly Father, and render Him infinite thanks for this exalted union. To thee, my great and powerful Queen, I offer my heart. Cause it to share thy boundless hatred of sin; sever the bonds and break the chains that bind this poor slave; detach me entirely from the world, from self-will and from all that is displeasing to God. Consecrate me to His divine will, praying that it may be established in my heart, and reign there absolutely for ever more, so that in imitation of thee I may be one in mind, will and heart with my loving Heavenly Father.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SECOND POINT

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS THE MIRROR  
 OF THE HEART OF JESUS

The Heart of the Mother of our Divine Saviour is a beautiful mirror in which her Beloved Son has depicted, reflected and represented most excellently, all the virtues that reign in His Sacred Heart. They who see the Heart of the Queen of Angels, as the angels do, find therein a vivid and perfect reproduction of the love, charity, humility, obedience, patience, purity, contempt of the world, hatred of sin and all the other virtues of the most adorable Heart of Jesus. From the very depths of our own heart, then, let us return Him fitting thanks, and offer it to our Blessed Lady, earnestly begging her to obtain for us the grace that, as her Heart is a living portrait of the Sacred Heart of her Son Jesus, ours may be in like manner an image of hers.

Let us, on our part, cultivate a great desire to behold that virginal heart, on which, as on a beautiful mirror, we should often fix our eyes that we may see the stains on our soul, in order to efface them and engrave on our heart by earnest imitation all the virtues which shine forth in the peerless Heart of our heavenly Mother, especially humility, obedience and charity; for all the

happiness, perfection and glory of our hearts consist in so living that we may be vivid reproductions of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

### THIRD POINT

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS BUT ONE HEART WITH THE HEART OF JESUS

Although the Heart of Jesus is distinct from that of Mary, and infinitely surpasses it in excellence and holiness, nevertheless, God has so closely united these two Hearts that we may say with truth that they are but one, because they have always been animated with the same spirit and filled with the same sentiments and affections. If St. Bernard could say he had but one heart with Jesus: "*Bene mihi est, cor unum cum Jesu habeo,*" and if it was said of the first Christians that

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

241 -

they had but one heart and one soul, so great was the union amongst them, how much more can we say that Jesus and Mary had but one heart and one soul, considering how closely they were bound together by the perfect conformity of mind, will and sentiment that existed between the Divine Son of God and His Immaculate Mother.

Add to this that Jesus so lives and reigns in Mary that He is the Soul of her soul, the Spirit of her spirit, the Heart of her heart; so much so that we might well say that Jesus is enshrined in the Heart of Mary so completely that in honoring and glorifying her Heart, we honor and glorify Jesus Christ Himself.

O Jesus, living in the Heart of Mary I be the life of my heart. Mary, Mother of Jesus, obtain by thy intercession, I beseech thee, that I may have but one heart with thy Beloved Son and thyself.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Who will grant me that my heart may be one for ever with the Heart of Jesus and Mary?"  
*Quis dabit mihi ut cor meum, cum Corde Jesu et Mariae cor unum fiat in aeternum?*

242 -

### FIFTH MEDITATION

#### Fourth Day of the Octave

#### Reasons Inspiring Us to Honor the Holy Heart of Mary

### FIRST POINT

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS, AFTER THE HEART OF JESUS, THE MOST EXALTED THRONE OF DIVINE LOVE

LET us~recollect that God has given us the feast of the most pure Heart of the Blessed Virgin so that we may render on that day all the respect, honor and praise that we possibly can. To enkindle this spirit within us let us consider our motivating obligations.

The first is that we ought to love and honor whatever God loves and honors, and that by which He is loved and glorified. Now, after the adorable Heart of Jesus there has never been either in heaven

or on earth, nor ever will be, a heart which has been so loved and honored by God, or which has given Him so much glory as that of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Never has there been, nor will there ever be a more exalted throne of divine love. In that Heart divine love possesses its fullest empire, for it ever reigns without hindrance or interruption, and with it reign likewise all the laws of God, all the Gospel maxims and every Christian virtue.

This incomparable Heart of the Mother of our Redeemer is a glorious heaven, a Paradise of delights for the Most Holy Trinity. According to St. Paul, the hearts of the faithful are the dwelling-place of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself assures us that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost take up Their abode in the hearts of those who love God. Who, therefore, can doubt that the Most Holy Trinity has always made His home and established the reign of His glory in an admirable and ineffable manner in the virginal Heart of her who is the Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son, the Spouse of

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

243 -

the Holy Ghost, who herself loves God more than all other creatures together?

How much then are we not obliged to love this exalted and most lovable Heart?

#### SECOND POINT

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS THE PRINCIPLE OF ALL THE GREATNESS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

There is another very special obligation embodied in these words of the Holy Ghost: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within" (Ps. 44, 14). All the glory, all the grace, all the sanctity, and all that is great and worthy of honor in the Queen of Heaven takes its origin from within, from her Heart, because it was by the profound humility, the peerless purity and burning love of her virginal Heart, that she, the Virgin of virgins, won the Well-beloved of the Eternal Father, that is His Only Son, whom she drew down to her heart and caused to dwell within her. In consequence she has been raised to the sublime dignity of eldest Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son, Spouse of the Holy Ghost, the Sanctuary of the Blessed Trinity, the Queen of the Universe, and has, moreover, been given to us as our Mother and our Sovereign. For this reason we ought not only to honor the most holy Virgin Mary in some of her mysteries or qualities, or in certain of her actions, nor even in her exalted person alone, but we ought first and chiefly to honor in her the source and origin of the dignity and sanctity of all these mysteries, qualities and actions, and even of her person; that is to say, her love and charity, for love and charity are the measure of merit and the principle of all sanctity.

It was the love and charity of her Heart, so full of both that sanctified all the thoughts, words, actions and sufferings of our Saviour's most holy Mother; sanctified also her memory, understanding, will and all the faculties of both the superior and inferior parts of her soul. This love adorned her whole interior and exterior life with such marvelous holiness; containing in itself, to a sovereign degree, all the virtues, gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, which rendered her worthy to bear and nourish Him who supports the whole world, and Who is

244 -

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

the life of all living things. It was the love and charity of Mary's Heart that exalted her to a place in heaven above all the Seraphim and established her on a throne of incomparable glory, grandeur, happiness and power in proportion to her unsurpassable dignity as Mother of God.



Add to this that our Lady's most gracious Heart is an inexhaustible source of gifts, graces, favors and blessings for all who love this Mother of Beautiful Love, and devoutly honor her most lovable Heart. In short, we have unspeakable obligations, both in number and quality, to the royal and maternal Heart of our great Queen and dearest Mother, on which account we can never sufficiently honor, praise and glorify her.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Infinite, boundless, eternal thanks be to the most loving Heart of Mary."  
Gratias infinitas, immensas, aeternas, amantissimo Cordi Mariae.

245 -

**SIXTH MEDITATION**  
**Fifth Day of the Octave**  
**Further Reasons for Honoring the Holy Heart of Mary**

FIRST POINT

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS A LIVING GOSPEL

THE virginal Heart of the Mother of God is the faithful depository of all the mysteries and marvels of our Saviour's life, according to the testimony of St. Luke: "And his mother kept all these words in her heart" (Luke 2, 51). Her Heart is a living book, an eternal Gospel, in which the Holy Spirit has inscribed that wonderful life in letters of gold. It is this book of life we should incessantly study in order to understand perfectly and love ardently the beauty of all the Christian virtues, whose practice imparts true life. Above all, we ought to study the wondrous excellence of holy humility, as well as the way of practicing it and ridding our hearts entirely of the accursed canker-worm of pride and vanity which works such terrible havoc, not only in the souls of the children of perdition, but even in the hearts of the children of God.

O Mother of Goodness, what obligations we have to honor thy most lovable Heart in which thou hast preserved such precious treasures, for which be thou blessed for all eternity. Cause our names to be written in that book of life, we beseech thee, and help us to study deeply the beautiful truths and holy maxims inscribed therein.

246 -

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SECOND POINT

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY CAREFULLY WATCHED OVER  
THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

Who can describe the burning love for her Son Jesus, which filled the incomparable Heart of the Mother of God? How studiously watchful she was in caring for Him whom she nurtured, clothed and tended in order to give Him to us as our Saviour, for which we owe her a debt of gratitude beyond all power to conceive!

THIRD POINT

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY SUFFERED INTENSE  
PAINS FOR US

Who could enumerate the intense sorrow and cruel wounds that lacerated the maternal Heart of the Mother of Jesus throughout her whole life, especially at the time of her Son's Passion, and above all when, at the foot of the Cross, it was transpierced with a sword of sorrow? "In the Heart of the Blessed Virgin," says St. Lawrence Justinian, "was clearly mirrored the Passion of her Son Jesus, and a perfect representation of His death." "It was then," says Richard of St. Laurente, "that those inspired words were accomplished in this virginal Heart: 'The sadness of the heart is every plague'" (Ecclus. 25, 17), that is, there was no part of this afflicted Mother's Heart that was not pierced through and through with a thousand darts of anguish.

Now, it was we who brought upon her all these sorrows by our sins; therefore, we are obliged to render her all the honor and glory we possibly can, in order to repair in some measure the agony and grief we have caused her.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"O Jesus, by the most loving Heart of Thy holy Mother, transpierced with a sword of sorrow, have mercy on us."

Per Cor amantissimum sanctissimae Matris tuae doloris gladio transfixum, miserere nobis, Jesu.

247 -

## **SEVENTH MEDITATION**

### **Sixth Day of the Octave**

#### **Other Reasons Which Bind Us to Have a Special Devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary**

##### **FIRST POINT**

##### **THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS THE TRUE ALTAR OF HOLOCAUSTS**

THE devout and learned Gerson likens the loving Heart of our Saviour's Mother to the bush seen by Moses, ever burning with the flames of most ardent charity but never consumed. Gerson says that it is the true altar of holocaust on which the sacred fire of divine love glows day and night. The sacrifice most pleasing to God and most beneficial to the human race, after the self-immolation of Our Lord on the Cross is the divine holocaust which the Blessed Virgin offered to the Eternal Father on the altar of her Heart, when she so frequently and with so much love offered to God in sacrifice that same Jesus, her Only Son so dearly beloved. We may add that He was sacrificed only once on the Cross, but was immolated a thousand upon a thousand times in the Heart of His holy Mother, that is, as many times as she offered Her Divine Son to the Eternal Father for us.

O holy Altar, what veneration is thy due, and what praises all creatures owe thee! Mother of Love, take our hearts and unite them with thy Well-beloved Son as a holocaust and sacrifice to Our Heavenly Father.

## SECOND POINT

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS THE PRINCIPLE OF  
JESUS' LIFE

What veneration we owe to the august Heart of the Mother of God, which was the principle of the life humanly divine and divinely human .of the Infant Jesus while He dwelt within her! At that time, the Heart of the Mother is as much the source of her child's life as of her own, the one depending on it as much as the other.

What praise and respect are therefore due to the loving Heart of Mary on which the Infant Jesus chose that His life should depend, to that Heart which was the principle of two lives both so holy, so precious, to that Heart on which the adorable Babe so often reposed when in His Mother's arms! That Heart, most noble and revered organ of that virginal body gave a Body to the Eternal Word to be for all eternity the object of the adoration and praise of all celestial and blessed spirits. The Heart of our Lady being the principle of the life of our Head and consequently of His members, and being the principle of life to Jesus and Mary, is also that of the lives of their children. "Vitam datam per Virginem, Gentes redemptione laudite!"

O Mother of Goodness, may the hearts of all the faithful unceasingly bless and love thy maternal and devoted Heart May it be the heart of my heart, the soul of my soul and the life of my life.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"O Mary, my life, my sweetness and my dearest hope!"

O Maria, vita, dulcedo, et spes mea carissima.

## EIGHTH MEDITATION

## Seventh Day of the Octave

Three Additional Reasons for Honoring the Holy Heart  
of Our Blessed Mother

## FIRST POINT

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS THE TEMPLE OF  
THE HOLY TRINITY

THE admirable Heart of Mary is the august temple of the Divinity, a temple built by the hand of the Almighty, a temple consecrated by the continual indwelling of the Divine Spirit, a temple dedicated to eternal love, a temple never profaned either by the smallest sin, or taint of the spirit of the world, or by love of self or any other creature. Our Lady's Heart is the temple in which, after the Divine Heart of Jesus, the Most Holy Trinity is more perfectly adored, loved and glorified than in any other temple, material or spiritual, in heaven or on earth. Within this temple, O glorious Virgin, thy spirit ever dwelt in seclusion and recollection, offering to God a continual sacrifice of praise, honor and fervent love. It is there that I desire unceasingly to adore, bless and love the Creator of all hearts who made and sanctified it for His glory, wherein He will be eternally glorified in a higher degree

than in all the empyrean heavens.

## SECOND POINT

### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS THE PARADISE OF DELIGHTS OF THE NEW ADAM

This wondrous Heart is to the new Adam, that is, to Jesus Christ Our Lord, a veritable Paradise of delights, of which He is the real

250-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Tree of life, planted in the midst of this Paradise where neither the serpent nor sin have ever entered, whose gates have always been carefully guarded, not by a Seraph only, but by the very King of the Cherubim and Seraphim.

What delight the Divine Son of Mary found in that motherly Heart which loved Him more ardently than He had ever been loved, even by the purest spirits in the heavenly Paradise! What a joy it was to thy Divine Babe, O Blessed Mother, when He reposed on thy virginal breast, and thou wast wholly filled, penetrated and possessed by His holy spirit and His divine love, which utterly transported and absorbed thy whole soul, spirit and heart.

O Mother of Fair Love, obtain for me that I may have no other Paradise or pleasure in this world to love, serve and honor Jesus, the Son of Mary, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

## THIRD POINT

### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS THE KING OF HEARTS

After the adorable Heart of Jesus, the Sovereign Monarch of heaven and earth, the august Heart of Mary, the Queen of Angels and the Mother of the King of kings, is the eternal King of all hearts which were created to adore and love God. Therefore, all men are bound to pay homage to the holy Heart of Mary as to their Sovereign.

O royal Heart of my loving Queen, I wish to honor and revere thee as the true king of my heart. Exercise thy power over my most unworthy heart that thou mayest destroy everything that displeases thee and establish in it the reign of thy love and of all thy virtues.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"May the Heart of Jesus and of Mary live and reign in my heart for ever."  
*Vivat et regnet Cor Jesu et Mariae in corde meo in aeternum.*

251 -

## NINTH MEDITATION

### Octave Day of the Feast

### The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Heart of the Mother of Fair Love and Charity

## FIRST POINT

### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS A FURNACE OF THE LOVE OF GOD

WE should contemplate and honor the most lovable Heart of our Lord's Mother as a furnace of the love of God.

It is a furnace of love because sin, worldly affection, self-love have never had part therein, because it has always been replete and aflame with the fire of Divine love.

It is a furnace of love because it has never loved aught but God, and His holy will, which it sought in Him and for His sake.

It is a furnace of love because our Blessed Lady always loved God with her whole Heart, with her whole soul and with her whole strength. All her actions were done from the purest love of God, nor had she ever any other intention in all her thoughts, words and sufferings but to please Him, doing everything "*Corde magno et animo volenti*," with a great heart and all possible perfection, in order to give all possible pleasure to His divine majesty.

Mary's Heart is a furnace of love not only because it willed always exactly what God willed, and never deflected from His holy will, but because she ever placed all her happiness and joy in the most lovable Will of God.

It is a furnace of such burning love that not even the torrents and floods of bitter sorrows that deluged her soul were ever capable, I will not say of extinguishing, but of cooling in the smallest degree the glowing flames of that fire.

252 -

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

It is a furnace of love in which the Holy Spirit, who is a consuming fire, enkindled His divine flame in her virginal Heart at the first moment of its existence, and never ceased to increase it more and more, from moment to moment, up to the last breath of her life.

O sacred fire and flame of this holy furnace, come and consume our hearts.

## SECOND POINT

### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS BURNING WITH LOVE FOR JESUS

The Heart of the Mother of Fair Love is a furnace of love in which the Only Son of God, who is also the only Son of Mary, ever dwelt and will continue to dwell eternally, He who is the essence of love, called in Holy Scripture, "a consuming fire" (Deut. 4, 24). Judge from this what burning flames, what glowing heat He generated in His holy Mother's Heart, where He found no obstacle to His designs. It is as if the Beloved Son of Mary existed in the Heart of His holy Mother as an immense furnace of divine love in the centre of another furnace all on fire with that same love, and from it the flames reached to the inmost being of the Seraphim to inflame them more and more and even to the subject of the Eternal Father's infinite felicity, His Well-beloved Son, who, inspired by the love of Mary, was drawn from His Father's bosom down to her virginal breast.

O holy furnace, blessed are they who approach thy sacred fire! Still more happy they who are enkindled by thy heavenly flames, and happiest of all those who cast themselves into that divine

brazier to be wholly consumed therein.

O furnace of love, spread thy flames throughout the entire universe so that my Saviour's desire may be accomplished which He expressed, saying that He came to cast fire on the earth, and desired that it might be enkindled in the hearts of all men (Luke 12, 49)

Whoever wishes to burn with this holy fire must strive to extinguish within himself the flames of love of the world and self. He must study to love God alone, with his whole heart and to perform each and all his actions for love of Our Lord and to do them well, having no other intention, at any time, except to please Him, and for love of

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

253 -

Him to place all his joy in the fulfilment of His holy will and in the acceptance of all possible crosses.

O Mother of Love, obtain by thy prayers that this transformation may be accomplished in us.

### THIRD POINT

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS A FURNACE OF CHARITY TOWARDS MEN

The pure Heart of the Mother of Jesus is a furnace of charity towards mankind; a furnace in which there has never been a single thought or sentiment contrary to virtue; a furnace of such burning charity for even the greatest enemies that she sacrificed for them her Only and Dearly Beloved Son at the very time they were cruelly putting Him to death, and piercing her maternal heart with a thousand darts of anguish.

It is a furnace of charity for her beloved children, whom she loves so ardently that if the love of all fathers and mothers past, present and future were united in one heart, it would be but a spark in comparison with the furnace of love burning in the Heart of our heavenly Mother.

It is a furnace on fire with such charity and zeal for souls, that she would have willingly suffered all the torments of hell to help to save a single soul. Moses, St. Paul, St. Catherine of Siena and several other saints have been ready and willing to do so, but how much more the Queen of all Saints, who was more filled with love for souls than all the saints together.

Return thanks, then, to the Divine Son of Mary for having so inflamed her Heart with that fire of divine charity for us, with which His own is burning. Thank her also for all she has accomplished in her charity for the human race. Desire earnestly to imitate your holy Mother in the practice of that virtue. Examine the faults you have committed against charity in the past, in order to humble yourself and beg pardon of God, offering Him the most lovable Heart of our Lady in reparation.

Also offer your own heart to the most holy Virgin, begging her to

254 -

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

destroy in it all that is contrary to charity, and engrave instead a perfect image of her charity towards her enemies, her friends, and the souls of all mankind.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O Heart of Jesus and of Mary, burning with love, may our heart be for ever immersed in you."

*O Cor Jesu et Mariae, fornax amoris, in te cor nostrum demergatur in aeternum.*

## Eight Other Meditations on The Holy Heart of Mary

### FIRST MEDITATION

#### The Holy Heart of Mary IS Our Sun, Our Treasure, and Our Refuge

##### FIRST POINT

##### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS OUR SUN

OUR loving Saviour has given us the very benign Heart of His Blessed Mother as a divine sun to clear the shadows of this earth, to warm us in the wintry cold of this mortal life, to gladden and to console us in earthly sadness and sorrows, and to vivify and fortify us in the lethargy and weakness of human fragility. Infinite thanksgiving be to the adorable Sun of eternity, Jesus Christ, for the gift of this sun!

O Mother of Fair Love, since your Well-beloved Son has given us your maternal heart to be our sun, enlighten our minds with your celestial radiance so that in knowing Jesus Christ, we may render the service, honor, and love that we owe Him. Illuminate our hearts so that in knowing the horror of sin we may have a hatred for it, in knowing the world we may detach ourselves from it, and in knowing ourselves we may have scorn for self. Make us participants in the celestial warmth of thy saintly charity so that we may love God above all things and our neighbor as ourself. Console us in our desolation, fortify us in our weakness. May thy shining Heart be the true sun of our hearts.

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### SECOND POINT

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS OUR TREASURE

Our benign Saviour has given us the Sacred Heart of His beloved Mother as the inestimable treasure of an infinity of good. If St. Chrysostom calls the very charitable heart of St. Paul, "a fountain of innumerable blessings" for the Christians who invoke the help of this divine apostle, what words must one use in speaking of the incomparable heart of the Queen of Apostles?

It is a treasury in which immense riches are locked, because the most blessed Virgin, kept hidden in her Heart, while on this earth, and will continue to do so eternally in heaven, all the mysteries of the life of her Divine Son our Redeemer, mysteries which are the price of our redemption, the source of the sanctification of the Church Triumphant and the consolation of the Church Suffering.

Her Heart is a treasury which conserves in itself all the graces merited and acquired for us by our Saviour through His sufferings and death on earth. Therefore our Lady is called by all the saints, "the admirable treasure of the Church ... .. the treasury of God's graces," "the most holy treasure of all sanctity," and "the treasure of salvation." Our Lord has enclosed in her breast and Heart all the treasures of His graces, which are given to us through her mediation; therefore, St. Bernard said that all God's gifts to mankind pass first through the hands of the Mother of Divine Grace: *Nihil nos Deus habere voluit, quod per Mariae manu non transiret.*

O what joy it is to possess so rich a treasure! O what profound gratitude we owe to our very benign Redeemed But if we wish to enjoy the inconceivable blessings destined for us in this precious treasure, let us be careful to render to the Queen of heaven the honor and praise due her, and let us be careful to have respectful and confident recourse to her in all our needs. We shall find in this treasury the means to pay our spiritual debts, to satisfy all our obligations, to practise all Christian virtues, to live in a saintly manner, and to know and love God worthily.

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

257 -

### THIRD POINT

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS OUR REFUGE

Our very loving Jesus has given us the divine Heart of His glorious Mary to be a tower of great strength, an impregnable fortress, an allpowerful refuge where we can take shelter against the enemies of our salvation. Have recourse to our Lady, tower of ivory, in all the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil because her heart is so filled with goodness for all kinds of people that never has anyone in need implored her help in vain. Do not fear that her heart will fail you. retire with confidence into this most beautiful refuge, and you will feel the effects of its strong protection.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"O Heart of Mary, tower of strength, protect us."

O Cor Mariae, turris fortissima, protege nos semper!

258 -

### SECOND MEDITATION

#### **The Holy Heart of Mary IS Our Rule, Our Heart, A Fountain of Wine, Milk and Honey, and Our Oracle**

### FIRST POINT

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS OUR RULE

THE sovereign Legislator has given us the august Heart of His glorious Mother as a holy rule which, if faithfully kept, will make us saintly. The Heart of Mary is a rule of the celestial life which we must live, a rule with which we must be clothed. Her heart encloses all the maxims we must follow, the saintly dispositions with which we must perform all our actions. It is a rule for the sentiments and affections which must abide in our hearts, and a rule of all our thoughts, words and actions. In one word, it is a rule to guide both our interior and exterior life.

Let us render thanks to the adorable Legislator for having given us a rule so holy, amiable, sweet and easy, filled with love. Your joy and pleasure must be in keeping it since this rule is simply the all sweet and loving Heart of our adorable Mother, who will never cease to obtain for us from God the graces necessary to observe it faithfully. Therefore, you must often scrutinize this divine rule, studying it carefully so that you may follow it honestly and exactly.



## SECOND POINT

### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY WAS GIVEN TO US TO BE OUR HEART

The Son of God gave us the holy Heart of His most cherished Mother, which is none other than His own true Heart, so that His children have only one Heart with their Father and Mother, and all the members of His family have only the heart of their adorable chief.

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

259 -

Let us remember that we constantly serve, love and adore God with a heart worthy of its infinite grandeur: *Corde magno et animo volenti*; with a heart all pure and holy, singing His divine praises and performing all our actions with saintliness, love, humility and with all the other holy dispositions characteristic of this beautiful Heart of Mary.

To accomplish this, at the beginning of each action, we must completely renounce our own heart, which means our mind, self-love and will, and we give ourselves to our Lord, to be united with the love of His Heart and the Heart of His most Blessed Mother. Let us work, then, to become detached from our own earthly, wicked and depraved heart, so that we shall gain a Heart truly celestial, holy and divine.

## THIRD POINT

### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY IS A FOUNTAIN OF WINE, MILK AND HONEY

Our most sweet Jesus has given us the very benign Heart of His precious Mother as a fountain of wine, milk and honey, from which we draw the charity, gentleness and meekness which we must show to our neighbor. Our Lord has also given us her Heart as an oracle to be devoutly consulted in all our doubts and perplexities, so that we may know and follow faithfully His adorable will.

Oh Mother of Fair Love, bind our hearts so closely to yours that they may never be separated! Pray that the hearts of your children may have no other sentiments than those of the most Immaculate Heart of their all-perfect Mother.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Queen of our hearts, direct our hearts forever."

*Regina cordis, dirige cor nostrum in aeternum.*

260 -

## THIRD MEDITATION

### The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Sanctuary of the Human Passions

#### FIRST POINT

### THE PASSIONS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS ARE DEIFIED THROUGH THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

Eleven passions are implanted in the human heart, namely: love, hate, desire and aversion, joy,

sadness, hope, despair, boldness, fear and anger. Adore all these emotions in the divine Heart of our Saviour, where, according to the theologians, they have been exalted to divinity through the hypostatic union, and by sanctifying grace which reigns perfectly in the Son of God made man. Thank Him for the glory that He has rendered to His Heavenly Father, by His most holy use of His human body. Offer to the Adorable Father all the honor thus rendered to Him by His divine Son. Give your heart to Jesus, together with all its passions. Beg Him to unite your emotions with His, to bless and sanctify them through His and to grant you all the graces necessary to imitate Him in the holy use of these passions.

## SECOND POINT

### THE PASSIONS OF THE HOLY HEART OF MARY ARE ENTIRELY SUBMISSIVE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

These same passions existed in the amiable Heart of the Blessed Virgin, where they were so perfectly subjected to reason and to the spirit of God who possessed her entirely, that always her passions were under entire control. Her love was constantly for God above, and for the things God loves. She hated only the objects of God's hatred. She rejoiced in the things that were pleasing to His divine majesty. Nothing

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

261 -

was capable of bringing sadness to her except those things which could sadden her Well-beloved Son.

Her only fear was the filial fear of saying, thinking or doing anything displeasing to God. She had no other desire but to accomplish wholly and entirely His most adorable will. Her entire hope rested in God alone. It is a certainty that her Heart was filled with a saintly boldness and a marvelous generosity to undertake and to do the acts pertaining to the service of God no matter how difficult. She understood that she could do nothing of herself, and remained continually in a state of humiliation and in great scorn of herself, never having hoped or believed herself able to do anything through her own strength alone for the glory of His divine majesty.

That is why we must honor the very august Heart of the Mother of God, as the sanctuary of all passions, which human emotions were sanctified so excellently that they have been actuated only by the Holy Spirit, who possessed and animated them much more perfectly than human mind can conceive. Let us offer to God all the honor accorded to His majesty by the Holy Virgin in her perfect use of these same passions, and beg her to obtain for us all the necessary and suitable graces to enable us, through a faithful imitation, to govern our emotions according to the example of our divine Mother.

## THIRD POINT

### WE MUST MAKE A FITTING USE OF OUR PASSIONS

Let us make an exact and careful examination of all our passions, in order to perceive our mistakes and abuse of them; humiliate ourselves and ask pardon of God, begging Our Lord and His holy Mother to correct our errors and to take complete possession of our heart and all its passions. Beg them to teach you how to use your emotions for the love and glory of the Most Holy Trinity.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"My soul doth magnify the admirable Heart of Jesus and Mary."

*Magnificat anima mea Cor admirabile Jesu et Mariae!*

#### FOURTH MEDITATION

### The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Kingdom and Throne of All Virtues

#### FIRST POINT

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY POSSESSED PERFECTLY ALL CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

THE Holy Spirit, having considered the most sacred Virgin from the moment of her Immaculate Conception as the one chosen from all eternity to be the Mother of God, infused in her Heart the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity; the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, and all the other virtues: religion, humility, obedience, patience, meekness, purity, etc. The Holy Spirit bestowed the excellence of the virtues in her virginal Heart in a degree proportionate to the dignity and grace of the Mother of God. Therefore, this admirable Virgin possessed all these virtues from the first moment of her life, in such a high degree of perfection that the greatest saints never equalled her excellence even in the closing days of their heroic lives.

All these virtues flourished constantly in the Heart of the Mother of God, and from time to time during her life they were increased in merit. So much so that no mind can comprehend the degree of perfection attained when Mary left this world to be assumed into heaven.

O Queen of Virtue, what great joy my heart feels in beholding thee as Queen of all virtue, supreme over all the angels and saints of Paradise! Oh my Jesus, I render Thee infinite gratitude for having given to your holy Mother a Heart that is most saintly and wholly consecrated to Thy divine love.

THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

263 -

#### SECOND POINT

#### THE REIGN OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES IN THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

Not only did all virtue abide in the holy Heart of the Mother of our Saviour, but in addition it established its throne there from the earliest moment of her life and reigns in her Heart forever in a most special manner. It reigned in a sovereign degree over her thoughts, words, actions, and over all her most intimate feelings, both interior and exterior; consequently, these perfect virtues made God reign more perfectly and gloriously in her Heart than in the empyrean world.

The all-perfect power of the Eternal Father ruled there through the admirable effects continually produced in her Heart: "He hath done great things to me" (Luke 1, 49).

The infinite wisdom of the Son of God reigned in the Heart of Mary through the Christian virtues that communicated to her great knowledge and light. The love and goodness of the Holy Spirit reigned in the Heart of Mary through the Christian virtues that enkindled in her great love and enthusiasm.

Infinite glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost for having established in the royal heart of the Queen of Heaven the throne of all the virtues and the sovereign kingdom of their incomprehensible

glory! Oh how very fitting it is to render all possible honor and praise to this incomparable Heart, where the Most Holy Trinity is infinitely more glorified than in all the hearts of heaven and earth.

### THIRD POINT

#### WE MUST PRACTICE ALL THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

The Blessed Virgin is our Mother; therefore, having the honor of being her children, although greatly unworthy, we must try to resemble her as closely as possible. Consequently we must imprint in our hearts a living image of the virtues that reign in her heart.

To accomplish this, let each one of us make a careful and honest examination of his heart, in order to know how far removed it is from

264-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

the virtues and sanctity of the Heart of our divine Mother, and to humiliate ourselves before God and her. We must make a strong resolution to begin in earnest to engrave on our hearts the semblance of the perfections of the divine heart of the Queen of the Angels.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O Heart of Mary, throne of all virtues, reign in our hearts forever."

*O Cor Mariae, thronus omnium virtutum, regna super cor nostrum in aeternum!*

265-

### FIFTH MEDITATION

#### The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Centre of Humility

##### FIRST POINT

##### FOUNDATIONS OF HUMILITY IN THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

Reflect on the fact that humility is the centre of the Heart of the most holy Virgin. Being the foundation stone of all virtue, it has occupied the first position in her Heart since her Immaculate Conception. Humility has always found in her breast complete rest and satisfaction, never having been attacked by its enemies, because it is established there on four solid foundations. The first is the perfect knowledge of humility possessed by this humble Virgin, so much so that she understood completely that being created by God from nothing as other creatures, she was nothing, had nothing, and would never be anything by herself. She knew very well that being the daughter of Adam she would have been conceived in original sin if God had not preserved her and, consequently, she would have been capable of all sins whose source is original sin.

The second foundation of her humility is her profound knowledge of all the gifts, graces and innumerable privileges which God showered upon her, and the infinite dignity of the Mother of God, with which God honored her. She knew well the rule that the Holy Spirit gave to all mankind in these words: *Quanto magnus est, humilia te in omnibus*, which point out, as St. Augustine says, that the humility of the creature must be proportionate to the favors that it receives from its Creator. That is why the infinite grace of the Mother of God obliged that most blessed Virgin to humiliate herself most

profoundly.

The third foundation is her understanding that the sovereign and infinite grandeur of God demands deep humility on the part of the

266-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

creature: *Summae celsitudini summa debetur humilitas*. Her ardent zeal for the honor and glory of God carried her to the point of consummate humility before His divine majesty.

The fourth foundation is that, beholding her Beloved Son plunged into the abyss of scorn, ignominy and shame, for the love of men, but much more for love of her than for all other children of Adam, she longed to abase herself below Him, thus her self-annihilation knew no end. It is thus that her Heart was the centre of humility.

O very humble Virgin, thou wast chosen to crush the head of the serpent which is pride. Crush it completely then in my heart and enlighten me with thy divine wisdom so that I may imitate thee in thy vast humility!

#### SECOND POINT

##### EFFECTS OF HUMILITY IN THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

Consider the five prodigious effects of this humility in the Heart of the holy Virgin.

The first effect is that because God elevated her to the highest honor that a pure creature can attain, she never had any self-esteem, but always humiliated herself.

The second effect is that having stood constant and firm amid all the ignominies and insults she suffered in the passion of her Divine Son, her soul, remaining quiet even when it was pierced by a sword of sorrow, was greatly troubled by the praise of St. Gabriel, more insupportable than all her trials and sorrows.

The third effect is that the praise and benediction of St. Elizabeth at the time of the Visitation inspired her to disclaim all honor and give all the glory to God in her divine Canticle, the "Magnificat."

The fourth effect of her boundless humility is that she concealed the extraordinary favor of the Divine Goodness so that God had to send an angel to St. Joseph to expressly communicate to him the mystery that his holy spouse was too humble to reveal.

The fifth effect is that she continually sought the company of the poor, sinners and other miserable people, and that after the Ascension

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

267-

of her Divine Son, she sought the lowest place in the gatherings of the faithful.

What immeasurable glory thou hast tendered to God, by thy very profound humility, O most humble Virgin! May eternal praise be thine! Oh how I long to imitate thee in this holy virtue! Obtain for me, I beseech thee, from thy Beloved Son, all the graces that I need for this purpose.

### THIRD POINT

#### WAY TO ACQUIRE HUMILITY

Examine carefully all your faults against humility-in your thoughts, affections, words and actions. Ask pardon from God, make a strong resolution of amendment, and pray constantly to the most sacred Virgin to obtain the grace to practise humility.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O Heart of Mary, centre of humility, intercede for us."

*O Cor Mariae, centrum humilitatis, intercede pro nobis!*

268 -

### SIXTH MEDITATION

#### **The Holy Heart of Mary b the Treasure of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

#### FIRST POINT

##### THE EFFECT OF THE GIFTS OF WISDOM, INTELLIGENCE, COUNSEL, AND FORTITUDE IN THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

AFTER considering and revering the august Heart of the Queen of Heaven as the highest throne of all virtue, we must contemplate and honor her Heart as the richest treasure of the Holy Spirit, where He deposited immense and inestimable riches, among them seven incomparable graces which are commonly called the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost: the gifts of wisdom and understanding, counsel and fortitude, knowledge and piety and fear of the Lord.

There is this difference between the moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost: the moral virtues are given to make our souls stronger, to help them to be docile and obedient to the light and commands of reason predisposed through grace, while the gifts of the Holy Ghost are qualities and perfections infused with sanctifying grace which they accompany everywhere, in order to dispose us to correspond promptly with all the divine inspiration, all the interior actions of the Holy Ghost, and to follow His guidance wherever He may call us. The gifts of the Holy Ghost are the saintly habits bestowed by God to raise our souls to a state of perfection higher than that which ordinarily proceeds from virtue alone, and to fortify us more strongly even than virtue into meeting the difficulties of life.

All these gifts of the Holy Ghost existed, with their Author, in the Heart of the Blessed Virgin from the moment of her Immaculate Conception, and to a degree, conformable to her destined dignity of becoming the Mother of God.

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

269 -

Let us consider the workings of these gifts in her virginal heart.

The gift of *wisdom* filled her Heart with such clear knowledge and engraved on it such a high esteem and love for God that all her contentment and joy were to contemplate His adorable perfection, to concern herself solely with divine and eternal things, whose contemplation gave her soul all possible delight. For this reason, she possessed a strong scorn for the foolish wisdom of the world and

its terrestrial and temporal attributes.

Through the gift of *understanding* she gained the greatest knowledge of all the secrets and mysteries contained in the divine writings of the Old as well as of the New Testament; a greater knowledge than all the holy doctors of the Church ever had or ever will have.

The gift of *counsel* taught her to make fervent resolutions and to follow the inspiration of the Holy Ghost through His gifts of wisdom and understanding.

The gift of *fortitude* implanted in her heart great contempt of herself and attachment to God, in Whom she placed all her confidence and strength, in virtue of which she surmounted all the difficulties and obstacles she encountered and bore patiently all her many persecutions and trials.

Offer to God all the glory that this divine Virgin has tendered to Him, through her most saintly exercise of these four gifts and beg her to make you a participant in them.

## SECOND POINT

### THE RESULTS PRODUCED IN THE HOLY HEART OF MARY By THE GIFTS OF WISDOM, PIETY, AND FEAR

Let us consider the effects of the operation of the gifts of wisdom, piety, and fear of the Lord in the heart of the most Blessed Virgin.

The gift of *wisdom* endowed her with the knowledge of created things and inspired in her the correct use of them. Through this gift she realized the inestimable value of souls, created to the image and likeness of God, which made her most zealous for our salvation.

The gift of *piety* engraved in her Heart the love and tenderness of a real mother for her children and filled her with a compassion for all

270-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

our miseries and afflictions, so great that she offered to His divine majesty everything she could do and suffer to assuage and help mankind.

The gift of *fear* of the Lord filled her filial Heart with a great apprehension to do only what was agreeable to God and to accomplish His most holy will at all times, in all places, and for His glory and satisfaction alone.

O adorable Spirit, may eternal thanks be rendered to Thee for having thus enriched the very perfect Heart of Thy divine Spouse with all the treasures of Thy most infinite goodness.

## THIRD POINT

### MEANS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit desires ardently to engulf your heart with a share of all the gifts with which He filled the heart of your divine Mother. Humiliate yourself and ask pardon for all the impediments that you have placed there; make a strong resolution of amendment, and ask the Blessed Virgin to acquaint you with the holy dispositions of her heart towards the sublime gifts of the Holy Ghost.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O Heart of Mary, treasure of holiness, intercede for us."

O Cor Mariae, thesaure sanctitatis, intercede pro nobis!

271 -

## SEVENTH MEDITATION

### **The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Sanctified Garden of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit**

#### FIRST POINT

#### THE SIX FIRST FRUITS IN THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

LET us consider that the amiable Heart of the Blessed Mother of God is the enclosed garden that is mentioned in the fourth chapter of the Canticle of Canticles, Hortus conclusus, a garden locked against the serpent and to everything displeasing to God, a garden open only to the Holy Ghost who produces in it innumerable fruits, among which are twelve principal fruits which differ from the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The seven gifts are holy and virtuous habits which dispose souls to follow promptly the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, while the fruits are actions produced by the gifts and by virtue which we practise happily and joyfully with true love of God, under the direction of the Holy Ghost. The twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost are: charity, joy, peace, patience, longanimity, goodness, benignity, meekness, faith, modesty, continence and chastity. Let us consider the effects of the first six fruits in the Heart of the glorious Virgin.

Her Heart, because of charity and love, was wholly detached from all that was not God and was intimately and uniquely bound up in His divine majesty. joy filled her with great happiness in all the things accomplished by the Mother of love in the service of God's glory. Peace maintained a profound tranquillity in her very generous heart in the midst of all the tempests and storms which so often assailed her. Patience sustained her in her many trials. Longanimity made her await courageously the great things she expected from divine liberality. The incomparable goodness with which her soul was filled made her in

272-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

capable of the slightest unkind thought towards any man, even her cruelest enemies, and urged her continually to wish good for all.

Let us rejoice upon seeing so great and marvelous perfection in the heart of our inviolate Mother. Let us be deeply grateful to the Holy Ghost for lavishing these gifts upon her Heart and beg Him to make us a sharer in them.

#### SECOND POINT

#### THE SIX OTHER FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

Let us consider the effects of the six other fruits of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Queen of Angels. *Benignity* rendered her sweet, affable, capable of doing good to all. *Meekness* kept all thoughts of sharpness and impatience from her, to soften her being with milk and honey. *Faith*, or rather,



fidelity, filled her with truth, naïveté, and frankness and made her scrupulous in accomplishing her promises. *Modesty forbade* anyone to see in her the slightest shadow of worldly vanity and pomp; this holy virtue was reflected in her countenance with such true perfection that she could have been taken for an angel and even a divine being according to St. Denys if the rules of faith were not opposed to it. Continence reigned in her heart and actions so that never did she experience any instinct other than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. *Chastity* clothed her with a purity so admirable that it made her worthy to be the Mother of the Saint of saints and the Queen of Seraphim.

O Mother of my God, my heart is delighted to behold thy Heart filled with all perfection so that it is infinitely more worthy of honor and praise than the hearts of all angels and saints. Eternal praise to the King of all hearts!

### THIRD POINT

#### WAYS TO ENJOY THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Let us adore the infinite desire of the Holy Spirit to imprint in our heart an image of all the fruits nurtured in the heart of His divine

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

273 -

Spouse. Let us ask pardon for all the obstacles we have interposed. Let us make a firm resolution to correspond to His great graces by a careful imitation of the adorable Heart of our amiable and loving Mother.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O Heart of Jesus and Mary, rule of our hearts, reign in our hearts forever."

*O Cor Jesu et Mariae, cordis fidelis regula, regna super cor nostrum in aeternum!*

274 -

### EIGHTH MEDITATION

#### **The Holy Heart of Mary Is the Paradise of the Eight Beatitudes**

#### FIRST POINT

#### THE FIRST FOUR BEATITUDES IN THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

LET *us* consider how the blessed heart of the Mother of our Saviour is the rich paradise of the eight evangelical beatitudes which are similar to the fruits of the Holy Spirit, in so much as both are acts springing from virtuous habits infused into our souls with sanctifying grace, but they differ in that the beatitudes are perfect and eminent acts of several virtues through which the Holy Spirit elevates souls to a state of perfection higher than that of the fruits.

The Holy Ghost infused all the beatitudes into the Heart of Mary from the moment of her Immaculate Conception, more perfectly than they ever existed in the hearts of even the greatest saints. Let us consider and honor in this marvelous Heart the beatitudes:

First, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5, 3). This beatitude contains two things: humility and love of poverty, which were deeply implanted in Mary's Heart, the most humble of all hearts except the Heart of Jesus, the Heart that had made a vow of poverty because of great love, as the Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget. Consequently, our Lady gave all to the poor; she earned her daily living by her hands; she only wore a colorless woolen cape, according to Nicephore and Cedrenus; the presents she received from the Magi were given away as alms, St. Bonaventure says. Our Lady told St. Bridget that often Jesus, her Son, St. Joseph, her spouse and she herself lacked the necessities of daily life. This is easy to believe when we recall the words of the Son of God: "The foxes

#### THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

275 -

have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8, 20); because He would not have said that if His holy Mother had enjoyed some comforts, no matter how small.

The second beatitude is "Blessed are the meek." Who could express the sweetness and gentleness of this meekest of Hearts?

The third beatitude is "Blessed are they that mourn." O blessed Virgin, who could count the many swords of sorrow that pierced thy loving heart? O what torrents of tears poured from thy sorrowful eyes, tears even, so say the Saints, of blood!

The fourth beatitude is "*Blessed* are they that hunger and thirst after justice." justice here means all Christian virtues, all the holy acts by which God is honored and served. To know the insatiable hunger and thirst of the Blessed Mother, to know the ways and means of best serving and honoring God, would also require a comprehension of her all-consuming love and ardor for His divine majesty and glory.

O my all-good and sweet Mother, I give thee my heart; unite it, I beseech thee, to thine, even though it be most unworthy. Engrave on my heart a perfect picture of thy charity, humility, love for the poor and thy most intense yearning and thirst for all virtue

#### SECOND POINT

##### THE REMAINING BEATITUDES IN THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

Contemplate and honor the other beatitudes in the Heart of the Blessed Virgin. The fifth is "Blessed are the merciful." Two types of people are included in this beatitude. First, those who, for the love of God, readily forget the injuries done them. Secondly, those who, filled with compassion for the corporal and spiritual sorrows of their neighbor, try to give them all possible aid and help. O Mother of Mercy, throughout thy life thou didst show mercy more perfectly than ever will be shown on earth even by the greatest saints; it is what thou art constantly doing, because all creatures on this earth have experienced the help of thy mercy.

The sixth beatitude is "Blessed are the clean of heart." O what purity,

Queen of Virgins, in thy Heart inviolate, undefiled by any trace of sin, either original or actual, thy Heart filled to overflowing from the moment of the Immaculate Conception with a purity greater than that of all the angels and saints in heaven.

The seventh beatitude is "Blessed are the peacemakers." It is through thee, O Queen of Peace, that the God of peace and love was given to us, the God who brought peace from heaven to the world. It is through thy help that the schisms and heresies which tear the holy robe of thy Divine Son are crushed. It is because of thy powerful intercession that true peace is imparted to men of goodwill, given to those who willingly renounce their own desires and seek only the things of God.

The eighth beatitude is "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." To know all the persecutions endured by the Mother of the Saviour, we would have to understand the innumerable and countless sufferings of her Well-beloved Son. Because of us, O incomparable Mother, thou and thy Dear Son Jesus Christ have become the target and butt of an infinity of insults, opprobrium, outrages, calumnies, scorn and unspeakable cruelties. Because of our great love for thee, we gladly embrace all the afflictions and persecutions that may ever beset us.

Infinite thanks to the Holy Ghost for having enshrined these beatitudes in thy pure heart. Let us ask the Holy Ghost, O sweet Virgin, to make us participants in thy grace, to teach us and give us the grace to find all our joy, our paradise, and our pleasure even as thou didst during life, that is, in serving, glorifying and loving the divine majesty.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"O Heart of Jesus and Mary, joy of our hearts."  
O Cor Jesu et Mariae, cordis nostri gaudium!

277-

V 1 1 1

**MEDITATIONS  
ON  
THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

279-

V 1 1 1

**MEDITATIONS  
ON  
THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS'**

**MEDITATIONS  
FOR THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART  
OF JESUS**

**FIRST MEDITATION  
The Vigil of the Feast  
Dispositions for the Worthy Celebrations of This Feast**

**FIRST POINT**

**THE FIRST DISPOSITION FOR THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART  
OF JESUS IS A BURNING DESIRE TO CELEBRATE IT DEVOUTLY**

THE adorable Heart of Jesus is the principle and source of His Incarnation, Birth, Circumcision, Presentation in the Temple, and of all the other mysteries and states of His life, as well as of all His thoughts, words, deeds, and sufferings for our salvation. His Heart burning with

(1). "Meditations on the Sacred Heart of Jesus" were first published in the twelfth book of *The Admirable Heart of Mary*. Like the "Meditations on The Holy Heart of Mary" they are divided into two series, one for the Feast of the Sacred Heart on the excellence of the Feast and our duties to the Sacred Heart, and the other for any occasion on the perfections of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Historically, these meditations are most important because they are the first ever written on the subject. They contain the substance of St. John Eudes's doctrine of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. cf. *The Sacred Heart of Jesus* (New York 1946), pp. 85-135.

280-

**MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

love prompted Him to perform all these things for us. Thus it is that we owe honor and love to this most amiable Heart for countless reasons, and to show our affection we must celebrate this Feast with all possible devotion.

Let us offer our hearts to the Holy Ghost, and earnestly beg Him to enkindle us with a burning desire to celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart with as much devotion as though we were to celebrate it only once on earth. This great desire constitutes the first requisite in preparation for this solemn Feast.

**SECOND POINT**

**THE SECOND DISPOSITION HIS HUMILITY**

The second disposition is one of deep humility. We must acknowledge our infinite

unworthiness to participate in the celebration of such a holy solemnity:

1. Because it belongs to heaven rather than to earth, for the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a feast of the Seraphim rather than of sinful men.

2. Because, through our negligence, God's blessings have not borne adequate fruit in our soul, although we have celebrated this Feast many times.

The divine Heart is the source of every grace that we have received from heaven throughout our lives; yet our ingratitude and infidelity have rendered these precious gifts fruitless and ineffectual.

May these thoughts inspire us to profound humility. Let us enter again and again into a true spirit of penance, which will prompt us to detest our sins, to excite genuine contrition in our souls, and to make a good confession to purify our hearts so that we may become worthy recipients of the light and grace necessary for a holy celebration of this Feast.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

281 -

### THIRD POINT

THE THIRD DISPOSITION IS UNION WITH THE THREE  
DIVINE PERSONS OF THE BLESSED TRINITY, THE  
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE ANGELS AND THE SAINTS

To excite the third disposition, we must offer ourselves to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to all the angels and saints! especially to our guardian angels and our patron saints. We must implore them to prepare our hearts and to invite the heavenly court to celebrate this Feast with us. Let us ask them to make us associates and participants in their ardent love for the most adorable Heart of Jesus.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus, for the ineffable gift of Thy Sacred Heart."  
*Gratias tibi, Domine Jesu, super inenarrabili dono Cordis tui.*

282 -

### **SECOND MEDITATION** **The Day of the Feast** **The Gift of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

#### FIRST POINT

JESUS HAS GIVEN US HIS SACRED HEART

ADORE and consider our most lovable Saviour in the excess of His goodness and in the generosity of His love towards us. Consider attentively His boundless beneficence. He has given us life and all the benefits that spring from the gift of life. He has given us His Eternal Father to be Our True Father, His most holy Mother to be our dear Mother, His angels to be our protectors and His saints to be our advocates and intercessors. He has given us His Church, our second Mother, together with all the sacraments of His Church for our salvation and sanctification. He has given us all His thoughts, words, actions and mysteries, all His sufferings and His very life which He spent and sacrificed for us, even to the last drop of His Precious Blood.

Moreover, He has given us His most lovable Heart, the principle and source of all other gifts. The charity of His divine Heart impelled Him to emanate from the adorable bosom of His Father, and come upon earth so that He might give us all these priceless favors. This Heart, humanly divine and divinely human, merited these graces by His sufferings, endured for us on earth.

## SECOND POINT

### WE SHOULD GIVE OUR HEARTS TO JESUS

How shall we repay our loving Redeemer for so much love? We must render love for love. In return for the gift of His Sacred Heart, we must give Him our hearts without reserve. To return Our Lord

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

283 -

love for love, we must offer our love wholly and completely to Him. He has given us His Heart for all eternity; we must give Him ours forever. He has given us His Heart with infinite love; let us give Him ours in union with His infinite love. He is not satisfied with giving us His own Heart, He has also given us the Heart of His Eternal Father, the Heart of His most holy Mother and the hearts of all His angels and saints. He even gives the hearts of all mankind who are commanded under pain of eternal damnation to love us as He has loved us: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15, 12).

Let us also offer Him in thanksgiving the Heart of His Eternal Father, the Heart of His holy Mother, the hearts of all the angels and saints and of all men; these are ours to give as though they belonged to us. St. Paul assures us that with the gift of His Son the Eternal Father has given us all things: "Hath he not also, with him, given us all things?" (Rom. 8, 32), and that all things are ours: "For all are yours" (1 Cor. 3, 22). Above all, let us offer Him His own Heart; He has given it to us; therefore, it is ours and is the most acceptable offering we could make to Him. It is His own Heart and at the same time the Heart of His Eternal Father, one by unity of essence. It is also the Heart of His most Holy Mother, whose heart is one with His by unity of will and affection.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Let us give thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for His ineffable gifts."

Gratias infinitas super inenarrabilibus donis ejus.

284 -

## THIRD MEDITATION

### **The Gift of This Feast Is a Great Favor Bestowed by Our Lord**

## FIRST POINT

### EXCELLENCE OF THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

LET us adore the incomprehensible goodness of our most loving Redeemer in giving us this holy Feast. It is, indeed, most extraordinary grace.

To understand it at all adequately, we must remember that the feasts celebrated by Holy

Church during the course of the year are fountains of sanctification and blessings, but this Feast is a veritable sea of grace and holiness. The Feast of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus constitutes an immense ocean of feasts because it commemorates the principle of all the other feasts celebrated by Holy Church. It also is the festival of the prime source of everything that is great, holy and venerable in each of the other feasts.

It is our duty, then, to render infinite thanks to our Saviour for His goodness, and to invite the Blessed Virgin, all the angels and saints and all creatures to unite with us to praise~ bless and glorify Him for this ineffable favor.

We should also dispose our souls to receive the graces Our Divine Lord wills to communicate to us during the solemnity of this wonderful Feast. We must make a strong resolution to do everything in our power and to employ all our affections and every means possible to continue to celebrate it appropriately and devoutly during the Octave.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

285 -

## SECOND POINT

### OUR DUTIES TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Why has the King of all hearts given us this Feast of His most lovable Heart? Solely that we may discharge our obligations to Him. We have four principal duties to fulfil.

The first duty is adoration. Let us adore the Heart of Jesus with all our heart and all our strength. It is infinitely worthy of adoration because it is the Heart of God, the Heart of the Only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father and of God made man. Let us adore this precious Heart, offering It all the adoration ever accorded to It in heaven and on earth. O my Saviour, may the whole universe unite in adoration of Thy divine Heart! I willingly consent to be reduced to nothingness now and forever, by means of Thy grace, so that the Sacred Heart of Jesus may be incessantly adored by the whole universe.

Our second duty is to praise, bless, glorify and thank His infinitely generous Heart for Its tremendous love for the Eternal Father, His most holy Mother, all the angels, all the saints, and all creatures, especially ourselves. Let us also thank Him for all the gifts, favors and blessings poured out from this immense sea of graces upon all things created, particularly upon us. O most sublime Heart, I offer Thee all the praise, glory and thanksgiving rendered Thee in heaven and on earth, in time and eternity. May all hearts praise and bless Thee forever!

The third duty is to ask pardon of His kind Heart for all the sorrow and suffering endured for our sins, and to offer in reparation all the satisfaction and joys given to Our Lord by His Eternal Father, by His Blessed Mother and by all ardent and faithful hearts. Let us accept out of love for the Sacred Heart all the trials, sorrow and affliction which may come upon us.

The fourth duty is to love this divine Heart with all possible affection and fervor in the name of those who do not love It and to offer It the entire love of all hearts that belong to It. O Heart all-lovable and all-loving, when shall I begin to love Thee as I should? I am under countless obligations to love Thee; yet, alas, I realize that I have not

even commenced. Grant me the grace to begin straightway to love Thee. Destroy in my heart whatever is displeasing to Thee and establish instead the reign of Thy holy love.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O God of my heart, O Jesus, my portion forever:  
*Deus cordis mei, pars mea, Jesus in aeternum.*

#### FOURTH MEDITATION

##### **The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is Our Refuge, Our Oracle and Our Treasure**

###### FIRST POINT

###### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR REFUGE

IN THE Feast we are celebrating, our most loving Saviour has given us His Heart not only as the object of our homage and adoration, but also as our refuge and our shelter. Let us have recourse to this haven in all our undertakings, and seek therein our consolation in our sorrows and afflictions. Let us place ourselves in the shadow of its protection against the malice of the world, against our own passions and the snares of the devil; let us retire to this shelter of goodness and mercy to shield ourselves from all the perils and miseries of life. Let us seek refuge in the Sacred Heart, in the tower of strength, where we may escape the vengeance of divine justice for our sins which caused the death of the very Author of life. May this most benign and generous Heart be our shelter and our refuge in all our necessities!

###### SECOND POINT

###### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR ORACLE

Our Divine Lord has given us His Heart also to be our oracle. How much more valuable is this gift than the first oracle which was placed in the tabernacle of Moses and afterwards in the temple of Solomon! The first oracle was confined to one place, but ours is to be found wherever our Saviour is present. The former remained in existence but a few centuries; ours will last until the end of time. The oracle of Old Law spoke by the voice of an angel, but the oracle of the New Law is the very voice of Christ Himself. O Jesus, Thou dost speak heart to

heart, teaching us Thy will, resolving our doubts, smoothing our difficulties when we have recourse to Thy Sacred heart with faith, humility and confidence.

If we wish to know what God asks of us upon different occasions, if we have a difficult task to undertake, if we are in doubt or perplexity, let us have recourse to the Heart of Our Lord, celebrating Holy Mass in His honor or else receiving Holy Communion. Thus, we shall experience the consoling effects of His goodness.



### THIRD POINT

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR TREASURE

Our most lovable Redeemer has also given us His most loving Heart to be our treasure. It is an immense and inexhaustible treasure which enriches heaven and earth with infinite blessings. Let us draw from this treasure whatever we need to pay our infinite debts to divine justice for our failings. Let us offer the Most Sacred Heart in satisfaction for our numberless sins, offenses and negligences.

If we lack a particular virtue, we must draw upon the treasure house of all virtues, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. If we need humility, let us beg Him to impart to us a share in His profound humility. If we need charity, let us implore Him by His most ardent charity to give us perfect charity. Likewise we may develop each virtue in turn.

When we need a special grace to meet certain circumstances, let us ask our Lord through His most benign Heart to grant it to us from His Sacred Heart, our treasure house.

If we desire to help the souls in purgatory, let us offer God our precious treasure that He Himself may take from it the price due His justice.

When the poor beg for alms, we should ask the Sacred Heart for the grace to respond to their appeal and give them a share in our heavenly treasure by saying this prayer: "O most benign and generous Heart of Jesus, have mercy upon all those who suffer."

When people ask to be remembered in our prayers, or make any request of us, we should lift up our hearts to Christ, our treasure, saying

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

289 -

with true confidence and with deep humility: "O loving Saviour, arouse in me the feelings of Thy charitable Heart toward all who come to me for help."

The heart of every man is attached to whatever is his treasure. Let us so direct our life that all the affections of our heart may be concentrated on the greatest of all treasures, the most amiable Heart of Jesus.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"O God of my heart, O Jesus, my love forever."  
Deus cordis mei, amor meus, Jesus in aeternum.

290 -

### FIFTH MEDITATION

#### **The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Perfect Model and Rule of Our Lives**

### FIRST POINT

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS OUR PERFECT MODEL

WE SHALL never be able to understand adequately and esteem at its full value the inconceivable grace our Lord has granted us through the gift of His Divine Heart. Let us picture a man who was such a favorite of a king that he could truthfully say: "The king's heart belongs to me." What happiness and joy to be so favored! But we have infinitely more than the heart of an earthly king. We have the Heart of the King of Kings, who loves us so ardently that each one of us can truly say: "The Heart of Jesus belongs to me."

Yes, this admirable Heart is mine. It is mine because the Eternal Father has given it to me; it is mine because the Blessed Virgin has given it to me; it is mine because He Himself has given it to me, not only to be my refuge and shelter in my needs, to be my oracle and my treasure, but also to be the model and rule of my life and of my actions. I wish to study this rule constantly so as to follow it faithfully.

I must consider what the Heart of Jesus hates and what it loves, in order to hate only what it hates and love only what it loves. The only thing it hates or ever shall hate is sin. Did the gentle Heart of Our Lord feel any hatred for the miserable Jews who persecuted Him so unjustly, or for the executioners who treated Him so cruelly? No, He never experienced the emotion of hatred. On the contrary, He besought His Eternal Father to pardon His executioners and even excused the most outrageous of all crimes.

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

291 -

I wish to follow the Divine Rule for love of Thee, my Saviour. I will hate nothing but sin; I will love all that Thou lovest, even my enemies. With the help of Thy grace I will do all the good I can to those who seek to harm me.

#### SECOND POINT

##### SENTIMENTS THAT SHOULD FILL OUR HEARTS IN IMITATION OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

My rule tells me that I must have in my heart what is in the Heart of Our Lord: "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2, 5). These sentiments are:

1. His affection for the person and will of His Eternal Father. He so loves His Father that He has sacrificed Himself and is still prepared to sacrifice Himself a hundred thousand times for the glory of God the Father. His love for the divine will is so great that never once in the course of His life did He prefer His own will and found His entire satisfaction in doing His Father's will: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (John 4, 34)

2. Another sentiment of His Heart is horror of sin. He hates evil to such a degree that He delivered Himself to the wrath of His enemies and to the torments of the Cross to crush the infernal monster.

3. A third sentiment is His esteem for the Cross and for suffering, which He loves so tenderly that the Holy Ghost, speaking of His Passion, called it the day of His Heart's joy: "In the day of the joy of his heart" (Can. 3, 11)

4. His love for His Mother is the fourth sentiment of His divine Heart. He loves her alone more than all His angels and saints together.

5. There is also a sentiment of charity for us. Our Saviour so devotedly loves us that "it

seems," says St. Bonaventure, "that He hates Himself for us." In tantum me diligis, ut te pro me odisse videaris.

6. Lastly, there is the attitude of His Heart towards the world. He regards it as something accursed and outcast, openly declaring that it has no part in His prayers: "I pray not for the world" (John 17, 9), and that His children are not of the world: "They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world" (John 17, 16).

292-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Such are the divine principles I wish to observe for love of Thee, my Saviour. I long to love God with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength. I long also to find my satisfaction in following in all things and everywhere His most adorable will. I long so to abominate all kinds of sin, that by means of Thy holy grace I may rather die than ever consent to it. O my Jesus, make me love crosses and afflictions that I may seek all my joy in them for the love of Thee, and that I may say with St. Paul: "I am filled with comfort: I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation" (2 Cor- 7, 4)

Grant me a share in Thy very great love for Thy holy Mother that she after Thyself may be the centre of my veneration and fervent devotion. Impress upon my heart the hatred Thou hast for the world. Make me detest it as a veritable antichrist which is always opposed to Thee and has crucified Thee so relentlessly. Grant, I beseech Thee, O God of my heart, the grace, ~ that for the love of Thee I may always preserve in my soul an entire and perfect charity for my neighbor. This is the rule of rules: "And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them" (Gal. 6, 16).

Ejaculatory prayer:

"O Sacred Heart of Jesus, law and rule of our heart."  
O Cor Jesu, lex et regula cordis nostri.

293-

#### SIXTH MEDITATION

##### **Jesus Gave Us His Sacred Heart to Be Our Heart**

##### FIRST POINT

##### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS GIVEN TO US TO BE OUR HEART

THE Son of God gives us His Heart not only to be the model and rule of our life, but also to be our heart, so that by the gift of this Heart, immense, infinite and eternal, we may fulfil all our duties to God in a manner worthy of His infinite perfections. We have three obligations towards God:

1. To adore His divine grandeur.
2. To render Him thanks for His unspeakable gifts.
3. To implore Him to grant through His divine generosity all the necessities of soul and body.

How are we able to discharge these duties in a manner worthy of God? We are utterly unable to do so. Even if we had the mind, the heart and the strength of all angels and men united, and if we were

to use them to adore, thank and love God and to satisfy His divine justice, we could accomplish absolutely nothing to discharge our obligations as creatures of God. We have, however, received from our divine Saviour the gift of His adorable Heart which is the perfect means of fulfilling all these duties. We should employ the Sacred Heart as if It were our own heart, to adore God fittingly, to love Him perfectly, and to satisfy all our obligations adequately so that our homage and love may be worthy of His supreme majesty. Eternal and infinite thanks be rendered Thee, O good Jesus, for the infinitely precious gift of Thy divine Heart. May all the angels, saints and all creatures bless Thee forever.

294 -

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### SECOND POINT

#### How WE SHOULD MAKE USE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

What happiness and what wealth to possess the divine Heart of Jesus! What a treasure to have at our disposal! How great is our obligation, O my Saviour, because of Thy incomprehensible goodness! Thou dost ask the Eternal Father to make us one with Him and with Thee, as Thou and He are but one. Consequently Thou dost wish to be one in heart with Thee and with Thy Adorable Father. Thou hast willed to be our Head, and hast willed us to be Thy members and to have but one heart and one spirit with Thee. Thou hast made us children of Thy Heavenly Father; Thou hast given us Thy divine Heart, so that we may love the Father with Thy very own heart.

Thou hast assured us that the Adorable Father loves us even as He loves Thee. "Thou hast loved them, as thou hast also loved me" (John 17, 23). Thou dost love us with the same Heart with which the Father loves Thee: "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you" (John 15, 9). Thus, Thou dost give us Thy Heart that we may love the Father and Thyself with the same heart and with the same love with which Thou lovest us. We should, therefore, employ Thy Sacred Heart to offer Thee our adoration, praise, thanksgiving and all our other duties with a reverence and a love worthy of Thy infinite greatness.

What must we do to employ the great Heart that God has given us? We must do two things. First, whenever we adore, praise, thank and love God, or practise acts of some virtue, or accomplish some deed in His service, we must renounce our own heart which is poisoned with the venom of sin and of self-love. Secondly, we must unite ourselves to the love, charity, humility and all the holy dispositions of His Sacred Heart, so that we may be worthy to adore, love, praise, serve and glorify God with the Heart of God.

O my Saviour, extend the power of Thy eternal arm to separate me from myself and unite me to Thee. Pluck out my miserable heart and replace it with Thine own, enabling me to say: I will give praise to

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

295 -

thee, O Lord, with my whole heart" (PS. 9, 2). I will praise Thee and love Thee, my Lord, with my whole heart- with the great Heart of Jesus, which is my own heart.

O all lovable and all loving Heart of my Saviour, be Thou the Heart of my heart, the soul of my soul, the spirit of my spirit, the life of my life and the sole principle of all my thoughts, words and actions, of all the faculties of my soul, and of all my senses, both interior and exterior.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O Heart all mine, I possess all things in possessing Thee!"  
*O Cor meum, Cor unicum, in te mihi sunt omnia!*

296 -

## **SEVENTH MEDITATION**

### **Profound Humility, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

#### *FIRST POINT*

#### *SELF-ABASEMENT OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS*

Humility is a virtue including an infinity of degrees because there are innumerable sources of humiliation. There are, however, three fundamentals. The first is our nothingness, which is a bottomless abyss of abjection and humiliation. The second is the infinite grandeur of God for a greatness necessarily involves lowliness in those who are inferior to it, and the greater the elevation, the greater is the demand of humiliation on the part of the inferior. That is why the supreme greatness of the majesty of God should impress on created beings an abasement infinite in itself. The third principal humiliation is sin. The least of our sins is an infinite abyss of abasement, and God could justly annihilate us for our smallest fault.

Self-abasement is the first effect that humility should produce in our heart. It operated prodigiously in the Heart of our Divine Saviour because Jesus, as man, understood very clearly that He Himself was nothing and of Himself had only nothingness.

Secondly, His very clear perception of the immense grandeur of God held our Lord continually in a state of incomprehensible lowliness.

Thirdly, the God-Man realized that He was a son of Adam, and that original sin is an immense ocean of sin. It is the very fountainhead of all the sins past, present and future in the whole world, even if it should last for thousands of years more. Jesus understood that if He had been merely man and had been born of an ordinary mother, and if He had not been preserved at the moment of His conception, He would have been as capable as the other children of Adam of committing sin. This realization held Him in a state of profound humiliation. Beyond this,

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

297 -

He saw Himself charged with all the crimes of the world as if they had been His own. *Peccata nostra sua esse voluit*, says St. Augustine, and He saw Himself obliged to bear before God the humiliation of a number of sins as great as the drops of water and grains of sand in the sea.

O Jesus, who could understand all the humiliations Thou didst bear on earth to destroy my pride? How is it possible that, after all this, my heart can tolerate for one single instant this frightful monster?

## SECOND POINT

### *HATRED OF THE HEART OF JESUS FOR THE GLORY AND ESTEEM OF THE WORLD*

To know the second effect of humility in the Heart of our Redeemer, let us study His continual hatred for the esteem and glory of this world during the whole course of His life here below. He is the Only Son of God and is God equal to His Father. He is the King of glory, the sovereign Monarch of heaven and earth, who merits the homage and adoration of all creatures. If He were to display the palest ray of His majesty, the whole universe would fall prostrate at His feet to adore Him. But He permits none of His grandeur to appear, either at His birth or in the course of His life, not even after the Resurrection, nor in the most adorable Sacrament where He is glorious and immortal. He fled when the Jews wished to make Him king, and declared that His kingdom is not of this world, so much did He detest the glories and honors of the world.

O Jesus, impress these sentiments upon my heart and grant that I may learn ever to esteem the praises of the world as poison from hell.

## THIRD POINT

### *LOVE OF THE HEART OF JESUS FOR HUMILIATION*

Recall to your mind all the humiliations, all the confusion, contempt, abjection, opprobrium and ignominies that our most adorable Saviour bore in His Incarnation, in His Birth, in His Circumcision, in His Flight into Egypt, and in all the mysteries of His Passion. All these humiliations constitute a magnificent feast that His divine love has

298-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

prepared and all the ignominies are as delicious viands, upon which He has feasted and satisfied His extreme hunger for abasement.

Whence did this insatiable hunger proceed if not from His infinite love for His Heavenly Father and for us? This love gave Him the incredible desire to be humiliated and considered as nothing, to atone for the infinite injury and the inconceivable dishonor the sinner had shown to God. The sinner tears God from His throne so that he may put himself in His Creator's place, preferring his own satisfactions to God's good pleasure, his own honor to that of God and his own will to the Divine Will. This injury only a God can perfectly repair by his own abasement.

That is why the incomprehensible love of the Son of God for His Father not only obliged Him to suffer so many humiliations, but also brought Him to the abyss of ignominies to seek his joys and delights, to repair more perfectly the dishonor shown to His Father. His love compelled Him also to deliver us from the eternal pains of hell, to acquire for us everlasting bliss in heaven, to destroy our pride, the source of all our sins, and to establish in our souls that humility which is the true foundation of all virtues.

Infinite thanks, O my Jesus, be to Thy holy humility! Everlasting praise to the Eternal Father who exalted Thee as highly as Thou hast been humiliated and has given Thee a name above all other names! May every knee in heaven, on earth and in hell bend to adore and glorify Jesus Christ, and may every tongue confess my Saviour, rejoicing in the immense and eternal glory of His Father!

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, have mercy on us." Jesu, mitis et humilis corde, miserere nobis.

299 -

## **EIGHTH MEDITATION**

### **The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the King of Martyrs**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **SUFFERINGS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS BECAUSE OF OUR SINS**

ALL the sufferings of the Holy Martyrs pale into insignificance in comparison with the infinite sufferings of the adorable Heart of the King of Martyrs. If we could number all the sins of the universe, we would count the myriad sharp arrows that pierced the divine Heart of our Saviour with so many wounds. These wounds caused the Sacred Heart to burn with love for His Eternal Father, whom He beheld outraged and dishonored by innumerable crimes. O my Saviour, I hate all my sins because they are the detestable executioners that brought Thy most gentle Heart to martyrdom.

Again, let us picture to ourselves a countless number of miserable souls for whom our Saviour had an incredible love. He foresaw that, notwithstanding all His sufferings for their salvation, they would by their own fault be lost forever. This vision of the damned inflicted unutterable sorrow on the most charitable Heart of Jesus. O unhappy souls, why have you not loved Him, who has loved you more than Himself, since He has given His very life and blood for your salvation! O dearest Jesus, give me all the hearts of these unfortunate souls, that I may love and praise Thee for them eternally.

300 -

## **MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **SUFFERINGS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS BECAUSE OF THE TRIALS AND TORMENTS OF THE MARTYRS AND CHRISTIANS**

Let us recall to our minds all the sufferings, the agony, the trials and the torments of so many thousands of martyrs and of all true Christians. All these afflictions are so many bleeding wounds for the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. His most benign Heart could suffer more than the tenderest of hearts because it was filled with an infinite charity for His beloved children. He retained before His eyes the sight of all their crosses and sufferings. In the hour of affliction each one sought consolation from His adorable Heart.

No human mind can understand the agonizing martyrdom suffered by the all-paternal heart of our Saviour in union with His heroic martyrs. This is expressed most remarkably in the words of the Prophet Isaias: "Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53, 4), and also in the words of St. Matthew: "He took our infirmities, and bore our diseases" (Matt. 8, 17). Truly we can call the Sacred Heart the King of Martyrs and the Glory of the Cross! How consoling it is for the afflicted to know that all their pain and sorrow have already been suffered by the most benign Heart of Jesus! He has borne all sufferings first out of love for His martyrs! Let us give ourselves also to Him to bear all our afflictions in union with immeasurable love with which He first suffered them.

### THIRD POINT

#### SUFFERINGS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

All the other sufferings of our Saviour seem to diminish when compared to those endured by His divine Heart on the cross. The sufferings of Calvary were so excruciating that the perfect body of our Saviour was broken with pain and sorrow and His soul He commended into the hands of His Father. O my Saviour, what made Thee suffer so

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

301 -

many torments if it was not Thine infinite love for Thy Father and for us? Indeed, we can say that Thou hast died of loving sorrow and that Thy Heart has been torn and broken by sorrowing love for the glory of Thy Father and for our redemption. O most adorable Heart of Jesus, how shall I thank Thee for the excess of Thy bounty? O that I could possess all the hearts of heaven and earth to sacrifice them in the flames of Thy love!

O Most Holy Father, how canst Thou refuse any petition asked of Thee through the amiable Heart of Thy Son, broken with sorrow for love of Thee and for love of us? No, it is impossible. Rather wouldst Thou allow heaven and earth to disappear. It is, then, through this divine Heart overcome by love and sorrow for me that I implore Thee, O Adorable Father, to take full and entire possession of my heart and to establish there perfectly and forever the reign of the holy love of Jesus and Mary.

Ejaculatory prayer:

Hail! Victim of all woes enthroned  
Upon the Cross, the Martyrs' King!  
Make Thou the Cross a joy intoned,  
The crown and glory that we sing.  
Ave, dolorum victima,  
Centrum crucis, Rex Martyrum,  
Fac nostra sit Crux gloria,  
Amor, corona, gaudium.

302 -

### NINTH MEDITATION

#### **The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Heart of Mary**

##### FIRST POINT

#### MUTUAL LOVE OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY

THE virginal Heart of the Blessed Mother of Jesus contains more love for her Dear Son than all the angels and saints together; thus, the Sacred Heart of the Only Son of Mary is so full of love for His most loving Mother that He is more to her than all created things together.

Let us offer to Jesus the heart and love of His Blessed Mother in reparation for all our want of love and service towards Him. Let us offer to His most worthy Mother, who is also our Mother, the Heart and love of her Son in satisfaction for our ingratitude and infidelity towards her.



## SECOND POINT

### THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS GAVE THE HEART OF JESUS TO MARY, AND THROUGH HER TO US

Not only is the Blessed Virgin the first object, after God, of the ardent love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, but the Sacred Heart is really the Heart of Mary for five principal reasons. The first three reasons are: 1. Because the Eternal Father has given her the Heart of His Only begotten Son as a Father gives the heart of a son to his mother; 2. because the Son has given His most loving Heart to the most admirable of mothers; 3. because the Holy Ghost has imparted to Mary the very spirit of love which unites the Blessed Trinity in the Sacred Heart of her Son. These Three Divine Persons continually and eternally give Mary the adorable Heart of the God-Man, so that she may give us her most precious gift, the Sacred Heart of her Divine Son.

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

303 -

Incessant and everlasting praise be to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost for this infinitely precious gift that They have given to our Blessed Mother and through her to us. O Most Holy Trinity, I offer Thee the most adorable Heart of Jesus and the most loving Heart of His Mother in thanksgiving for Thy infinite goodness in my regard. I also offer Thee, in union with those two most ardent Hearts, my own unworthy heart, with the hearts of all my brethren, humbly beseeching Thee to take full possession of them forever.

## THIRD POINT

### OTHER REASONS WHY THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE HOLY HEART OF MARY

The fourth reason why the Sacred Heart is truly the Heart of Mary is that the Eternal Father, having considered the Blessed Virgin from the very instant of her conception as the one chosen to be the Mother of God, gave her from the first moment of her life a love similar to His love for His Divine Son. According to many theologians, Mary had more love for Jesus at that moment than all the Seraphim will ever have. Therefore., Mary's incomparable love for Jesus drew Him into her sacred womb and into her Heart to rest there eternally as the Heart of her Heart and as a divine Sun that sheds its celestial light into her soul and inflames it with divine fire.

The fifth reason why the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Heart of Mary is that, at the moment of the Incarnation, she cooperated with the Blessed Trinity to form the human Heart of Jesus, which was formed of her virginal blood. The blood of her holy Heart passed into the Heart of Jesus and received the perfection that was needed to form the Heart of the God-Man. This divinely human and humanly divine Heart dwelt in the sacred womb of Mary as a furnace of divine love, a furnace which transformed the Heart of Mary into the Heart of Jesus and made these two Hearts but one and the same Heart in a unity of spirit, affection and will.

The holy Heart of Mary was, therefore, always closely united to the Sacred Heart of her Divine Son. She always willed what He willed and also consented to act and to suffer so that the work of our salvation

304 -

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

might be accomplished. Hence, the Fathers of the Church plainly assert that the Mother of the Saviour cooperated with Him in a very special way in the redemption of mankind. That is why our holy

Redeemer told St. Bridget of Sweden, whose revelations have been approved by the Church, that He and His holy Mother worked in perfect harmony, uno corde, for our salvation.

Thus, the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Heart of Mary. These two Hearts are actually only a single Heart, which was given to us by the Blessed Trinity and by our Blessed Mother, so that we, the children of Jesus and Mary, might have but one heart with our Heavenly Father and our holy Mother and that we might love and glorify God with the same heart, a heart worthy of the infinite grandeur of His divine majesty.

Ejaculatory prayer:

O Heart of Jesus and Mary, my most loving Heart!  
O Cor Jesu et Mariae, Cor meum amantissimum!

305-

*Eight Other Meditations on The Sacred Heart of Jesus*

**FIRST MEDITATION**

**The Blessed Trinity Lives and Reigns  
in the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

FIRST POINT

THE ETERNAL FATHER DWELLS IN THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

CONSIDER that the Eternal Father is in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, bringing to birth His Well-beloved Son and causing Him to dwell there the same all-holy and divine life that He lives in His own adorable bosom from all eternity. He imprints there a perfect image of His own divine fatherhood, so that this humanly divine and divinely human Heart shall be Father to all the hearts of the children of God. Therefore, we should look upon Him, love and honor Him as Our Loving Father, and endeavor to imprint upon our own hearts a perfect likeness of His life and virtues.

O good Jesus, engrave the image of Thy most holy Heart upon our hearts and make us live only by love for Thy Heavenly Father. Would that we might die of love for Thee, as Thou didst die of love for Thy Eternal Father!

SECOND POINT

THE DIVINE WORD LIVES AND REIGNS IN THE  
SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Consider that the eternal Word exists in that royal Heart, united with it in the most intimate union imaginable, the hypostatic union,

306-

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

which causes that Heart to be worshipped with the adoration that is due to God. He is there with a life that is somehow more helpful, if one may so speak, than His life in the Heart and bosom of His Father. The Word lives, but does not rule in the Heart and bosom of the Heavenly Father; whereas He lives and rules in the Heart of the God-Man, ruling over all human passions which are centered in the heart so absolutely that they do not stir except by His order.

O Jesus, King of my heart, live and rule over my passions, uniting them with Thine, never allowing them to be used except under Thy guidance and for Thy glory alone.

### THIRD POINT

#### THE HOLY GHOST LIVES AND REIGNS IN THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Consider that the Holy Ghost lives and reigns ineffably in the Heart of Jesus, where He conceals the infinite treasures of the knowledge and the wisdom of God. He fills the Sacred Heart with all His gifts to a preeminent degree, according to His divine words:

*"And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11, 2-3).*

Consider, finally, that these Three Divine Persons live and reign in the Heart of the Saviour, as if they were seated on the most high~ throne of their love, in the primal heaven of their glory, in the paradise of their dearest delights. They there shed abroad, with inexplicable abundance and profusion, wonderful lights, and the burning fires and flames of their eternal love.

O Most Holy Trinity, infinite praise be to Thee forever for all the wonders of love that Thou dost work in the Heart of my Jesus! I offer Thee my heart, with the hearts of all my brethren, begging Thee most humbly to take entire possession of them, to destroy in them every

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

307 -

thing displeasing to Thee, and to establish there the sovereign rule of Thy divine love.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

O most Holy Trinity, Eternal Life of Hearts, reign in all hearts forever!

*O sacrosancta Trinitas, aeterna vita cordium, in corde regnes omnium!*

308 -

### SECOND MEDITATION

#### The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Sanctuary and the Image of the Divine Perfections

### FIRST POINT

#### THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS SUBSIST AND REIGN IN THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

LET us adore and contemplate all the perfections of the divine nature, subsisting and reigning in the Sacred Heart of Jesus: that is to say, the eternity of God, the infinity of God, His love, charity, justice, mercy, power, immortality, wisdom, goodness, glory, felicity, patience, holiness and all other perfections.

Let us adore these divine perfections in all the wonderful effects they produce in the divine

Heart of the Son of God. Let us give wholehearted thanks for these manifestations, and offer them all the worship, glory and love which have been and shall be rendered to them eternally by that same Heart.

## SECOND POINT

### THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS STAMP THEIR ETERNAL IMPRESS ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Let us consider that those adorable perfections imprint their image and likeness on the divine Heart of Our Lord, in a manner infinitely more excellent than the most gifted human or angelic minds can conceive or express. The adorable Heart of Jesus bears within itself the image of eternity by its perfect detachment forever from things fleeting and temporal and by its exceeding great affection for things divine and eternal. The Sacred Heart bears the image of immortality by its infinite love for the Heavenly Father and for us, a love whose

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

309 -

immensity reaches everywhere., in heaven, on earth and under the earth. If we consider the nature of that incomparable Heart, we shall see without difficulty that it bears within itself a living likeness of all the other perfections of the Godhead.

O wonderful Heart of Jesus, we offer Thee our hearts; impress upon them, we beseech Thee, some reflection of that divine likeness, so that in us may be accomplished the commandment of our divine Master: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5, 48).

## THIRD POINT

### THE DIVINE MERCY SHOULD BE THE OBJECT OF A VERY SPECIAL DEVOTION

Of all the divine perfections mirrored in the Sacred Heart of our Saviour we should have a very special devotion to divine mercy and we should endeavor to engrave its image on our heart. To this end three things may be done. The first is to pardon with all our heart and promptly forget the offenses done against us by our neighbor. The second is to have compassion on his bodily sufferings, and to relieve and succor him. The third is to compassionate the spiritual misfortunes of our brethren, which are much more deserving of sympathy than the corporal ills. For this reason, we ought to have great pity on the numbers of wretched souls who have no pity on themselves, using our prayers, our example and our teaching to safeguard them from the eternal torments of hell.

O most gracious and merciful Heart of Jesus, imprint on our hearts a perfect image of Thy great perfections, so that we may fulfil the commandment Thou hast given us: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6, 36).

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O Holy God, O Strong God, O Immortal God, have mercy on us."

*Sanctus, Deus, sanctus fortis, sanctus immortalis, miserere nobis!*

### THIRD MEDITATION

#### **The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Temple, the Altar and the Censer of Divine Love**

##### FIRST POINT

##### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE TEMPLE OF DIVINE LOVE

THE Holy Ghost, love uncreated and eternal, built this magnificent temple and fashioned it of the virginal blood of the Mother of love. It is dedicated to eternal love. It is infinitely more sacred, more noble, and more venerable than all the temples material and spiritual in heaven and on earth. In this temple, God receives worship praise and glory worthy of His infinite greatness. In this temple, the supreme Preacher continually teaches us most eloquently. It is an everlasting temple that shall have no end. It is the centre of all holiness, incapable of any profanation. It is adorned with all the Christian virtues in the highest degree, and with all the perfections of the divine nature, as with so many living images of the Eternal Godhead.

Let us rejoice in the vision of all the splendors of this wonderful temple and all the glories there rendered to the divine majesty.

##### SECOND POINT

##### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS THE ALTAR OF DIVINE LOVE

The Heart of Jesus is not only the temple, but it is also the altar of divine love. On this altar, the sacred flame of omnipotent love burns night and day. On this altar, the great High Priest Jesus continually offers to the Most Holy Trinity manifold sacrifices and supreme oblation.

##### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

311-

First, He offers Himself as a sacrifice and victim of love, the most holy and precious victim that ever was or can be. He sacrifices utterly and entirely His body, His blood, His soul, His whole life, all His thoughts, all His words, all His actions and all that He suffered on earth. Moreover, He makes that sacrifice perpetually, with a love that is boundless and infinite.

Secondly, He sacrifices everything the Heavenly Father has given Him, namely, all rational and irrational creatures, animate and inanimate beings, which He immolates as so many victims in praise of His Father; but, above all, He sacrifices human beings, the good and the wicked, the blessed and the reprobate. The good He offers as victims of love to His divine goodness. The evil He immolates as victims of the wrath of God, to His awful justice: "Every victim shall be salted with salt" (Mark 9, 48). Thus, the great High Priest sacrifices all things to the glory of His Father on the altar of His Heart. Therefore, He alone may rightly say: "I have joyfully offered all these things" (I Par. 29, 17)

Let us offer ourselves to Him and beg Him to rank us with the victims of His love, to consume us as holocausts in the divine flames burning incessantly on the altar of His Sacred Heart.

### THIRD POINT

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE CENSER OF DIVINE LOVE,

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is not only the temple and the altar, but also the censer of divine love. It is the golden thurible described in the eighth chapter of the Apocalypse, which St. Augustine interprets as the loving Heart of Jesus. In that precious censer all the worship, praise, prayers, desires and affections of all the saints are placed, like so many grains of incense to be offered to God in the Heart of His Well beloved Son, ascending as a most pleasing odor to His divine majesty. There we also must place all our prayers, all our desires, all our devotions, and all the pious affections of our hearts, yes, our very hearts themselves, with all that we do and all that we are, beseeching the King

312 -

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

of all hearts to purify and sanctify all these things, and to offer them to His Father as a heavenly incense of sweet fragrance.

Thus, the Sacred Heart of our divine Lord is the temple, the altar, the censer, the priest, the victim of divine love, all for our sake, performing on our behalf the functions of those divine offices. O love so abundant! O my Saviour, how wonderful are Thy loving kindnesses! Ah, what reverence and praise I should give to Thy loving Heart in return! O most blessed Heart of my Jesus, let me be naught but heart and love towards Thee and let all hearts on heaven and earth be immolated to Thy praise and glory!

Ejaculatory prayer:

Hail, priest of hearts and victim, hail!  
Alone Thou equal art to God.  
Most worthy Temple, Holy Grail,  
And Altar, holiest to laud.  
Ave, Sacerdos cordium,  
Ave, Deo par Victima,  
Templum Deo dignissimum,  
Et Ara sacratissima.

313 -

### FOURTH MEDITATION

#### **The Sacred Heart of Jesus Loves Us with an Everlasting and a Boundless Love**

#### FIRST POINT

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS LOVES US WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE

THE divine Heart of our Saviour is filled with eternal love for us. To realize this truth, one should understand two truths about eternity: first, that it has neither beginning nor end: secondly that it comprised in itself all ages, past, present and future; all the years, months, weeks, days, hours and moments of the past, present and future, and that it comprises them in a fixed and permanent

manner, holding all those things united and joined together in one indivisible point. That is how eternity differs from time. Time runs on incessantly; as one moment arrives, another elapses and is left behind, and so one never sees two moments of time together. But in eternity everything is permanent; whatever is eternal always remains of the same extension.

That is why the eternal love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for us comprises two elements. First, this incomparable Heart has loved us from all eternity, before we were and could have known and loved it, even in spite of the vision and knowledge that it had of all our offenses which were present to its vision as they are now. Secondly, the amiable Heart of Jesus loves us at every moment with all the love wherewith it has ever loved us and shall love us throughout all eternity. Thus, we can see the difference between God's love and ours. Our love is a passing act; the love of God is constant. The love that God has exercised towards us for a hundred thousand years remains in His Heart together with that which He will dispense a hundred thousand years from now. Eternity implies that in God there is nothing past nor

314-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

future, but all is present, so that God loves us now with all the love wherewith He has loved us from all eternity and wherewith He will love us forever.

O eternity of love! O eternal love! If I had existed from all eternity, I should have been bound to love Thee from all eternity; and yet, my God, I have not begun to love Thee as I should. At least, let me begin now, O my Saviour, to love Thee as Thou wouldst be loved. O God of my heart, I give myself to Thee to be united to Thy ceaseless love for me from all eternity. I surrender myself to Thee to be united to the love wherewith Thou lovest Thy Father before all centuries, so as to love the Father and the Son with an eternal love.

#### SECOND POINT

##### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS LOVES US WITH A BOUNDLESS LOVE

The loving Heart of Jesus loves us with a boundless love. The divine and uncreated love which possesses that adorable Heart, is nothing else but God Himself. Now, since God is unlimited, His love is also unlimited. Since God is everywhere, His love is everywhere, in all places and in all things. Therefore, the Sacred Heart of Jesus loves us not only in heaven, but He also loves us on earth. He loves us in the sun, in the stars and in all created things. He loves us in the hearts of all the denizens of heaven and in the hearts of all persons that have some measure of charity for us on earth. All love for ourselves existing in the hearts in heaven and on earth is a participation in the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Moreover, He loves us even in the hearts of our enemies despite the hatred they bear us. I even make bold to say that He loves us in hell, in the hearts of the devils and the damned, in spite of all their wrath and hatred, since the divine love is everywhere, filling heaven and earth like the presence of God.

O boundless love, I plunge myself into thy fires and flames that fill all created beings, in order to love my God and my Saviour in all places and in all things. O Jesus, I offer Thee all the boundless love of Thy Heart, of the adorable Heart of Thy Divine Father, the lovable Heart of Thy holy Mother, and of all the hearts that love Thee in heaven and

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

315-

on earth. I ardently desire that all creatures of the universe be transformed into flaming fires of love

towards Thee.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"How late have I loved Thee, O Goodness so ancient and yet so new, how late have I loved Thee."

*Sero te amavi, bonitas tam antiqua et tam nova, sero te amavi.*

316 -

## **FIFTH MEDITATION**

### **The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is the Source of the Life of the God man, of the Mother of God and of the Children of God**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF THE LIFE OF THE GOD-MAN**

THE adorable Heart of our Saviour is the source of the life of the Godman, and consequently is the source of all the thoughts and feelings of the Son of God on earth, of all the words He pronounced, of all the actions He performed, of all the sufferings He endured, and of the incomprehensible love wherewith He did and suffered all things for our salvation. Therefore, it is to Thy loving Heart, O my Jesus, that our obligation is due. What shall we do to thank Thee? We can do nothing more pleasing to Thee than to offer Thee Thy most divine Heart. I offer it then to Thee, my Saviour, in union with the infinite love wherewith it hath accomplished so many wonderful things for our Redemption.

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF THE LIFE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD**

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the source of the life of Mary, the Mother of God. When that admirable Mother was carrying her Beloved Son in her blessed womb, her virginal Heart was the source of the natural bodily life of her divine Child, but the Heart of that adorable Child was, at the same time, the source of the spiritual and supernatural life of His most worthy Mother. Hence the divine Heart of the Only Son of Mary was the source of all the pious thoughts and

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

317 -

feelings of His Blessed Mother, of all the sacred words she spoke, of all the good deeds she performed, of all the virtues she practised, and of all the pains and sorrows she suffered in order to cooperate with her Beloved Son in the work of our salvation.

Praise eternal, O my Jesus, to Thy divine Heart O my Redeemer, I offer Thee also in thanksgiving for the great wonders of grace that Thy filial Heart hath wrought in Thy glorious Mother, I offer her maternal Heart flaming with love for Thee.



### THIRD POINT

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IS SOURCE OF LIFE OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the source of life of all the children of God. Since it is the source of the life of the Head, it is also the source of life of the members; and since it is the source of life of the Father and the Mother, it is the source of life of the children. That is why we should regard and honor that benign Heart as the source and origin of all the good thoughts in the minds of all Christians, of all the holy words that have issued from their lips, of all the virtues that they have practised, and of all the toil they have borne for their sanctification as Christians.

O my Saviour, may all these things be transmuted into immortal praise to Thy Most Sacred Heart O Jesus, since Thou hast given me that very Heart to be the source of my life, let it be, I beseech Thee, the sole source of all my feelings and affections, of all the faculties and functions of my soul, and of all the use I make of my interior and exterior senses. In fine, let it be the soul of my soul, the spirit of my spirit, and the Heart of my heart.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"O Heart of Jesus, source of all good, to Thee be praise and glory for ever.

*O Cor Jesu, Principium omnium bonorum, tibi laus, tibi gloria in aeternum!*

318 -

### SIXTH MEDITATION

#### Three Hearts of Jesus Which Are But One Heart

##### FIRST POINT

##### THE DIVINE HEART OF: JESUS

WE HAVE three Hearts to adore in our Saviour which, nevertheless, are but one single Heart by virtue of the hypostatic union.

The first is His divine Heart existing from all eternity in the bosom of His Adorable Father, which is but one Heart and one love with the love and Heart of His Father, and which, with the Heart and love of His Father, is the source of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when He gave us His Heart, He also gave us the Heart of His Father and of His adorable Spirit, hence His marvelous words: "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you" (John 15, 9).

He simply means: "I love you with the same Heart and the same love wherewith I love my Father. My Father loves Me with an eternal, boundless and infinite love; I love you also with a love that is eternal, boundless and infinite. My Father causes Me to be what I am, Godlike unto Himself and Only Son of God; and I make you to be by grace and participation what I am by nature and essence, that is to say, gods and children of God, seeing that you have but one and the same Father as I, a Father who loves you with the same Heart and the same love wherewith He loves Me: 'Thou hast loved them, as thou hast also loved me (John 17, 23)- My Eternal Father has constituted Me universal heir of all His goods: 'He hath appointed him heir of all things' (Heb. 1, 2); and I make you My co-heirs: 'Heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ' (Rom. 8, 17); I promise to give you

possession of all My treasures: 'He shall place him over all his goods'(Matt. 24, 47)- My Father finds all His pleasure and delight in Me; and I take My delight and pleasure in you: 'My delights were to be with the children of men'" (Prov. 8, 30

## THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

319 -

O goodness! O love! O God of love, how is it possible for the hearts of men to be so hard and cold towards Thee who art all aflame with the fire of love towards them? O, let all my joy and delight be in thinking of Thee, in speaking of Thee, in serving and loving Thee! O my All, let me be wholly Thine, and do Thou alone possess all that is in me.

## SECOND POINT

### THE SPIRITUAL HEART OF JESUS

The second Heart of Jesus is His spiritual Heart, which is the will of His holy soul, a purely spiritual faculty, whose function is to love what is lovable and to hate what is hateful. But the divine Saviour so perfectly sacrificed His human will to His Divine Father that He never exercised it while on earth and will never exercise it even in heaven, but He sought uniquely and solely His Father's will, according to those words of His: I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 5, 30). I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6, 38). Now, it is out of love for us that Our Lord renounced His own will, in order to perform the work of our salvation solely by the will of His Father, in particular when He prayed to Him in the Garden of Olives: "Father, not my will, but thine be done!" (Luke 22, 42).

O God of my heart, if for love of me Thou didst sacrifice Thy utterly holy and divine will, how much more should I renounce my own will for love of Thee, wholly depraved and corrupted as it is by sin! Ah, let me renounce it with all my heart forever, imploring Thee most humbly, O my adorable Redeemer, to crush it like a serpent full of venom and to establish in its place the rule of Thy divine will.

## THIRD POINT

### THE CORPOREAL HEART OF JESUS

The third Heart of Jesus is the Sacred Heart of His deified body, a furnace of love divine and of incomparable love for us. Since the corporeal Heart is hypostatically united to the Person of the Word,

320-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

It is enkindled with flames of infinite love for us. Its love is so intense that it constrains the Son of God to bear us continually in His Heart; to fix His eyes ever upon us; to take such a great interest in the smallest details concerning us that He verily numbers all the hairs of our head, allowing not one of them to perish; to ask His Father that we might make our eternal abode within His bosom: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me" (John 17, 24); and to assure us that, if we vanquish the enemies of His glory and of our salvation, He will make us sit with Him on His own throne, and will let us enter into possession of the same kingdom and the same glory that His Eternal Father has given Him.

Oh, how abundant and rapturous is the love of Jesus for such faithless and ungrateful men as we! O Jesus, my love, either take away my life or let me live only to love Thee, to praise and glorify

Thee unceasingly. Let me die a thousand deaths rather than willingly do anything to grieve Thee! Thou hast three Hearts which are but one and the same Heart, a Heart wholly devoted to loving me continually. Would that I possessed all the hearts in the universe that I might consume them in Thy holy love!

Ejaculatory prayer:

"I love Thee, O most loving Jesus, I love Thee, O infinite goodness, I love Thee with my whole heart and I wish to love Thee more and more."

Amo te, amantissime Jesu, amo te, bonitas infinita, amo te ex toto corde meo, et magis atque amare volo.

321 -

### **SEVENTH MEDITATION The Miracles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **MIRACLES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IN THE REALM OF NATURE**

PICTURE to yourself the realm of nature, the great universe comprising so many wonderful things, namely, the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars and comets, the four elements, of which the air is peopled by such a great variety of birds; the earth, replete with its marvelous abundance of animals, trees, plants, flowers, fruits, metals, stones; the sea, filled with such a prodigious multitude of fishes. Add to that the creatures of reason, men and angels; consider them in the natural state of their creation. What a miracle to have made this amazing universe out of nothing! It is not only a miracle, it is a world of miracles without number.

Count all the creatures made by God and you will count so many miracles that God has performed in drawing them from the abyss of nothingness. Number all the moments that have elapsed since the creation of the world and you will number so many miracles since preservation is a continuous creation. There are also innumerable other wonders perpetually wrought in the governance of this universe. Now, who is the author of those innumerable miracles? It is the inconceivable goodness and the incomprehensible love of the divine Heart of that adorable Word, mentioned by St. John the Evangelist in the first words of his Gospel: "All things were made by him" (John 1, 3)- It is because of His love for us that our divine Lord has made all things, even though He had always before His eyes the ingratitude, the offenses and the crimes without limit which He was obliged to suffer and still endures every day from us.

322 -

#### **MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

That is why all those things which He created are so many tongues and voices preaching to us unceasingly the ineffable charity of His most gracious Heart, and exhorting us to adore Him, to love Him and to glorify Him in every possible manner.

Heaven and earth, says St. Augustine, and all things contained therein, cease not to tell me that I should love my God: Caelum et terra et omnia quae in eis sunt, non cessant mihi dicere ut amem Deum meum.

## SECOND POINT

### MIRACLES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IN THE REALM OF GRACE

Picture the realm of grace, which comprises innumerable wonders incomparably surpassing those of the world of nature. It encompasses all the miracles of sanctity that have been wrought on the earth by the Holy of Holies; all the wonders that transpired in the Mother of grace; the entire Church Militant; all the Sacraments, with all the marvelous effects which they produce; all the wonderful things that divine grace has effected and will effect in the lives of all the saints that have been and that shall be in this world. What is the source of all those wonders? Is it not the inconceivable charity of the blessed Heart of our Redeemer, who has established and constantly preserves this amazing world of grace on earth, for love of us?

O my Jesus, let all these wonders of Thy most loving Heart and all the powers of Thy divinity and Thy humanity be employed to bless Thee and praise Thee unceasingly and eternally: "O all ye powers of the Lord, bless the Lord" (Dan. 3, 61).

## THIRD POINT

### MIRACLES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IN THE REALM OF GLORY

Let us raise our mind and our heart to heaven, to contemplate the realm of glory, the fair, great and glorious city of heaven, of which all the citizens are forever freed from tribulation and showered with

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

323 -

countless blessings. Let us behold that innumerable army of the blessed: "Which no man could number" (Apoc7, 9), who are more dazzling than the sun, who possess incalculable riches, joys unspeakable and glories indescribable. Consider the inconceivable happiness which]

you in that heavenly Jerusalem, since the Holy Ghost declares to us that never hath eye seen, nor ear heard, nor human heart understood nor can ever understand the infinite treasures that God has prepared there for them that love Him. Now, what has made heaven and who is the author of all the miracles contained therein? It is the intense love of the Sacred Heart of the Son of God, who has merited it by His blood, who has filled it with an ocean of unutterable delights, to give us the full and perfect possession of it eternally.

O my Saviour, graciously let me offer Thee, I beg Thee, as an act of thanksgiving, all the glories and wonders of paradise! If I were possessed of a hundred thousand paradises, how gladly would I, by the help of Thy grace, divest myself of them so as to sacrifice them to Thy eternal praise!

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him: and his wonderful works to the children of man."

Confiteantur Domino misericordiae ejus, et mirabilia ejus filiis hominum.

## EIGHTH MEDITATION

### The Sacred Heart of Jesus Is a Furnace of Love, Purifying, Illuminating, Sanctifying, Transforming and Deifying

#### FIRST POINT

#### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS A FURNACE OF LOVE FOR US

THE most loving Heart of our benign Saviour is a burning furnace of most pure love for us; a furnace of purifying love, of illuminating love, of sanctifying love, of transforming love and of deifying love. His love is a purifying love, in which the hearts of holy souls are purified more perfectly than gold in the furnace; an illuminating love, which scatters the darkness of hell with which the earth is covered and lets us into the wonderful brilliance of heaven: "Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2, 9); a sanctifying love, which destroys sin in our souls in order to establish there the kingdom of grace; a transforming love, which transforms serpents into doves, wolves into lambs, beasts into angels, children of the devil into children of God, children of wrath and malediction into children of grace and blessing; a deifying love, which makes gods of men: "I have said: you are gods" (Ps. 81, 6), letting them share in the holiness of God, His mercy, His patience, His goodness, His love, His charity and His other divine perfections: "Partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1, 4)

O divine love of my Jesus, I give myself wholly to Thee; purify me, enlighten me, sanctify me, transform me into Thee, that I may be naught but love for my God.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

325 -

#### SECOND POINT

#### THE FURNACE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS RADIATES LOVE To ALL BEINGS

The august Heart of Jesus is a furnace of love which spreads its fiery flames in all directions, in heaven, on earth and throughout the whole universe. Its fiery flames would have consumed the hearts of the Seraphim and would have enkindled all the hearts on earth if the terrible chill of sin had not set in. Those divine fires transform all the hearts of heavenly lovers into so many furnaces of love for Him who is all love for them.

All creatures on earth, even senseless, inanimate and irrational beings, feel the effects of the incredible goodness of that magnificent Heart since He loves all things that are and hates nothing that He has made, sin being the only thing that He did not make, the only object of His hatred: "For thou invest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which thou hast made" (Wisd. 11, 25)

Jesus Christ possesses an extraordinary love for men, as well for the good as the wicked, for His friends as for His enemies, for whom He has such intense charity that even the overwhelming torrents and floods of their innumerable sins are not able to extinguish it: "Many waters cannot quench charity" (Cant. 8, 7). Not a moment elapses that He does not grant to men manifold natural and supernatural favors, corporal and spiritual, even while they are offending Him and dishonoring Him by their misdeeds.

The divine fires of the precious Heart of the Son of God reach even into hell, to the devils and the damned, preserving their being, life and the natural perfections which He gave them at creation, and not punishing them as much as they have deserved for their sins, for which His divine justice might very justly chastise them much more severely than it does: "There is no one that can hide himself from his heat" (Ps. 18, 7)

O sacred fires and flames of the Heart of my Saviour, rush in upon my heart and the hearts of all my brethren, and kindle them into as many furnaces of love for my most loving Jesus!

326 -

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### THIRD POINT

Intensity of the Love of the SACRED

#### HEART OF JESUS

Imagine all the charity, all the affections, all the tender and intimate feelings of all the hearts that the omnipotent hand of God might fashion as being collected and united in one heart large enough to contain them. Would they not all be capable of forming one unimaginable furnace of love? But, realize that all the fires and flames of such a furnace would not make one tiny spark of the immense love with which the infinitely loving Heart of Jesus is inflamed towards you, O Christian soul.

O furnace infinitely to be desired! Who will grant me to be plunged into that burning fire? O Mother of Jesus, O all ye angels, O all ye holy saints of Jesus, I give myself to you all and to each in particular, and I give you also all my brothers and sisters, and all the inhabitants of earth, that you may plunge us all into the abyss of that sacred furnace! Attend and hear, O vast furnace of love! A tiny straw asks most humbly and earnestly to be plunged, buried, lost, devoured and consumed wholly in thy sacred flames and thy holy fires forever and ever!

Ejaculatory prayer:

"O fire which ever burnest and is never extinguished. O love which is ever fervent and never grows tepid, inflame me wholly that I may love Thee wholly."

O ignis qui semper ardes et nunquam extingueris. O amor qui semper ferves et nunquam tepescu, accende me totum, ut totus diligam te!

327-

1 X

**MEDITATIONS  
FOR  
SPECIAL DAYS OF THE YEAR (1)**

329-

1X

*MEDITATIONS FOR SPECIAL DAYS  
OF THE YEAR'*

**Meditation for New Year's Day**

FIRST POINT

LET US ADORE JESUS AT THE BEGINNING  
OF HIS LIFE ON EARTH

O JESUS, my Lord, I adore, bless and love Thee with all the powers of my soul at the first moment of Thy life of suffering on earth.

I adore all the holy thoughts, sentiments and dispositions of Thy divine soul, and all that took place within Thee in that first moment.

O Admirable Jesus, from the very first moment of Thy mortal life, Thou didst turn towards the Eternal Father to adore, love and glorify Him, to refer to His omnipotence Thy being, Thy life and all its consequences. Thou didst give Thyself to Him to do and suffer everything He pleased, for His glory and for love of us. I behold that, at the same instant, Thou didst turn Thy spirit and heart towards me, to think of me, to love me, to make great plans for my soul and to prepare very special graces for me.

Blessed be Thou, O Good Jesus, and may all the creatures of heaven and earth, and all the powers of Thy divinity and Thy humanity eternally bless Thee for these divine operations.

(1). The first and last of these meditations are taken from "Part Six" of *The Kingdom of Jesus*. The others are to be found in the *Manual of Piety* which St. John Eudes compiled for his order of priests, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

330-

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SECOND POINT

LET US GIVE OURSELVES TO JESUS TO BEGIN THE YEAR  
As HE BEGAN HIS LIFE UPON EARTH

O Jesus, I give myself to Thee, that I may commence this year as Thou didst begin Thy life on earth, and share in Thy most holy dispositions. I beg Thee, by Thy great mercy, to implant these dispositions in my heart.

O Most Adorable Jesus, in honor of and in union with the humility, love and other holy dispositions with which Thou didst adore and love the Eternal Father, giving Thyself to Him at the

first moment of Thy life, I adore, love and glorify Thee, as my God and my Saviour, as the Creator of time, the King of years and of centuries, and as the divine Redeemer who purchased for me, at the cost of Thy Precious Blood, all the time that is allotted to me on earth.

O Jesus, I consecrate to Thee all my minutes, hours, days and years, my being and my life, and all that goes with them. I desire to employ everything for Thy pure glory alone. I desire all my thoughts and acts, every beat of my heart, every breath I draw, and all else that shall take place in me this year, and during my whole life, to become so many acts of praise and love for Thee. May it please Thee, my dear Jesus, to grant that this may be so, through Thy most great power And goodness.

I also offer Thee, O Jesus, all the love and glory that shall be given to Thy majesty. I unite myself with all the honor and praises that shall be given Thee this year and forever, by the Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother, the angels and saints and all Thy creatures.

O Most Amiable Jesus, I adore all the designs Thou dost shape for me during this year. Do not permit me to put obstacles in their way. I give myself to Thee to do and suffer everything Thou dost please, for the accomplishment of these eternal designs. In honor Of, and in union with the love with which Thou didst accept, at the first moment of Thy Incarnation, all the sufferings Thou hadst to bear in life, I now accept and embrace, for Thy love, all the sufferings of

SPECIAL DAYS OF THE YEAR

331 -

body and spirit I shall have to undergo this year and during my whole life.

O my Saviour, a year will come that will be the last in my life. Perhaps this very year now unfolding is to be my last. If I knew with certainty that this was to be my last year on earth, with what care and fervor would I spend it in Thy service! Nevertheless, I wish to spend this year as if I had no more time to love and glorify Thee in this world, and to make up for the occasions in the past, when I have fallen away from my love of Thee. Grant me, O Good Jesus, all the graces that I need for this constancy.

### THIRD POINT

#### LET US OFFER THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN HONOR OF THE FIRST MOMENT OF HER LIFE

O Blessed Virgin, Mother of my God and Saviour, I honor and reverence thee in the first moment of thy life. I honor and reverence the dispositions of thy holy soul, and all that took place in thee at that time.

Thou didst begin immediately, O holy Virgin, to love and glorify God most perfectly, and from that first moment to the last of thy life, thou didst ever love and glorify Him more and more. As for me, in spite of all the years I have been in this world, I have not yet begun to love and serve Him as I should.

O Mother of mercy, beg thy Divine Son to have mercy on me. Atone for my failings, offering Him on my behalf all the love and glory thou didst ever give Him, to satisfy for my neglect in loving and glorifying Him. Grant that I may share in thy surpassing love for Him, and in the fidelity of that great maternal love. Pray for me, that He may give me the grace to begin, at least now, to love Him perfectly, and that all that shall take place during this year, and all my life, may be consecrated to His glory and thy honor.



O angels, And saints of Jesus Christ, pray for me, that our loving Saviour may give me new grace and new love for Him, to devote

332-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

this year and my whole life purely and solely to the service of His glory and love.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Behold I make all things new."

Ecce nova facio omnia (APOC. 21, 5)

333 -

#### **Meditation for Ash Wednesday**

#### **The Holy Season of Lent**

#### FIRST POINT

#### LENT IS A SEASON OF GRACE AND BLESSING

O JESUS, King of ages and Sanctifier of time, I adore Thee as the Author of the holy season of Lent, and as the source of all its holiness. O my God, I adore Thy providential designs towards the Church, towards our own Community and myself in particular, during this penitential time of special grace and benediction, in which, O my Saviour, Thou dost indeed desire to grant me many very special graces if I interpose no obstacles. Do not permit any obstruction, but destroy in me whatever may be contrary to Thy benevolent designs, and grant me the dispositions to accomplish perfectly Thy most holy will. O my dearest Lord, I testify that with all my strength I detest my sins for love of Thee, I renounce my self-love, my own will and all that pertains to "the old man," and I give myself to Thy Providence to do and suffer all that Thou dost please on my behalf throughout my life, and especially during this holy season of Lent.

O my God, I wish to consider and spend this Lent, as it were to be the last Lent of my life. To that end, I dedicate and consecrate to Thee all my actions, promising that I wish to do or think nothing save for Thy supreme glory, and to fulfil my obligations with all the perfection possible to me, with the help of Thy bountiful grace, which I implore with my whole heart for this intention.

#### SECOND POINT

#### HOW TO SPEND THE SEASON OF LENT PROFITABLY

O my Jesus, I desire to spend this holy season in company with Thee and Thy most holy Mother and, so far as I can with the assistance

334-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

of Thy grace, to keep it as Thou and she would have done. I see that Lent was spent by Thee in solitude, apart from the society of men, apart even from the sweet company of Thy most holy Mother, in unbroken silence, in ceaseless prayer, in extremely rigorous penance, fasting stretched on the ground, suffering in the desert a multitude of pains both bodily and mental.

I adore Thee, O my God, in all these achievements and in all the interior dispositions of Thy holy soul. I give myself to Thee for the accomplishment and imitation of Thy Lent, inasmuch as Thou shalt desire of me. I wish to love with Thee, and for love of Thee, solitude, silence, prayer and penance. I beseech Thee to grant me the grace to dissociate myself from vain and useless conversations, to abstain from all wrong and idle words, to perform all my acts in spirit of prayer and recollection, and to practise, for love of Thee~ some measure of penance and mortification.

O my Saviour, I offer Thee the abstinence and fast of this Lenten season, together with all the fasts and other mortifications of Holy Church, of all the Saints, of Thy Blessed Mother, in honor of and in union with Thy most exemplary fast and penance, in atonement for my sins and in fulfilment of Thy divine designs for Holy Church, for our Community and for my own soul in particular.

O Mother of Jesus, I offer myself to thee. Make me, I beseech thee, a participant in the holy dispositions with which thou didst spend this penitential season.

O angels of Jesus Christ, O saints of God, pray for me. Obtain for me the grace to employ this Lent and the remainder of my life in faithful service of my God, according to His most holy will.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"The world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful."  
*Mundus gaudebit, vos autem contristabimini* (John 16, 20).

335 -

### **Meditation for Good Friday**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **DUTIES TO OUR DYING SAVIOUR**

THIS is the last hour of the temporal and passible life of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. Our God, Our Saviour, Our Father is agonizing and dying on the Cross. Let us reader Him, with all possible devotion, our final homage and service.

Our first duty is to adore Jesus, and to invite all the angels and saints to adore Him with us, in the dreadful manifestation and awesome mysteries of His mortal life, especially of His last day, last hour, last moment, last thoughts, last words, actions and sufferings, in the last disposition of His holy soul and in His last breath.

The second duty is to bless and thank Him, begging all the angels, saints and His most holy Mother to help us to offer Him thanksgiving for everything He spoke, did and suffered for the glory of His Heavenly Father and for our salvation.

The third duty is to beg our Saviour's forgiveness and make reparation in the name of all men for the multiple offenses and outrages He suffered on earth on our account. We must offer Him, in atonement, all the love and honor which were, are and shall always be given Him in heaven and on earth by His Eternal Father, by the Holy Spirit, by His Blessed Mother, by all His angels and His saints, also to offer and yield ourselves to Him to do and suffer whatever shall please His holy will.

The fourth duty is to prostrate ourselves at the feet of Jesus, agonizing and dying on the Cross, beseeching Him to give us His benediction before leaving mortal life, and, by the virtue of this benediction, to destroy in us all kinds of malediction, that is, every trace of sin and inclination to

evil, to bless our body and our soul, our eyes,

336-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

our ears, our mouth, our tongue, our hands, our feet, our memory, our mind and our will, all our senses interior or exterior, so that henceforth we employ them only for His greater glory.

The fifth duty is to tell God the Son, dying for us on the Cross, that we wish to die with Him and for Him; to die to sin, to the world, to ourselves, to all that displeases Him. We should offer ourselves to Him for this purpose, begging Him very earnestly to impress on our minds a perfect image of His most holy death, and to make us die the precious and desirable death of the saints, that we may henceforth live only in Him and for Him.

## SECOND POINT

### DUTIES TO MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

After having fulfilled our obligations towards the Son of God, we have still three duties to His holy Mother.

The first is to prostrate ourselves in heart and in spirit at her feet asking her pardon for the cruel death of her Son, and for the most bitter sufferings of her pure heart which we have caused. In reparation, we must offer her all the honor, glory and praise which have been, are and will be forever rendered to her in heaven as well as on earth by the Most Holy Trinity, by the sacred humanity of her Son, by all the angels and all the saints. We must also give ourselves to our Lady as her slaves, promising that we wish to serve and honor her all our lives in every way possible to us.

The second thing we must do for the Blessed Virgin is to remember that Our Lord Jesus Christ, dying on the Cross, gave her to us as our Mother, and gave us to her as her children, when, addressing her, He said: "Behold thy Son"; and speaking to each of us in the person of St. John: "Behold thy mother." We ought to thank Our Lord with our whole heart for having given us His Mother to be our Mother; we ought to give thanks to the most holy Virgin for having received us as her children, and to beg our Saviour that inasmuch as He has associated us with Him as the Beloved Son of Mary, He also make us share His perfect filial devotion to His admirable Mother.

Our third debt to the Mother of Jesus is to acknowledge and salute

## SPECIAL DAYS OF THE YEAR

337 -

her as our Mother, declaring that we desire to serve, love and honor her as our Mother, obey her as a Mother and study to make ourselves like unto her as children should resemble their mother; and, consequently, to imitate her humility, her patience, her obedience, her purity, her mildness and docility, her charity and all her other virtues. We must beseech our Lady to look upon us, her unworthy children, to protect and to guide us in all things and to be a mother to us both in life and in death.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"He loved me and delivered himself for me."

Dilexit me et tradidit semetipsum pro me (Gal. 2, 20).

**Meditation**  
**The Vigil of the Ascension of Our Lord**

FIRST POINT  
 ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

BEFORE Our Lord ascends to return to the bosom of His Heavenly Father we must render to Him four final tributes.

Our first duty is to adore our Saviour in all the states and mysteries of His life on earth, to ask His pardon for our failure to honor Him and for the little fruit we have derived from His all-meritorious life, and to offer Him in reparation the admirable glory which has been accorded our divine Redeemer by His Blessed Mother, the angels, the saints and by His whole Church.

Our second duty is to bless and thank Our Lord on the eve of His glorious ascension, begging the choirs of angels, the holy company of saints and His most holy Mother, to praise and glorify Him with us, in the name of the whole human race, for all that He thought, said, did and suffered while on earth out of love for us, affirming that we wish to do, say, think and suffer everything only for love of Him alone.

SECOND POINT

REPARATION

Our third duty is to prostrate ourselves at the feet of our Risen Saviour in a spirit of repentance and contrition and, in the name of all mankind, to make worthy reparation, begging His divine pardon for the countless injuries, offenses and outrages we have heaped upon Him which He endured on our behalf while He was on earth. In satisfaction we must offer Him all the honor and glory that He

SPECIAL DAYS OF THE YEAR

339 -

received, and that He will ever receive on earth and in heaven, as also to offer ourselves to Him to do and to suffer for this intention, whatever may be His august and holy will.

THIRD POINT

UNION IN SPIRIT AND HEART

Our fourth duty is to give ourselves to Him, begging Him to prepare us to leave this earth on the great feast of tomorrow, to ascend to heaven with Him in heart and spirit. We must implore Him to accomplish this by breaking all our bonds and detaching us entirely from everything in this world and in ourselves. We must beg our Saviour to tie and bind us so closely to Himself that He may transport upwards into heaven our minds, our thoughts, our hearts, our desires and our affections, that for the future we may be able to say with the first Christians: "Our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3, 20).

Ejaculatory prayer:

"Our conversation is in heaven."  
 Conversatio nostra in caelo est (Phil. 3, 20).

## Meditation

### The Vigil of the Assumption of Our Lady

#### FIRST POINT

##### HOMAGE AND THANKSGIVING

BEFORE the Blessed Virgin Mary leaves this earth to enter heaven, let us fulfil our final obligations to her.

The first duty is to prostrate ourselves at her feet, in the name of the whole human race, asking the angels and the saints to prostrate themselves with us to salute and honor her in all the states and mysteries of her life; to beg her pardon for the inadequate honor we have rendered during the course of the year, and for the little fruit we have gathered from her shining example. We must offer her, in place of our ingratitude and negligence, all the honor and all the praise accorded to her by the choirs of angels and by the vast company of saints in heaven and on earth.

The second duty is to give our Lady thanks from ourselves and from all men, begging also all the citizens of heaven to bless and thank her with us, for all that she thought, said, did and suffered in this world to cooperate with her Divine Son in the salvation of mankind.

#### SECOND POINT

##### REPARATION

Our third duty is to implore her pardon in the name of the whole world, for the countless injuries and offenses that she has received, and for all the pain, sorrow and anguish she has borne on account of our sins, on our behalf offering her in satisfaction and reparation the Adorable Heart of her Divine Son, together with all the service,

#### SPECIAL DAYS OF THE YEAR

341 -

praise and honor which have been and will ever be tendered to her by the whole Church, Triumphant and Militant. We must also offer her ourselves to do and suffer anything she pleases, affirming that we wish to do all that is possible to us to serve and honor her throughout our lifetime, and to cause her to be served and honored by everyone else.

#### THIRD POINT

##### ACT OF OBLATION TO MARY

The fourth duty is to present her with a gift, before she leaves the earth to go to heaven, as she is our sovereign Lady and our Queen. What gift shall we offer her? What can we give her when everything is already hers? It is true that all creation belongs to her, but it is, nevertheless, very pleasing to her to receive from us what is already hers, provided we offer our gift with the same affection with which we would make our offering if we could give our Queen something that is not already hers. Let us give her our hearts. Our Lady wants most of all the gift of each human heart that she may give it to her Divine Son. Let us each give his heart to her entirely and irrevocably, beseeching her to destroy anything in it displeasing to her, to detach it completely from all creatures and to unite it closely to her own most admirable Heart in order to enrapture our hearts and bear

them upward with her own into highest heaven.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"We offer thee our hearts."  
Tibi cor nostrum offerimus.

342 -

**Meditation  
for  
The Feast of the Holy RELICS (2)**

FIRST POINT

OBLIGATION TO HONOR THE RELICS  
OF THE SAINTS

THERE are several reasons which oblige us to honor the precious relics of the saints, especially those enshrined in this place.

First, we should honor all that God honors. Almighty God honors to such a degree everything belonging to His saints that He counts the hairs of their heads and performs miracles by their bones and ashes, so that they become venerated by all men, even by kings and princes, who think themselves privileged to be allowed to touch and honor saintly relics.

Secondly, we should honor all creatures by which God is honored. Almighty God is greatly honored by the relics of the saints because the bodies of the saints have cooperated with their souls in the heroic virtue they performed for the glory of God; thus, all honor given to the saints and their relics proceeds to God, the Saint of saints and the fount of all sanctity.

Thirdly, we must venerate saintly relics because St. Paul testifies that the bodies of the faithful are the members of Jesus Christ, who is their Head, and members of the mystical body of Jesus, namely, His Church.

Fourthly, St. Paul also affirms that the bodies of true Christians are temples of the Holy Ghost, and that Jesus Christ will raise them up because the Holy Ghost has taken up His dwelling in them: "He

(2). Some religious communities celebrate this feast on November 5, during the Octave of the Feast of All Saints.

SPECIAL DAYS OF THE YEAR

343 -

shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8, 11). This is why the Church, in the funeral ceremonies of a Christian, blesses the grave and asks God that His Holy Spirit may descend into it with the body to be placed there, in order to raise it up on the day of General judgment.

Finally, Holy Mother Church, animated and guided by the Holy Ghost, has always held the relics of the saints in such veneration that St. Gregory Nazianze, quoted by the great Cardinal Baronius in his Ecclesiastical Annals, says that the bodies of the holy martyrs have the same power as their souls if we touch or venerate them; and that drops of their blood and small tokens of their sufferings have the same power as their bodies. St. Gregory says, furthermore, that the veneration of

the Saints was so widespread, that a little dust of the remains of a bone were honored as equivalent to the whole body, and that even the name of a saint, without the presence of any relics at all, was enshrined in the place of the martyr's body and possessed equal power. With good reason he exclaimed: "O prodigious thing! Their very memory alone gives life."

## SECOND POINT

### DISPOSITIONS WITH WHICH WE SHOULD HONOR HOLY RELICS

The first disposition is deep humility, acknowledging to ourselves that, as sinners, we are unworthy not only to touch but even to gaze upon the holy relics of the saints.

The second disposition is the purification of our souls from all sin and from all affection to sin by means of true contrition; because holy things should be-treated in a holy manner.

The third disposition is thanksgiving to our Lord Jesus Christ for all the glory He has rendered His Father by the saints whose relics are here present, for the countless favors He has bestowed upon them and for the rich graces He has given us through their intercession. We must also return thanks to the saints themselves for the wealth of honor they have rendered unto God and for the great assistance they have given us by their prayers and merits.

344 -

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

The fourth disposition is to give ourselves to Jesus Christ, the Saint of saints, and to ask Him to make us sharers in the spirit, in the love, in the charity, humility and other virtues of His saints and to unite us to all the love and all the glory that they have rendered and will eternally render with Him to the Most Holy Trinity. We must likewise offer ourselves to the saints and implore them to give us to Jesus and His most holy Mother, and to employ the God-given power to destroy in us anything that is displeasing to them. We must beg the saints to make us sharers in their ardent love and in all their magnificent virtues, to make us their associates in the praise which they send up and will forever send up before the throne of the most High, and to obtain for us the grace to imitate the holy life they lived while on earth.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"God is wonderful in his saints."

*Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis* (Ps. 67, 36).

345 -

### **Meditation for Christmas Day**

#### **Our Duties to the Child Jesus**

## FIRST POINT

### ADORATION, PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

O DIVINE and adorable Child Jesus, prostrate at Thy feet, I adore Thee, praise Thee and thank Thee with Thy Blessed Mother, with St. Joseph, with the whole Church and in the name of all creatures. I adore, praise and thank the Blessed Trinity through Thee and in Thee. May everything in me and in

the universe offer adoration, praise and thanks to the Blessed Trinity that reigns so perfectly in Thee.

## SECOND POINT

### HUMILIATION AND SATISFACTION

O Divine Child Jesus, Thou art the joy of the angels in heaven. The glory and the happiness of Thy Eternal Father are Thine from the very first moment of Thy mortal existence. Nevertheless, I now behold Thee lying in a stable, suffering the humiliation and pains of childhood. O Infant Jesus, my sins are the cause of Thy suffering. I hate and detest them with all my heart and in satisfaction I offer Thee all the tears and pains of Thy Holy Childhood, and I give myself to Thee to suffer in union with Thee whatsoever suffering it may please Thee to send me.

346-

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### THIRD POINT

#### LOVE AND OBLATION

O Loving Child Jesus, Thou art all love for me and I wish to be all love for Thee. I give Thee my heart with all my affection, in union with the Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy Blessed Mother, and all Thine angels and saints. Take full possession of my soul forever.

O Most Sweet Jesus, Thou dost give Thyself to me with infinite love. In union with the same love, I give, consecrate and sacrifice myself entirely to Thee with every created being. If I had an infinity of worlds, I would gladly sacrifice them an infinite number of times if it were possible. O Almighty Child, use Thine infinite power to take full possession of me, to annihilate in me everything that is contrary to the spirit of Thy Holy Childhood, and to sacrifice me wholly with Thee to the glory of Thy Father.

Ejaculatory prayer:

"We adore Thee, O dear Child Jesus."  
Adoramus Te, Domine Jesu Infans.

347-

### **Meditation for The Last Day of the Year**

#### FIRST POINT

#### LET US ADORE JESUS ON THE LAST DAY AND LAST MOMENT OF HIS LIFE ON EARTH

O JESUS, my Lord, I adore, love and glorify Thee in the last day, the last hour and last minute of Thy mortal life on earth. I adore and that happened both inwardly and outwardly on that last day, meaning Thy last thoughts, acts, words and sufferings, Thy final use of the senses of Thy sacred body, and the last dispositions of Thy holy soul, to which I desire to unite myself now, with a view to the closing moment of my own life.



O Divine Jesus, by the light of faith I behold Thee on that last day of Thy life, adoring and loving the Eternal Father infinitely. Thou dost give Him fitting thanks for all the graces imparted to Thee and, through Thee, to the whole world during the time of Thy sojourn on earth. Thou dost ask His pardon for all the sins of men, offering Thyself to Him to suffer the penance due to them. Thou dost think of me with love exceedingly great, with a most ardent desire to draw me to Thyself. Finally, Thou dost sacrifice Thy Precious Blood and Thy most noble life, for the glory of the Heavenly Father and for love of us. Blessed be Thou infinitely for all these inestimable graces.

O Good Jesus, in honor of and in union with the love, humility and other holy dispositions with which Thou didst perform all the last actions of Thy life, I give Thee thanks for all the glory Thou didst render to the Eternal Father during Thy life on earth, for all the graces Thou hast bestowed upon me and all men this year and always, as well as for the graces Thou wouldst have lavished on me if I had not stood in Thy way.'

348-

#### MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

I most humbly beg Thy forgiveness for all the outrages and indignities Thou didst suffer on earth because of me, and for all the offenses I have committed against Thee this year. In satisfaction, I offer Thee all the honor and glory rendered to Thee, during Thy time on earth and during the past year, by Thy Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Mother, and by all the angels and saints. So, too, I offer myself to Thee to bear all the penance Thou mayest ordain for me in this world and in the next.

O Jesus, most worthy of love, I adore Thy infinite thoughts and designs for me on the last day of Thy most precious life; and I give myself to Thee to do and suffer all Thou dost desire of me, for the fulfilment of these unfathomable designs. Grant that I may die a thousand times rather than hinder the operation of Thy loving Providence.

#### SECOND POINT

##### LET US OFFER JESUS THE LAST DAY AND LAST MOMENT OF OUR LIFE

O Good Jesus, I offer to Thee the last day, the last hour and the last moment of my life and everything that may happen to me then outwardly and inwardly. I mean, my last thoughts, words, actions and sufferings, as well as the last use of my bodily senses and of the powers of my soul.

May it please Thee to grant that all these things may be consecrated to the honor of the last day, the last hour and last moment of Thy perfect life. May I die loving Thee with Thy holy love. May my being and my life be sacrificed and consumed for Thy glory, and may my last breath be an act of pure love of Thee. This is my intention, my desire, my expectation. O my Dear Jesus, relying as I do upon the excess of Thine infinite love, may it please Thee to grant, by Thy great mercy, that this may be so.

## THIRD POINT

LET US OFFER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN THE LAST DAY  
OF OUR LIFE IN HONOR OF THE LAST DAY  
OF HER LIFE ON EARTH

O Mother of Jesus, Mother of the Eternal and Immortal Godmade Man, I honor and venerate thee in the last hour and moment of thy life. I honor thy last thoughts, words and acts, and the last use made of the senses of thine immaculate body and of the powers of thy glorious soul. Especially I wish to honor the last act of love made by thy mother's heart for thy Most Beloved Son.

With all my heart I bless and thank thee, O holy Virgin, for all the glory thou didst render to God during thy spotless life, and for all the graces thou didst ever obtain from His bounty for me and for all men, especially during this year.

I beg thy forgiveness, O Mother of Mercy, for all the offenses thou didst suffer on earth, as well as for those I have committed this year against thee. To make satisfaction for these, I offer thee all the honor that has ever been accorded thee in heaven and on earth.

O Mother of Fair Love, I offer thee the last day, the last hour and moment of my life, and all that shall take place in me at that last moment, in honor of the last moment, hour and day of thy life, and of all that occurred in thee on that day. Unite me, I beseech thee, with all the holy and divine dispositions of thy maternal heart and thy pure soul. Grant that, by thy merit and prayers, my last thoughts, words, acts and breaths may be consecrated to the honor of the last thought, words, acts and breaths, both of thy Son and of thyself. Grant that I may die loving Him with His holy love, and that I may be utterly consumed and sacrificed to His glory, and that my life may end with a last act of most pure love for Him.

O angels and saints of Christ, pray that He may consummate this final grace for me, by His exceedingly great mercy and for love of Him.

*Ejaculatory prayer:*

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

*Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur* (Apoc. 14, 13)





## LA VIE SPIRITUELLE - REVUE MENSUELLE

No 69 JUIN 1925. pp.229-328

[par L.Poisson, L.Levesque, J.Gauderon, D.Boulay, Fr.Hulin.]

229 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

Sa vie apostolique

Certes le siècle de Louis XIV fut grand. Il fut grand par ses auteurs, par ses poètes, par ses écrivains, par ses artistes, par ses généraux, par ses hommes d'État. Il fut plus grand peut-être encore par ses Saints. Il y a là, sans parler des femmes, de Mme de Chantal, de Mme Acarie, de Mlle Legras, etc., etc., toute une pléiade d'hommes de Dieu, vraiment extraordinaires: saint François de Sales, saint Vincent de Paul, saint Pierre Fourier, le cardinal de Bérulle, le Père de Condren, M. Olier, M. Bourdoise, Boudon, l'abbé de Rancé, Michel Le Nobletz, le Père Maunoir, M. de Renty, M. de Bernières.

Dans cette phalange, les plus illustres de ses contemporains avaient attribué à Jean Eudes une place d'honneur. Mgr de Maupas, évêque d'Évreux, n'hésitait point à écrire . « Il ne s'est point trouvé d'homme semblable dans notre France depuis bien des siècles. » C'est à son

230 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

occasion et après les bénédictions admirables de la mission des Quinze-Vingts, que saint Vincent de Paul s'écriait: « Oh! qu'un bon missionnaire est un grand trésor, et qu'il y a peu de gens au monde qui veuillent servir Dieu, dans la pureté de la foi, dans le détachement des créatures et l'abnégation de soi-même! » C'est sous cet aspect que notre prêtre normand s'était montré. Monsieur Olier renchérit encore quand il appelle le P. Eudes « la merveille ou la rareté » de son siècle.

Les générations qui suivirent furent un peu oublieuses et ingrates. Sa mémoire n'était pas éteinte, mais elle restait voilée: c'était comme un feu caché dans la cendre. L'Église a rallumé ce foyer et rendu justice au grand serviteur de Dieu: elle vient de l'inscrire, par un jugement infaillible, au livre d'or des saints, à côté de ses vieux émules.

Des titres nombreux et variés recommandent Jean Eudes à notre vénération. Il réunit toutes les vertus théologiques et morales; il les a portées à un degré héroïque. Son action fut prodigieuse. Il a fondé deux familles religieuses: la Congrégation de Jésus et de Marie, appelée Congrégation des Eudistes, et l'Institut de Notre-Dame de Charité, dont sont sortis les bons pasteurs, aujourd'hui répandus dans les cinq parties du monde; il y adjoignit une sorte de Tiers-Ordre, dit du Sacré-Cœur. Il partage avec Monsieur Olier et saint Vincent de Paul l'honneur d'avoir établi en France les premiers grands séminaires. Il est le père, le docteur et le propagateur de la dévotion aux saints Coeurs de Jésus et de Marie. Il a composé des offices en leur honneur, des offices d'une beauté toute séraphique, des offices « de feu » et fait célébrer la fête du Cœur admirable de la sainte Vierge dès 1643 dans ses maisons de Caen, et celle du Cœur Sacré du divin Maître dès 1670 en sa chapelle de Rennes. Il est auteur de nombreux écrits ascétiques qui

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

231 -

embrassent tous les aspects de la vie chrétienne, religieuse et sacerdotale.

Voilà large matière à études et à louanges. Mais il semble que sa note caractéristique soit l'esprit d'apostolat. À ses yeux, pour le prêtre c'est la grosse affaire: « Sachez, mon frère, dit-il, que quand vous

entrez dans l'état du sacerdoce, votre salut doit être tout fait et que vous devez entrer pour travailler au salut des autres, Car l'affaire de notre salut doit être en si bon état, et vous devez être si saint que vous soyez capable avec la grâce de Dieu de sauver et de sanctifier les autres. »

C'est bien là le programme et le résumé de sa vie. «Après l'incomparable Xavier, dit le P. Hérambourg, il n'est peut-être personne, du moins au XVIIe siècle, qui ait porté plus le zèle pour la gloire de Dieu et le salut des âmes. » Ce sentiment est si fort et si profond dans son cœur, qu'il a arraché ce beau cri, digne des plus héroïques serviteurs de Dieu: « Je me sens une si forte inclination de travailler au salut des âmes que je renoncerais volontiers à toute la gloire du paradis des anges et des saints et même de la Très Sainte Vierge, et que je quitterais sans peine le ciel, si j'y étais, pour revenir sur la terre afin d'aider au salut d'une pauvre âme."

Quand il parle de l'apostolat, il ne se contient plus, il est soulevé au-dessus de lui-même, il chante avec enthousiasme, Il devient lyrique: « Travailler à sauver les âmes, est plus beau que de remporter des victoires, de conquérir des royaumes, de fonder des empires, plus beau que pratiquer les plus austères mortifications, que de vêtir de nourrir tous les pauvres de la terre, que de vaquer aux plus sublimes oraisons, que d'accomplir des miracles, créer des mondes et de ressusciter les morts, que d'endurer le martyre. C'est l'œuvre des œuvres. Les saints n'eurent rien de plus à cœur. L'Église s'y dévoue. Les

232 -

#### SAINT JEAN EUDES

anges y courent avec une impétueuse ardeur. La Vierge Marie y consacre sa vie et son Fils. Et le Verbe de Dieu, pour cette délivrance, est venu, a peiné, a souffert et est mort. Et les trois divines personnes, dans leurs créations et leurs œuvres, ne poursuivent jamais d'autre but. »

Il faut lire ces pages de notre Saint. On n'en écrit jamais de plus brûlantes et de plus frémissantes. Il semble que sous ces lettres refroidies vit et palpite encore la grande âme qui les dicta.

Et surtout elles le peignent: c'est lui. Nous avons là l'âme de son âme et le secret de toute sa vie. S'il est entré à l'Oratoire, c'est parce qu'il croyait y trouver la plénitude de l'esprit apostolique, de l'esprit du Verbe incarné: « la parole éternelle et le premier de tous les prédicateurs ». S'il en sortit, c'est qu'il estima que l'Oratoire avait oublié le but suprême de son institution: réformer les prêtres, qui sont par état les sauveurs des peuples, les envoyés de Dieu pour former son fils Jésus dans les cœurs, des dieux chargés de produire des dieux et les rendre plus capables et plus dignes de remplir leur sublime et divine mission.

Quelle fin attribue-t-il à sa famille religieuse? « Je supplie, s'écrie-t-il à la fin de ses Constitutions, très humblement et les genoux en terre, tous les enfants de la Congrégation, mes très chers et très aimés Frères, de bien considérer ce que je vais dire: c'est que la Congrégation est établie dans l'Église pour lui donner des ministres dignes des saints autels, des ouvriers évangéliques irréprochables, des prêtres vraiment apostoliques, des pasteurs selon le cœur de Dieu, des ecclésiastiques qui soient des images vivantes de sa très éminente sainteté; en un mot, des hommes non plus hommes, mais dieux et pères de dieux. »

Et cela est l'œuvre apostolique par excellence; c'est sauver les sauveurs, diriger les directeurs, enseigner les Docteurs,

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE 233 -

nourrir les pasteurs, éclairer ceux qui sont la lumière du monde, sanctifier ceux qui sont la sanctification de l'Église, faire dans la hiérarchie ecclésiastique ce que les séraphins et les chérubins font

dans le ciel, avoir entre les mains ce que Jésus-Christ a de plus précieux, la plus illustre portion de son troupeau, ce qui lui est plus cher que la prunelle de ses yeux, le cœur de son corps mystique et de sa sainte famille.

Et il n'y a pas de travail qui puisse être mis en parallèle avec celui-là. Tout doit lui être subordonné; « et si, étant en mission, nous apprenions qu'on eût besoin de nous au séminaire nous devrions laisser là la mission et courir comme au feu. »

Et quel est le premier article des Constitutions de son ordre de la Charité? C'est que « sa fin propre et particulière qui distingue cette Congrégation d'avec les autres est d'imiter, autant qu'il est possible, moyennant la divine grâce, la très ardente charité dont le très aimable Cœur de Jésus, fils de Marie mère de Jésus, est embrasé au regard des âmes créées à l'image et semblance de Dieu et rachetées du précieux sang de son Fils, s'employant de tout cœur, par l'exemple d'une sainte vie, par la ferveur des prières, et l'efficace des instructions, à la conversion des filles et femmes qui sont tombées dans le désordre et qui, étant touchées de Dieu, veulent sortir de l'état du péché, pour faire pénitence, sous la conduite des religieuses, et pour apprendre plus facilement les moyens de servir la divine Majesté et de se sauver. »

Et il tient si fort à ce zèle pour les âmes que quand même une fille aurait toute sorte de beaux talents et de charmantes qualités pour servir dans la communauté, si elle n'a point d'amour pour l'observance du quatrième vœu, le dévouement aux pécheresses, il défend de la recevoir. Elle se perdrait et perdrait tout. Il n'y a rien de plus pernicieux

#### 234 - SAINT JEAN EUDES

aux communautés que d'accepter des sujets qui n'ont point l'esprit de leur vocation.

Il a écrit de nombreux ouvrages de piété: c'est toujours l'apôtre que l'on y rencontre puissant et irrésistible. Un saint religieux dira du Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu: « Il y a tel chapitre qui me semble tout étincelant de feux et de flammes pénétrantes jusqu'à l'intime du cœur, pour nous embraser à aimer Dieu de toutes nos forces, très fidèlement, liés cordialement et très constamment par des preuves de la sainte Écriture si fortes qu'aucun bon esprit n'y saurait résister: il faut se rendre tout à fait à notre amant infini, éternellement aimable. »

Et de ses méditations perdues, le P. Hérabourg a écrit: « On y lit le langage du ciel, et la simple lecture qu'on en fait détache presque imperceptiblement le cœur des choses de la terre pour l'attacher au souverain Bien. »

«Le zèle du salut et de la perfection des âmes le dévorait, continue le même auteur... Il ne pouvait passer de moment sans faire quelque chose à la gloire de son maître, et on sait que, marchant dans les rues de Paris pendant qu'il y demeura, il s'appliquait à la composition des hymnes de l'office du saint Cœur de Notre-Seigneur et de celui de sa très sainte Mère. C'est ainsi qu'il a dignement rempli ses jours. C'est ce qui le fera vivre éternellement dans l'esprit des bons chrétiens. Sa mémoire sera en bénédiction, sa gloire s'augmentera de jour en jour. La lecture de ses livres, qui procurent la conversion et l'avancement de tant d'âmes dans les voies de la grâce, sera pour lui un nouveau triomphe. »

Et quand il chante avec tant d'ardeur les saints Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, quand il travaille si activement à la diffusion de leur culte, sans doute c'est à cause de leur beauté et de leur amour, mais aussi parce qu'ils sont l'origine du vrai zèle pour le salut des âmes perdues.

#### SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

#### 235 -

«Car encore que le divin Cœur de Jésus, qui ne fait qu'un avec celui de sa très sainte Mère, soit la source

de tous les bons desseins, de tous les saints instituts et de tous les ouvrages de piété, néanmoins il l'est plus spécialement de ceux qui regardent directement le salut des âmes pécheresses, comme étant la chose du monde qu'il chérit et qu'il désire davantage puisque ce très bénin Sauveur nous assure qu'il est venu en ce monde, non pour les justes mais pour les pécheurs. »

Tout ce que le P. Eudes fait, dit, écrit, institue n'a qu'un but: sauver les âmes. Pour ce travail divin il voulait mobiliser tous les êtres, toutes les choses, toutes les puissances de la terre et du ciel.

Au début de la Fronde, il s'adresse à la reine Anne pour une sainte croisade contre ce débordement d'iniquité qui fait un étrange ravage dans la France: « C'est une chose déplorable, Madame, et à larmes de sang, de voir périr tant d'âmes et que ce mal va toujours croissant, et que si peu de personnes s'en mettent en peine. Lorsqu'il s'agit de quelque intérêt temporel des princes et des rois de ce monde, que ne fait-on point? Mais les intérêts du Souverain Monarque sont abandonnés. Nous nous tuons dans nos missions à force de crier contre quantité de désordres qui sont dans la France..., et Dieu nous fait grâce de remédier à quelques-uns. Mais je suis certain, Madame, que si Votre Majesté voulait employer le pouvoir que Dieu lui a donné, elle pourrait plus faire elle seule, pour la destruction de la tyrannie du diable et pour l'établissement du règne de Jésus-Christ, que tous les missionnaires et prédicateurs ensemble. »

Il demande au pouvoir chrétien de se souvenir de son devoir. Il est fait pour aider l'homme, dit saint Thomas, sa fin dernière comme sa fin prochaine. Sa fin est la béatitude céleste. Tout doit donc être

## 236 - SAINT JEAN EUDES

ordonné dans la vie par le chef de l'État de la manière qui convient le mieux pour que la multitude obtienne le paradis. Il pourra commander tout ce qui peut y conduire, et interdire, dans la mesure du possible, tout ce qui y serait contraire.

Le P. Eudes essaiera d'enrôler les femmes du monde dans le même mouvement d'apostolat. Il écrit aux Dames de Rouen: « Quel bonheur pour vous d'être choisies de Dieu, pour être associées avec lui dans la plus grande de ses œuvres, qui est l'œuvre de la rédemption des âmes! Délivrer un homme qui est captif selon le corps des mains des barbares est chose grande; mais affranchir une âme de la Servitude de Satan est plus que si on délivrait tous ceux qui sont esclaves corporellement. » Et il leur chante son hymne de guerre comme il l'a chanté à ses prêtres, comme il l'a chanté à ses religieuses.

Il établit des confréries des Saints-Coeurs. Aux associées il sait souffler son esprit de conquête. Elles marchent avec ardeur et, aux heures mauvaises de la Revolution, elles ont accompli de véritables merveilles.

Il a besoin de collaborateurs supplémentaires. Il fait appel aux prêtres de bonne volonté. Il les réunit, les éclaire, les échauffe, les soulève et en fait de vaillants lutteurs comme lui, avides de se donner et de se dépenser. En se répandent de-ci de-là, et tous font des fruits qui ne se peuvent exprimer.

Et quand notre infatigable apôtre, devant des moissons jaunissantes, sent que les ouvriers nécessaires lui manquent pour les cueillir, et sait par ailleurs qu'à Paris de nombreux clercs, les intellectuels de ce temps-là, passent leurs jours dans des stériles spéculations et de vaines subtilités, il ne peut retenir un de ces cris de douleur où se peint sa grande âme: « Que font à Paris tant de docteurs et tant de bacheliers pendant que les âmes périssent

## SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

## 237 -

par milliers, faute de personnes qui leur tendent la main pour les retirer de la perdition et les préserver du feu éternel? Certainement, si je me croyais, je m'en irais à Paris crier dans la Sorbonne et les autres



collèges: Au feu! Au feu de l'enfer qui embrase tout l'univers! Venez, messieurs les docteurs; venez, messieurs les bacheliers; venez, messieurs les abbés: venez, messieurs les ecclésiastiques, nous aider à l'éteindre! »

Il ne voudrait laisser aucune âme en dehors de la grâce. Son zèle déborde les frontières de la France; il embrasse la Chine, tout l'univers; et pour coopérer au grand œuvre de leur salut, il sacrifierait volontiers, moyennant le secours divin, cent mille vies s'il les avait; et il adresse à l'un de ses Frères en religion, qui va partir pour ces rivages lointains, ce beau Proficiscere tout frémissant de ses ardeurs évangéliques: « Allez au nom de la sainte Trinité pour la faire connaître et adorer. Allez au nom de Jésus-Christ pour appliquer aux âmes le fruit de son précieux sang. Allez sous la protection et la sauvegarde de sa divine Mère, sous la conduite du bienheureux saint Joseph, de saint Gabriel, etc., etc. Allez, au nom et de la part de notre petite Congrégation... ».

L'âme apostolique de Jean Eudes s'est manifestée dans toutes ses œuvres et surtout dans la formation d'ouvriers irréprochables pour la vigne du Seigneur. Elle s'est révélée avec un éclat particulier dans ses très nombreuses missions. C'est là sûrement un des traits distinctifs de sa physionomie, c'est le premier titre que lui donne le décret de tuto.

Missionnaire apostolique, sur ce point comme sur les autres, il reproduira Jésus-Christ: il aura passé sa vie à former des apôtres et à évangéliser les foules.

Il donne son premier sermon en 1623, à l'âge de 21 ans, étant simple minoré. Et cet essai est un coup de maître,

238 -

#### SAINT JEAN EUDES

Il prêchait encore à Saint-Pierre de Caen, durant l'été de 1678, en faveur de l'hôpital général que l'on était en train de bâtir. Pendant plus de cinquante ans il va sans trêve ni repos à la recherche des brebis égarées de la maison d'Israël. Il parcourt la Normandie dans tous les sens. Il porte la parole de Dieu dans huit autres provinces de notre vieille France, Bretagne, Ile-de-France, Bourgogne, Champagne, etc.... dans quatorze diocèses au moins. Il a de la prédilection pour les paroisses de campagne. Il rechercherait volontiers les plus ignorantes et les plus dépravées. Mais, comme il le dit, la mission étant très nécessaire et très utile partout, il la fait aux villes comme aux champs. On le voit à Caen, à Lisieux, à Pont-l'Évêque, à Saint-Lô, à Coutances, à Évreux, à Rouen, à Autun, à Châlons, à Versailles, etc. Paris même l'entendit à plusieurs reprises, aux Quinze-Vingts, à Saint-Sulpice, à Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

Il s'est adressé à tous les genres d'auditoires: aux paysans, aux ouvriers et artisans, aux domestiques, aux bourgeois, aux soldats, aux nobles, aux magistrats, aux ecclésiastiques, aux moines. Il a prêché devant la Cour à Versailles et à Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Il avait été choisi comme étant l'homme du royaume le plus en état de donner avec fruit les exercices du Jubilé dans ce milieu raffiné. Et on ne doutait pas que, même après Bossuet, le grand missionnaire y fit bonne figure.

Les voyages étaient longs en ce temps-là. Le feu qui consume notre saint missionnaire est si ardent qu'il ne peut se contenir jusqu'au terme, et tout le long du chemin il prêche; il prêche tous les braves gens qu'il rencontre; il prêche les patrons et les domestiques des auberges où il descend. Il a sa petite clochette. Il la sonne en traversant les villages et, de quelque endroit élevé, il leur annonce les vérités du salut.

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

239 -

Tous avaient besoin de les rapprendre. Le monde d'alors ne ressemblait pas au monde d'aujourd'hui. Les catholiques remplissaient les principales obligations de la religion chrétienne: ils allaient à la messe le dimanche; ils se confessaient chaque année; ils communiaient à Pâques; ils

respectaient les jours d'abstinence. Mais il semble que pour beaucoup ces saintes pratiques étaient devenues de simples formalités. On en observait la lettre, on en négligeait l'esprit: elles étaient vidées de leur âme.

L'ignorance religieuse était profonde. D'innombrables superstitions régnaient. La prière du matin et du soir était abandonnée. Les choses de Dieu étaient traitées avec un extrême dédain. Le laisser-aller était général. Le clergé donnait lui-même l'exemple de toutes les négligences, se raillant à l'occasion des dévotions dites superflues. Il s'était affadi, matérialisé. Très occupé à cultiver ses biens, il n'avait pas le temps de cultiver les âmes. De ce détachement des temples et du culte le P. Eudes nous fait le plus sombre tableau:

« Allez dans les églises; vous en verrez plusieurs au dehors environnées d'ordure et de puanteurs, au-dedans tapissées de toiles d'araignées, pavées de boue et de poudre; les vitres, la couverture rompues et ouvertes au vent, à la pluie, à la grêle et à la neige; les autels dénués d'ornement et couverts de poussière; les prêtres offrir le redoutable sacrifice avec des aubes et des chasubles toutes déchirées, des corporaux et des purificatoires si sales qu'ils font mal au cœur; des calices d'étain et tout noirs; le très saint sacrement dans un ciboire de même étoffe et rempli de poudre et d'ordure, sans lampe et sans lumière et sans aucune marque de religion. O Dieu! ô grand Dieu! où est la foi des chrétiens? Et qu'est devenu le sens religieux des populations?

240 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

« Le culte, en beaucoup d'endroits, est célébré avec tant d'immodestie, de précipitation et d'irrévérence, pour ne pas dire d'impiété, qu'on pourrait croire que les officiers du sanctuaire sont gagés non pour louer Dieu, mais pour se moquer de lui; non pour l'honorer, mais pour le déshonorer et le faire déshonorer aux autres. »

Le protestantisme a exercé ses ravages dans les âmes, et un trop grand nombre se sont laissés séduire par les nouvelles doctrines. Le libertinage de l'esprit en a conduit certains jusqu'à l'athéisme.

Privée de ses appuis, la morale a croulé. Ce sont les éternelles misères humaines; c'est la mise en train des sept péchés capitaux; c'est la vilaine et hideuse floraison de la triple concupiscence. On signale tout particulièrement des blasphèmes, des sacrilèges, des enchantements, des haines, des duels, des homicides secrets, des empoisonnements d'hommes et d'animaux, des parjures devant les juges, des injustices, des fraudes, toutes les formes de la luxure, même les plus contraires à la nature.

Un monde assujéti à de telles habitudes ne pouvait être porté à goûter les missions. Il devait fatalement leur faire opposition. Les contradictions se déchaînèrent. Il en vint des autres Ordres religieux, des dignitaires ecclésiastiques, des curés, des pêcheurs qui allaient être troublés dans la satisfaction de leurs passions, des personnes du monde même les plus dévouées aux intérêts de Dieu.

Et que ne dit-on pas des missionnaires? Ce sont des gens fort riches et fort austères, qui refusent l'absolution pour un rien et chargent de pénitences insupportables; ce sont des gens ignorants, timides, superstitieux, qui débitent des fables et ne s'appliquent qu'à l'extérieur de la religion, négligeant le fonds et l'essentiel, ce sont des gens intéressés qui, sous de beaux préceptes, soutirent l'argent des populations crédules pour en bâtir des églises et des séminaires.

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

241 -

Ce sont les plus grands hypocrites qui aient paru depuis plusieurs siècles. Ce sont des novateurs, des séditeux en rupture de ban avec l'autorité civile et l'autorité religieuse.

Des curés partent en voyage plutôt que de subir les missionnaires, même quand ils sont envoyés par l'évêque. Dans certaines paroisses personne ne veut les recevoir. On les tourne en dérision. Le Père Eudes est obligé de prendre sa clochette et de s'en aller par les places publiques et jusques dans les marchés recruter un auditoire.

La vertu du Saint vient à bout de tous les obstacles. La mission se donne. Elle est défrayée souvent par le seigneur du lieu. L'autorité comprenait qu'elle avait charge d'âmes. Elle dure un mois, deux mois, trois mois à Rennes en 1669, l'Octave de Pâques. C'est le principe du Père: une mission, pour être féconde, doit être longue: « Afin qu'une mission fasse quelques changements dans les cœurs et qu'elle détruise les vices et les mauvaises coutumes, il est nécessaire qu'elle dure pour le moins sept à huit semaines. Nous n'en faisons point dans les plus petites paroisses de la campagne qui ne dure six semaines; autrement on plâtre le mal, mais on ne le guérit pas; on rompt les mauvaises habitudes, mais on ne les déracine pas, on fait du bruit, mais peu de fruit. »

Pendant la mission aucune cérémonie extraordinaire et à grand tapage.

On prie beaucoup, et le Père Eudes attache une importance extrême à rétablir l'habitude des prières du matin et du soir. C'est un article du règlement des Missions.

On prêche souvent, jusqu'à trois fois par jour, et sous des formes différentes.

Il y avait le catéchisme. Le P. Eudes avait fait un Manuel d'Instruction religieuse, un des premiers qui ait été composé sous forme de demandes et de réponses. Il savait le

242 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

commenter avec un art extrême, charmer et retenir l'attention de son turbulent petit auditoire. Il avait formé des catéchistes à son image. Cet enseignement simple était spécialement destiné aux enfants. On comptait bien que les grandes personnes arriveraient à s'y intéresser. C'est ce qui advint. Il eut le plus grand succès et fit un bien prodigieux.

Il avait aussi l'usage des conférences particulières: pour les missionnaires, afin d'entretenir en eux le feu sacré; pour les prêtres, afin de leur rappeler la sublimité de leur vocation et la grandeur de leurs devoirs; pour les gentilshommes et les seigneurs de paroisse, afin qu'il leur soit remontré « comme il doivent employer leur exemple et leur autorité, pour empêcher, autant qu'ils peuvent, parmi leurs vassaux, tout ce qui est contraire à l'honneur de Dieu et procurer l'avancement de sa gloire en ce qui dépend d'eux; pour les dames et mères de famille, afin qu'elles soient ramenées à observer exactement tous leurs devoirs envers leurs maris, leurs enfants et leurs serviteurs, à fuir la lecture des romans à la mode, toute nudité de la gorge ou du sein; pour les artisans, afin de les détourner de la détestable société du compagnonnage. Il faut reconnaître que l'idée de ces conférences spéciales était lumineuse, délicate et haute, et ne pouvait manquer d'être féconde.

Personne n'était oublié, ni les malheureux jetés en prison ni les malades dans les hôpitaux ou les maisons particulières, ni les religieuses dans leurs monastères. Tous étaient visités, enseignés, confessés, communies, mis en possession des grâces et des bénédictions divines.

Enfin un sermon général était adressé à la foule réunie, et il devait rouler sur quelqueune des grandes vérités dogmatiques ou morales de notre foi. Le P. Eudes avait pris

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

243 -

soin de préciser dans ses Constitutions les matières à traiter.

Le troisième et dernier travail de la mission, le principal, le plus utile, le plus important, c'est la confession, parce que c'est là surtout que le prêtre est Jésus-Christ, c'est là surtout qu'il fait les fonctions de Jésus-Christ, qu'il arrache les âmes à Satan et qu'il les rend à Dieu. Le P. Eudes y aurait volontiers passé les journées entières, sans boire et sans manger, si la prudence l'avait pu souffrir. C'est là qu'il employait toutes ses heures libres jusque bien avant dans la nuit.

Cinq grandes cérémonies terminaient chaque mission:

La première communion solennelle des enfants; et le bon Père savait l'envelopper de tant de piété, trouver, pour exhorter les petits, des accents si pathétiques et si touchants, qu'ils fondaient en larmes et toute l'église avec eux et emportaient de cette cérémonie un ineffaçable souvenir qui embaumait leur vie tout entière;

Le pèlerinage, qui avait pour but d'apprendre au peuple à sanctifier ces sortes d'exercices de piété, où d'ordinaire il se commettait un grand nombre de péchés. Et naturellement, sous la conduite de notre Saint, tout se passait avec un recueillement monastique, et on se séparait sous cette pensée que la vie n'est qu'un pèlerinage très court qui pour tous sera vite fini.

Le service pour les défunts, afin d'illustrer cette vérité, en évoquant les disparus; les disparus depuis des années, les disparus d'hier que nous rejoindrons demain;

La procession générale, formée de 10, 15, 20 paroisses, avec ses adieux, ses félicitations aux âmes fidèles, ses suprêmes appels, ses menaces aux cœurs jusque-là rebelles, ses vivats, ses acclamations à Jésus-Eucharistie, exposé sur un splendide reposoir au milieu de la place

244 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

publique, souvent même à la main du missionnaire et semblant parler par sa bouche;

Et le fameux feu de joie dans lequel le prédicateur jetait successivement livres, tableaux, images obscènes, en les nommant à haute voix et en criant anathème à leurs auteurs et à ceux qui, en ayant de semblables, refusaient de s'en dessaisir. Et quand un orateur comme le P. Eudes, avec l'âme que nous lui connaissons, l'accent qu'il est facile de soupçonner, apostrophant les assistants, leur criait d'une voix véhémence: « Ainsi seront jetés au feu tous les jureurs, tous les blasphémateurs, tous les vindicatifs, tous les impudiques, tous ceux qui n'ont pas voulu profiter de la mission! À vous de choisir: ou la conversion, ou pour jamais les flammes de l'enfer », on conçoit que la foule fût profondément impressionnée, que les pécheurs obstinés fussent bouleversés, terrifiés, et, comme le dit le P. Martine, que souvent de cette cérémonie on ait vu arriver des effets extraordinaires.

Les missions du P. Eudes eurent un succès prodigieux. Les foules affluent. Elles accourent de sept ou huit lieues à la ronde. Rien ne les arrête, ni la rigueur des saisons, ni l'incommodité des routes, ni la longueur du chemin. Le travail cesse; les boutiques se ferment; les serviteurs et les servantes achètent à prix d'argent de leurs maîtres indévots la permission d'aller aux exercices, ou bien louent d'autres personnes pour les remplacer. A certains jours, il y a, pour entendre les envoyés de Dieu, dix mille, quinze mille, vingt mille, trente mille et même quarante mille hommes et femmes. Les églises les plus vastes ne peuvent contenir ces multitudes. Il faut sortir sur la place publique, s'établir dans les champs, sur les collines. La voix puissante du missionnaire réussit à parvenir jusqu'aux derniers rangs. Tous s'en étonnent, et avec raison.

Elle remue et soulève ces masses avec une force irrésistible.

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

245 -

On les voit maintes fois éclater en sanglots. On les voit, après un saisissant tableau des châtements divins, tomber à genoux d'un même mouvement et crier éperdument: « Miséricorde, mon Dieu! Miséricorde! » ou bien se dresser dans un saint enthousiasme et redire avec amour: Vive Jésus! Vive Jésus! La reine elle-même, présente, avait suivi l'élan de la foule et, tout en larmes, mêlé sa voix à la voix de ses sujets.

Mais le P. Eudes n'était pas de ces orateurs qui excitent les émotions passagères et qui font dire aux belles dames: « Il a parlé divinement, ma chère. » Et puis, après on ne songe plus au sermon et on passe à d'autres exercices toujours aussi futiles.

Lui, il secoue, renverse les âmes, il y provoque la haine l'horreur du mal, le remords, les saintes frayeurs, le soin de trouver les pardons divins. Aussi les confessionnaires sont assiégés. Ils sont quinze, vingt prêtres; il en faudrait cinquante, il en faudrait cent, dit M. de Renty. Ils ont beau prendre sur les nuits pour continuer le pieux travail; cela ne suffit pas. « Il fallait attendre quelquefois, dit le même témoin, deux, trois et quatre jours à pour se confesser, et au bout de quatre semaines, quantité ne l'ont pu. »

Les effets sont admirables: la rénovation de la vie chrétienne est complète.

Les athées et les libertins abjurent leurs erreurs; les huguenots reviennent à l'église; les sorciers abandonnent leurs infâmes pratiques; les plus grands pécheurs se convertissent; les cabaleurs violemment opposés à ces pieux exercices se frappent la poitrine et demandent pardon au ciel et à la terre d'avoir voulu mettre obstacle à un si grand bien.

Les blasphèmes se taisent; le trafic du dimanche est supprimé; les duels cessent, une ligue est organisée pour

246 -

#### SAINT JEAN EUDES

les empêcher de renaître; les haines s'apaisent; les réconciliations de familles cruellement divisées depuis de longues années s'accomplissent; les fraudes et les injustices se réparent; les restitutions se font; de grosses sommes sont rendues; les procès, les différends sont arrangés et terminés; les liaisons coupables se brisent; les mauvais livres sont livrés et détruits; les abus de pouvoirs diminuent; la police est mieux gardée; les édits sont plus exactement observés. Le mal est vaincu; le bien triomphe, il reflurit avec magnificence. C'est un nouveau printemps pour l'Église de France. Elle a vécu longtemps de cette renaissance.

En vérité Jean Eudes est bien l'émule des François Régis et des Vincent Ferrier.

Mais quel était le secret de son emprise sur les âmes? Par quels moyens exerçait-il sur elles une action si puissante?

D'abord par sa parole. Malheureusement nous n'avons de lui aucun sermon. Il n'aimait pas les discours complètement écrits et appris par cœur et mot à mot, estimant que c'était de grand travail et de peu de fruit, parce que quand l'esprit est ainsi lié aux paroles, il perd sa liberté, sa ferveur se diminue, et il ne parle pas avec la vigueur et la véhémence avec laquelle il fait éclater son zèle quand il n'est attaché qu'aux choses, pourvu d'ailleurs qu'elles soient bien conçues et digérées et qu'il les possède parfaitement. Il avait cependant trois volumes de sermons dont le P. Hérabourg a dit: « Le style en paraît simple, mais pourtant il est fort et nerveux, appuyant toujours les choses qu'il avance sur de solides preuves de l'Écriture et des Pères. C'est un arsenal où l'on trouve des armes toutes propres pour combattre le vice et faire triompher la vertu. » Ces trois volumes sont perdus. Et alors nous n'avons, pour apprécier l'orateur, que l'histoire et ses écrits, où sûrement

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

247

se rencontrent des passages de ses discours, et en particulier son Prédicateur apostolique, fruit d'une

expérience de plus de cinquante-cinq ans durant lesquels Dieu lui a fait la grâce d'annoncer sa divine parole dans une grande quantité de missions, avec d'abondantes bénédictions et des fruits extraordinaires. Et n'est-on pas en droit de dire que l'orateur s'est peint dans le Prédicateur apostolique comme le saint dans le Royaume de Jésus?

Il a dit, avec cette hauteur de pensée qui le caractérise, que le prédicateur est la bouche de Jésus-Christ et qu'il fait parler Dieu. Vous ne trouverez donc pas sur ses lèvres de citations de Platon, d'Aristote, de Sénèque, de Plutarque, de traits de mathématique, de médecine, de jurisprudence, d'antiquités païennes, de romans à la mode. Il ne connaît et ne veut connaître que la parole de Dieu. Son unique livre de chevet est la sainte Écriture avec ses commentateurs autorisés, les exégètes comme Cornille de La Pierre, les Conciles, les Pères, les pieux auteurs, comme Louis de Grenade et de Saint-Jure, les saints par leur vie, et la Somme de saint Thomas, la table de laquelle fournit toutes les choses dont on a besoin. Aussi il la possède, cette divine Écriture. Ses écrits en sont pleins. Elle fait la beauté de ses offices. Elle donne à ses Règles de Jésus et de Marie un caractère unique. Il y a là une mosaïque admirable de textes sacrés sur les devoirs et les vertus de la vie chrétienne et sacerdotale qui a étonné Rome elle-même.

Il ne traitera jamais de sujets mi-profanes mi-religieux, de questions subtiles, relevées et difficiles, qui sont plus propres pour contenter la curiosité humaine que pour édifier les âmes et toucher les cœurs. Il n'annoncera que les très simples et très solides vérités de la doctrine évangélique, toujours les mêmes, mais jamais assez connues, assez méditées.

S'il parle de vertus et de vices, ce ne sera jamais au simple

248-

SAINT JEAN EUDES

point de vue de l'honnêteté naturelle. Il se souviendra que le baptême a passé sur ces âmes qui l'entendent, qu'il en fait un autre peuple, un peuple de dieux et que de ce chef elles ont contracté tout un ordre d'obligations infiniment plus élevées. Et quand il retracera le programme des instructions à donner pendant les missions, un des premiers sujets indiqués sera: du Baptême, de la profession qu'on y a faite et des obligations qui la suivent. Et il estimait que « c'était une chose déplorable à larmes de sang de voir que d'un si grand nombre d'hommes dont la terre est peuplée, qui ont été baptisés et par conséquent admis au rang des enfants de Dieu, des membres de Jésus-Christ et des temples vivants du Saint-Esprit et obligés à mener une vie conforme à ces divines qualités, il y en a néanmoins beaucoup plus qui vivent en bêtes, en païens et même en démons, qu'il n'y en a qui se comportent en véritables chrétiens. Et une des principales raisons, c'est que la plus grande partie de ces mêmes chrétiens ne savent pas ce que c'est que d'avoir été baptisés. »

La parole du P. Eudes est tout apostolique, toute surnaturelle, toute divine: elle est forte aussi, véhémence, pleine de mouvement, toute de feu. C'était le programme que la très sainte Vierge, par un intermédiaire inconnu, avait tracé à notre Saint:

« Dites à votre Frère de ma part que, lorsqu'il monte en chaire, il faut qu'il porte avec lui les canons, les mousquets et les autres armes puissantes et terribles de la parole de Dieu, pour combattre le péché en général, et pour le foudroyer et écraser dans les âmes. Mais lorsqu'il va parler et communiquer en particulier avec quelque pécheur pour le convertir, il doit mener avec lui la douceur, la bénignité, la patience et la charité. » C'est bien ainsi que l'ont vu ses contemporains: « Il paraissait un lion en chaire, écrit une religieuse, mais au confessionnal c'était un agneau. »

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE 249 -

« Ses sermons, disait de son côté M. de Renty, sont des foudres qui ne donnent point de repos, aux

consciences qu'elles ne se soient ouvertes de leurs péchés recelés, en sorte que les confesseurs travaillent plus à consoler qu'à émouvoir. »

Il sait l'importance capitale de la crainte. Il sait qu'elle est le commencement nécessaire de la sagesse. Il voit en face de lui des âmes coupables; il veut les secouer, les terrifier pour les arracher au joug maudit de leurs passions. C'est d'ailleurs le mouvement logique spontané de son âme. Le mal ne peut que le mettre hors de lui; il outrage Dieu et perd ses frères.

Faut-il donner un ou deux exemples? Il s'agit de la tenue dans les églises. Il parle tout d'abord aux hommes: « Oui, les anges et les archanges, les puissances et les dominations, les chérubins et les séraphins plus purs que le soleil, qui n'ont jamais offensé Dieu et qui ne lui ont jamais rendu que tout honneur et toute obéissance, tremblent néanmoins devant sa force; et toi, criminel de mille crimes, qui es tout pourri des ordures de tes vices et qui mérites mille enfers, tu entres dans le sanctuaire du Dieu vivant la tête levée, les yeux égarés et sans aucune crainte? Tu te présentes devant le tribunal formidable de ton juge, par les mains duquel ton âme passera bientôt, et qui la fera rendre compte jusques à une parole oiseuse, avec aussi peu de retenue que s'il n'était rien! Tu es si osé que de paraître devant Dieu les mains toutes sanglantes du sang de son Fils unique et bien-aimé, que tu as crucifié et massacré autant de fois que tu l'as offensé mortellement, et tu ne pâlis point, tu ne rougis point, tu ne trembles point, mais tu causes, tu ris, tu prends des postures indécentes et même insolentes comme si tu venais là exprès afin de l'outrager et d'allumer le feu de sa colère contre toi! Il te voit, il te considère, il te souffre pour un temps; il t'attend à pénitence.

250 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

Mais si tu méprises les richesses de sa bonté... sache que tu fais un amas de colère, de châtiments et de malédiction qui tout à coup viendront à fondre sur ta tête.»

Et passant aux femmes, il les apostrophe avec une énergie peut-être plus grande encore: « Et les femmes, lesquelles... doivent être en tout lieu et en tout temps ornées d'une telle pudeur, simplicité et modestie, que leur sainte conversation et l'exemple de leurs vertus et de leur piété soit capable de convertir les cœurs des hommes les plus endurcis,... en quel équipage viennent-elles dans les lieux saints? Quels y sont leurs comportements? Au lieu d'être voilées, comme Dieu le leur ordonne par saint Paul, elles s'y présentent, voire même elles entrent souvent dans le sanctuaire, comme si elles venaient à un bal et à une danse, avec des habits pompeux, des cheveux frisés, crépelés, annelés, avec la gorge et le sein découverts. Est-ce vouloir plaire à Dieu cela, ou au monde qui est son ennemi et par conséquent au prince du monde qui est Satan? Est-ce porter les marques d'une chrétienne ou d'une païenne? Est-ce être parée des livrées de Jésus-Christ, ou des livrées de l'Antéchrist? Est-ce porter l'image de la pureté, modestie et humilité de la plus noble de toutes les femmes, qui est la Reine du ciel, ou le portrait de la vanité et impiété de l'infâme Jézabel, laquelle, par un juste jugement de Dieu, a été écrasée sous les pieds des chevaux et mangée par les chiens? Dirait-on pas qu'elles viennent à l'église pour y désavouer publiquement, à la face de Dieu et des anges, les promesses qu'elles ont faites en leur baptême de renoncer aux pompes du diable, et pour protester hautement que, encore qu'elles confessent Jésus-Christ de bouche, elles le renient néanmoins par leurs œuvres pour adhérer à son ennemi? O effronterie! O impudence insupportable! Voir des chrétiennes paraître devant Jésus-Christ couronné d'épines, déchiré à coups de fouet, démembré, crucifié,

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

251 -

tout couvert de plaies et de sang, revêtues des pompes de Satan, armées de pied en cap de vanité, de mondanité, d'afféterie, de mille flèches empoisonnées pour faire la guerre à la chasteté et pour tuer les âmes pour lesquelles il est mort, ou pour mieux dire, armées de fouets, d'épines et de clous, pour flageller, tourmenter et crucifier derechef celui qu'elles adorent en apparence comme leur Dieu et

qu'elles renient en effet! Que vous a-t-il fait, misérables, ce très aimable Sauveur, pour que vous le traitiez si indignement dans sa propre maison? »

On pourrait dans les OEuvres du P. Eudes trouver vingt passages de cette ardente et vibrante allure, sur le faux honneur, sur le péché, sur le monde, sur la dignité du baptisé, sur ses graves obligations et responsabilités, sur la façon de servir la messe, sur la sublimité du sacerdoce et de tous ses ministères, sur le zèle, sur la douleur.

C'est l'énergie d'un saint Jean Chrysostome dénonçant les désordres de Constantinople, des prophètes d'Israël relevant les criminelles prévarications du peuple, de Jésus-Christ lui-même flagellant les vices et l'hypocrisie des Scribes et des Pharisiens.

Forte par son accent et son mouvement, la parole du P. Eudes l'est encore par sa doctrine. Ne cherchez pas chez lui un christianisme d'accommodement, qui n'ait que des sourires et des baisers et d'inépuisables indulgences pour toutes les erreurs et toutes les faiblesses, et qui ouvre à peu près indistinctement à tous, après quelques détours, les portes du Paradis. Non, la complaisance et la flatterie pour les désordres du monde l'exaspèrent. Il s'attache aux justes sévérités et condamnations de l'Évangile. Nous n'avons qu'à nous rappeler ses virulentes sorties, citées quelques lignes plus haut. Nous pourrions donner la liste de ceux auxquels, d'après lui, il faut refuser l'absolution; par exemple, parce qu'ils donnent occasion de péché aux

252 -

#### SAINT JEAN EUDES

autres, ceux qui sont auteurs de divertissements périlleux pour le salut, comme sont les danses, condamnées par les saints Pères; toutes les femmes et filles qui par leurs gorges, leurs épaules et leurs bras découverts, et par le luxe et la pompe de leurs habits, servent d'instruments aux démons pour traîner beaucoup d'âmes en enfer. A raison de quoi saint Jérôme les appelle les amazones et les guerrières du diable, qui font la guerre à la chasteté et qui la tuent en beaucoup de personnes. Ajoutez-y les mères qui permettent à leurs filles de s'enrôler avec ces amazones diaboliques, etc., etc.

Elle résume bien sa pensée, cette formule brève et saisissante: Il ne faut pas imiter « ces prédicateurs à la mode, qui font le chemin du paradis fort large et celui de l'enfer fort étroit, contre la parole expresse de la vérité éternelle ».

Enfin, la parole du Père Eudes est forte par ses saintes libertés, ses évangéliques audaces devant les grands de la terre. Il doit à tous la vérité; tous la recevront. Lui aussi frappe comme un sourd. On rappellera éternellement ses véhémentes apostrophes aux agents subalternes du fisc, ces sangsues, ces mangeurs du peuple avec leurs superbes maisons et leurs dorures, aux archers de la gabelle cassant les cruches des pauvres femmes voisines des côtes de la mer, qui y allaient puiser de l'eau.

Il osa s'attaquer aux courtisans devant Louis XIV: «Ce qui m'étonne, Sire, c'est que pendant que Votre Majesté s'acquitte si parfaitement des devoirs de la religion et qu'elle rend à Dieu avec humilité ses plus profonds hommages, je vois une multitude de vos sujets qui font tout le contraire. » L'historien du P. Eudes ajoute: « Le tonnerre eût éclaté dans le saint lieu, qu'il n'eût pas jeté plus d'épouvante parmi les gentilshommes. Tous, incontinent, de fléchir les genoux, mais pas assez prestement pour que le roi, en tournant la tête, n'en aperçût quelques-uns. De

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

. 253 -

là, chez ceux-ci, une violente indignation contre l'audace du missionnaire, indignation d'ailleurs qu'il leur fallut dissimuler, pour célébrer avec les autres son zèle et son courage.

Notre Saint n'hésita pas davantage à dire tout « nuement » la vérité à la reine et au roi. C'était



après l'incendie qui avait consumé une partie du Louvre. Et l'humble religieux de s'écrier devant la cour effrayée de tant d'audace: « Il est permis aux princes de bâtir des palais, mais il leur est bien plus impérieusement commandé par Dieu de soulager leurs sujets, d'avoir compassion de tant de veuves, de tant d'orphelins et de tant de peuples accablés de misère. Il est permis aux princes de prendre quelques honnêtes divertissements, mais y employer tous les jours n'est point le chemin du paradis. Si le feu temporel n'a pas pardonné à la maison royale, le feu éternel ne pardonnera ni à princes ni à princesses s'ils ne vivent en chrétiens et s'ils n'emploient leur autorité pour détruire la tyrannie du diable et du péché et pour établir le règne de Dieu. Je serais criminel si je tenais la vérité captive. Je ne suis qu'un chétif homme et un misérable pécheur, mais dans cette chaire je tiens la place de Dieu; je fais l'office d'ambassadeur de Jésus-Christ pour porter la parole du Roi des rois à une grande reine, et je la supplie de la prendre de cette façon. » Et la reine sut la prendre de cette façon.

« C'est ainsi, ajoute le P. Martine, que le P. Eudes faisait profession de dire la vérité à tout le monde et de reprendre le vice partout où il le trouvait. Quelque besoin qu'il eût de la protection des grands dans tant de fâcheuses affaires qu'on lui suscita, il n'accorda jamais rien à la flatterie, toujours prêt à sacrifier non seulement tous les intérêts humains, mais sa vie même s'il avait été nécessaire pour soutenir la vérité et combattre le vice. »

Nous ne donnerions qu'une idée incomplète de la parole

254 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

du P. Eudes si nous n'ajoutions pas qu'elle était aussi chaude et aussi bonne que forte. C'était le programme qu'il avait tracé et il se fût bien gardé de le négliger sur un point essentiel. Oui, effrayons, mais ne décourageons pas; et après que nous avons jeté la terreur dans les âmes, efforçons-nous, comme les prophètes, de les ouvrir à la confiance et de les conduire à la charité. Il y a dans ses œuvres trop d'actes et de flammes d'amour, trop d'élans d'admiration, pour que ses sermons ne fussent pas également remplis de ces affectueux sentiments. Du reste, l'histoire nous le montre un jour sur une place publique arrachant à ses auditeurs des larmes d'amour après leur avoir dépeint les merveilles de l'Eucharistie, et une autre fois les faisant acclamer avec enthousiasme Jésus-Christ dont il avait dit les divines beautés.

« Il foudroyait les crimes, a dit le P. Hérabourg, mais il avait pitié des pécheurs... On voyait à l'oeil que ce qu'il disait procédait d'un cœur de père qui brûlait d'amour pour ses enfants et dont les entrailles étaient pleines de compassion pour leur misérable état, et de zèle pour leur salut. » Bref, sa parole était telle que les plus grands orateurs du XVIIe siècle disaient, après l'avoir entendu: « C'est ainsi que nous devrions prêcher! »

Par elle, il a remué le monde: il a achevé de le convertir au confessionnal. Là comme ailleurs, il fut incomparable. C'était pour lui l'oeuvre des œuvres, le centre, le but, le tout de la mission. Il y portait surtout deux vertus. D'abord une pitié profonde, un amour vrai et tout surnaturel pour les pauvres pécheurs. Il savait si bien remuer les âmes qu'on n'entendait que soupirs et gémissements sortir des confessionnaux. Mais à cette bonté compatissante il joignait toujours la justice, c'est-à-dire une fermeté inébranlable à sauvegarder les droits de Dieu, la sainteté du sacrement de pénitence, et les intérêts spirituels des âmes.

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

255 -

Il faut l'entendre dissenter sur ce point. Jamais d'absolution avant que les réparations nécessaires n'aient été faites, les restitutions accomplies, les réconciliations opérées, les scandales supprimés, les relations coupables rompues, les habitudes mauvaises vaincues. Les plus belles promesses ne suffisaient pas: il fallait le fait. On le savait si bien que, dès le début de la mission, tous s'empressaient de rentrer dans l'ordre, dans la crainte d'être privés des grâces de ces saints exercices.

À la prédication, au confessionnal, notre héros joignait la prière. On lui a rendu cet admirable hommage: « Jamais, jamais homme n'agit tant et ne pria tant; jamais personne n'accorda mieux l'action avec la contemplation; jamais prédicateur apostolique n'eut tant de commerce avec les hommes et avec Dieu tout ensemble. »

Et il imposait la prière à ses collaborateurs, même au plus fort du travail, même quand ils étaient débordés; il la demandait aux foules et s'efforçait de leur en faire contracter l'habitude. Il la réclamait des communautés religieuses avec lesquelles il était en relation. Il sommait les anges gardiens, les saints patrons et saintes patronnes des lieux et des personnes d'intercéder auprès de Dieu. Il réquisitionnait, mobilisait le ciel et la terre pour déchaîner la force de la prière dans toute sa puissance.

Avec la prière, la pénitence, les jeûnes, les macérations, les larmes, le sang, les contradictions, les croix. La souffrance ne l'effraie pas; au contraire, elle le remplit d'immenses espérances. Il sait qu'elle porte en elle toutes les grâces et toutes les rédempctions. Il dira: « Plus il y a de croix dans les affaires de Dieu, plus elles sont avantageuses. » Il chantera: « La croix, c'est l'unique trésor de la terre, le souverain bien des enfants de Jésus et de Marie, la source de toute bénédiction, la gloire, la couronne, l'amour

256-

SAINT JEAN EUDES

et les délices des véritables chrétiens. Ah! que c'est un grand et riche trésor qu'une bonne affliction quand on en fait un saint usage. La grâce des grâces et la force des forces est la multitude des croix que mon très adorable Crucifié m'a données. Je souhaite qu'il en soit loué et glorifié éternellement. »

Et les faits viennent confirmer le principe: plus il a de peines, et plus il réussit.

Enfin, la grande raison de ses succès est sa sainteté. Elle donne aux autres causes toute leur efficacité; et sa vertu propre est incommensurable.

Tout prêche en lui. Il a dit: « Le prédicateur apostolique est obligé d'être tout voix, à l'imitation du grand saint Jean: Vox clamantis, c'est-à-dire qu'il doit vivre, agir et converser de telle sorte, et son extérieur doit être tellement composé que, soit qu'il soit assis ou debout, on ne voie rien en sa personne, en ses déportements, en sa démarche, en ses yeux, en ses mains, en ses pieds, en ses gestes, en ses habits, et en tout ce qui est en lui, non seulement dans la chaire et l'église, mais dans tous les lieux où il se trouve, qui ne parle et qui ne prêche la piété, la modestie, l'humilité, la simplicité, l'honnêteté et toutes sortes de vertus. »

Il s'est peint dans ces lignes sans y songer. Les foules ne s'y trompent pas. Pour elles il est visible qu'il a vécu, qu'il vit les saintes vérités qu'il prêche avec tant d'ardeur. Dans ses plus véhémentes invectives contre le péché et le monde, et dans ses plus chauds élans vers Jésus, vers Marie, vers la vertu, vers les choses saintes, il n'y a rien de factice, rien d'artificiel: c'est bien lui, tel que la grâce et ses efforts l'ont fait et tel qu'il voudrait faire les autres.

Il a réalisé l'idéal tracé par lui: La prédication évangélique étant une continuation de la prédication du Fils de Dieu, et le prédicateur chrétien tenant sa place et repré-

SA VIE APOSTOLIQUE

257 -

sentant sa personne en cette position, doit l'imiter en ce qui est dit: Commencer par faire ce que l'on doit enseigner, et être puissant en œuvres pour devenir puissant en paroles.

« C'est pourquoi tous les prédicateurs doivent être des exemplaires de piété et de toutes sortes de

vertus, spécialement de l'humilité, de l'obéissance et de la charité. » Et alors leur parole, comme celle de saint Basile, sera un tonnerre, parce que leur vie sera un éclair. On ne pouvait mieux dire.

Et s'il faut caractériser en deux traits la physionomie de notre Saint, je dirai qu'elle est surtout faite de force et de tendresse. Buffon avait raison: Le style c'est l'homme. On a écrit, et le mot me paraît juste: François de Sales est la force sous la douceur, et Jean Eudes la douceur sous la force.

La force, nous enseigne saint Thomas, se manifeste par deux aptitudes: aptitude à entreprendre, aptitude à souffrir.

Nulle vie ne fut plus remplie que la vie de notre saint fondateur et missionnaire. Il pourrait parler, lui aussi, de sa sollicitude de toutes les églises. On se demande comment il a pu mener de front tant de besognes sans que l'une nuise à l'autre. Eh bien! non, il a un tel empire sur lui-même qu'il est tout entier à chaque affaire pendant les heures qui lui sont consacrées. Et comme le dit le P. Martine, « si nombreuses et si variées que fussent ses occupations, il sut si bien les ajuster que ses missions ne nuisirent point à ses projets, ni ses négociations diverses à ses missions ». C'est un bel exemplaire d'énergie.

Jamais homme ne fut plus contredit. Il a rencontré de l'opposition dans tout ce qu'il a fait, dans sa sortie de l'Oratoire, dans l'établissement de sa Congrégation et de ses Charités, dans la fondation de ses séminaires, dans ses

258 -

#### SAINT JEAN RUDES

missions, dans sa dévotion aux saints Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie. Les attaques, les difficultés lui sont venues de tous côtés: de ses filles, des curés, des moines, des autres Ordres religieux, des chapitres, des grands vicaires de ses évêques, des jansénistes, des saintes gens de ce temps-là, de ses amis, des puissants de la terre, du Roi, de Rome qui ne lui a jamais donné la consolation de voir sa famille religieuse autorisée. La Providence même semble se joindre à ses adversaires, par des deuils en apparence inopportuns. Jamais un instant de découragement. Jamais une plainte. Toujours une belle allégresse. Toujours une inébranlable confiance. Il aurait peur si les croix manquaient. Toujours la tranquillité d'âme, la marche en avant, la persévérance invincible. Toujours l'action de grâces pour la souffrance reçue. Il a un mémorial des bienfaits divins à son égard, et ce mémorial est une longue énumération de ses croix.

C'était un vaillant. Il affectionnait cette formule. Corde magno et anima volenti. Je le comprends. Elle l'exprime exactement.

Avec la vaillance, la tendresse, toutes les tendresses

Tendresses pour Jésus et sa Mère. Il a des cris qui l'égale aux amants les plus passionnés du Sauveur: « O amour! O amour! Ou mourir ou aimer! ou plutôt mourir et aimer! »

Tendresses pour les âmes: il resterait indéfiniment sur la terre pour les servir. Il abandonnerait le ciel pour accourir à leurs secours et pour travailler à les sauver.

Tendresses pour les pécheurs: elles éclatent dans ses missions et dans l'audacieuse invention de ses charités.

Tendresses pour les malades: son dévouement aux pestiférés d'Argentan et de Caen le couronna d'une auréole qui ne se voila jamais et aida puissamment au succès de sa prédication.

Tendresses pour les pauvres: ce sont ses seigneurs et maîtres, et il entend que sa Congrégation se regarde comme constituée pour les instruire, les assister et les consoler.

Tendresses pour les opprimés: on sait avec quel courage il savait élever la voix pour les défendre.

Tendresses pour les enfants: ils étaient l'objet principal de sa sollicitude et il affectionnait tout particulièrement ceux de ses Pères qui s'entendaient le mieux à les instruire et à les former. Et devant ces boutons de rose, son visage et sa plume, ordinairement si graves, s'éclairaient volontiers d'un sourire.

Ne reconnaissons-nous pas toutes les prédilections du Coeur de Jésus? Et alors ne sommes-nous pas en droit de conclure que le coeur de Jean Eudes c'était bien le coeur du Christ! Ne peut-on pas lui appliquer sa belle comparaison des deux lyres si bien harmonisées, que quand l'une chantait, l'autre aussi, sans avoir besoin d'être frappée, se mettait à chanter? Comme Marie, Jean Eudes aime ce que Jésus aime, haït ce qu'il haït, se réjouit de ce qui le console, s'afflige de ce qui le peine.

Mieux que cela, de Jean Eudes comme de son maître, le Père de Condren, on peut dire qu'il n'est plus qu'une apparence, et que sous cette apparence ce qui se cache, c'est Jésus-Christ. Il a écrit . « Le prêtre, le vrai prêtre est une image vive de Jésus-Christ en ce monde et de Jésus-Christ veillant, priant, prêchant, catéchisant, travaillant, suant, pleurant, allant de ville en ville et de village en village, souffrant, agonisant, mourant et se sacrifiant soi-même pour le salut de toutes les âmes créées à son image et semblance. »

Jean Eudes fut éminemment ce prêtre-là, et jamais n'a été réalisée avec plus de perfection la grande parole: « Le prêtre est un autre Christ. »

L. Poisson.

## L'œuvre des Séminaires

Confiné, ou à peu près, dans le nord-ouest de la France, le rôle de saint Jean Eudes dans l'établissement des grands séminaires fut trop longtemps méconnu. Cependant il est comparable à celui de Monsieur Olier. L'illusion sur ce point risque d'être entretenue par la remarquable Histoire des Séminaires français, que publia, en 1912, M. Degert, professeur à l'Institut catholique de Toulouse, si loin de notre Normandie et des documents utiles pour une mise au point! Les lacunes, Dieu merci! furent vite comblées, en ce qui nous concerne, par le livre de M. le chanoine Bonnenfant, ancien directeur au grand séminaire d'Evreux, sur Les Séminaires normands du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1). Du reste, la Vie du V. Jean Eudes, en quatre volumes parus de 1905 à 1908 et composés par le R. P. Boulay, C. J. M. elle fournit tous les renseignements.

Le séminaire de Vaugirard, qui fut remplacé par Saint-Sulpice à la mi-août 1642, date des derniers jours de 1641; et le séminaire des Bons-Enfants, dépendant de Saint-Lazare, fut lancé en février 1642. Ils ont donc précédé d'un an le premier séminaire eudiste, ouvert à Caen le 25 mars 1643 et dont les Lettres-patentes furent délivrées en décembre 1642. Cet écart de minime importance est bien compensé

(1) Picard éditeur.

(2) Librairie Haton.

### L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES

261

par le fait que saint Jean Eudes a personnellement organisé six grands séminaires; tandis que l'intervention de Monsieur Olier semble avoir été moins directe dans la fondation des cinq maisons sulpiciennes qui eut lieu de son vivant. A la veille de la Révolution, les Eudistes dirigeaient quinze séminaires, exactement le même nombre que Messieurs de Saint-Sulpice; il est vrai que ceux-ci occupaient des centres plus importants et beaucoup plus dispersés, ce qui a étendu et rendu plus notoire leur influence.

Il a manqué surtout à la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie de reprendre au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle son apostolat primordial dans les Séminaires français; mais elle l'exerce, depuis quarante ans, au Canada et en Colombie, d'autant plus fidèle à sa tradition primitive, qu'elle crée des établissements d'éducation cléricale dans les pays qui en manquent. En tout cas, si la renommée du saint Instituteur a pu en souffrir, son mérite n'est pas diminué parce que ses fils, victimes des persécutions, n'ont pu se maintenir dans les positions acquises.

Tout le monde sait que la situation sociale et religieuse de notre patrie empêcha, pendant trois quarts de siècle, l'application du décret Cum adolescentium Aetas, voté en 1566 par le Concile de Trente et publié l'année suivante par Pie IV. De timides essais, qui ne sont pas encore tous connus du grand public, ou bien avaient complètement échoué, ou bien étaient restés isolés, sans portée générale. Ce qu'en quatre-vingts ans des princes de l'Église ou des prélats n'avaient pu faire, trois simples prêtres, travaillant chacun de leur bord, dans l'intervalle d'une année, jetèrent avec succès les assises de cette grande œuvre, qui, dès lors, allait prospérer et mieux réussir en France que partout ailleurs peut-être. C'étaient trois zélés missionnaires, ayant particulièrement souffert du déplorable état d'un clergé

262-

### SAINT JEAN EUDES

qui entravait, au lieu de le faciliter, le labeur apostolique de la régénération des âmes. Ils furent également secondés par le grand homme d'Église et d'État qui gouvernait alors la France.

Pour ce qui est du Père Eudes, dont il s'agit uniquement désormais, Richelieu l'aida non seulement de sa haute autorité, mais encore des subsides de sa nièce, la duchesse d'Aiguillon. Il se trouva en outre, au

milieu du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, de bons évêques en Normandie, pour favoriser l'ouverture des séminaires que l'homme de Dieu était destiné à établir dans leurs diocèses. Cela ne veut pas dire que tout se fit aisément et qu'il n'y eut pas de fortes hostilités à vaincre. Les jansénistes, en particulier, ennemis de l'Apôtre des SS. Coeurs de Jésus et Marie, adversaires, du reste, de toute entreprise vraiment catholique, entravèrent rudement et longuement la brillante carrière qu'il nous reste à décrire.

Nous dirons comment saint Jean Eudes fut amené à fonder ses séminaires, comment il les conçut, dans quel ordre il les réalisa et quels résultats il obtint.

Le Père Eudes s'aperçut très vite que les magnifiques succès de ses missions n'étaient guère plus durables que des feux de paille, faute d'être maintenus par le ministère habituel de pasteurs instruits, vertueux et zélés. Les missionnaires une fois partis, les populations n'avaient point, pour les entretenir dans la ferveur, des prêtres à la hauteur de leur tâche et soucieux de la remplir. Au témoignage du P. Martine, son premier biographe, le saint apôtre disait à ses confrères, avec la mélancolique émotion du Maître contemplant la récolte mûre et sans moissonneurs: « Les voilà ces pauvres gens dans d'excellentes dispositions;

## L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES 263 -

mais qu'en doit-on attendre sous la conduite de pasteurs tels qu'on les rencontre de tous côtés? N'est-ce pas une espèce de nécessité, qu'oubliant bientôt les grandes vérités dont ils ont été touchés durant la mission, ils retombent dans leurs premiers désordres? (1) »

Il s'agissait donc, avant tout, de convertir, de transformer le clergé, pour garantir la conversion des fidèles. Suivant absolument la même voie que les fondateurs de Saint-Lazare et de Saint-Sulpice, qui, avant d'aboutir au terme des séminaires proprement dits, avaient organisé des conférences hebdomadaires pour les ecclésiastiques, l'un à Paris en 1633, l'autre au Puy en 1636, le Père Eudes inaugura, en 1641, des entretiens spéciaux aux prêtres de la région pendant la mission de Rémilly (diocèse de Coutances). Le bienfait de cette initiative ne lui parut pas encore suffisant. C'est l'éducation pieuse et solide des clercs qu'il fallait assurer par des établissements propres à cette fin.

Ne convenait-il pas aux Oratoriens, constitués tout exprès pour être des modèles et des entraîneurs de conduite sacerdotale, de réaliser cette oeuvre capitale? Saint Jean Eudes le pensait; il espérait même qu'on lui permettrait d'ouvrir un séminaire dans la Maison de Caen dont il était supérieur depuis 1640. Il plane un mystère sur les raisons qui empêchèrent l'accomplissement de ce dessein et qui amenèrent, en conséquence, la fondation de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie. Ce n'est pas le lieu d'en discuter, ni d'écrire quoi que ce soit qui puisse éveiller de légitimes susceptibilités. A peine osons-nous invoquer le témoignage d'un oratorien distingué du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle: « J'estime, disait en 1871 le P. de Valroger, que l'esprit du cardinal de Bérulle était passé dans le Père Eudes, quand il sortit de l'Oratoire pour fonder sa Congrégation »,

(1) Martine-Lecointe, Vie du P. Eudes, 1, p. 102.

## 264 SAINT JEAN EUDES

et déférer au vœu du Concile de Trente. Nous pouvons nous en tenir à l'avis du cardinal Perraud, sur le rôle de l'Institut dont il était l'éminent Supérieur, à propos de la réforme du clergé qui, au milieu du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, « s'accomplit dans un grand nombre de diocèses. L'Oratoire fut loin de demeurer étranger à ce mouvement. Tant qu'il resta fidèle à ses premières traditions, il fut un modèle vivant de la véritable discipline ecclésiastique. Mais, par la suite, trop absorbé par la direction des collèges, écueil fatal auquel il avait été se briser de trop bonne heure, malgré les précautions de son fondateur, il ne put que seconder de fort loin le mouvement de restauration si énergiquement entrepris par la Compagnie de Saint-Sulpice (et par les Eudistes, serait-il bon d'ajouter), et si visiblement béni de Dieu (1). »

Le mystique Père de Condren contribua sûrement, pour une large part, à l'orientation des trois principaux instituteurs des séminaires français: Vincent de Paul, Jean-Jacques Olier, Jean Eudes: directeur très écouté de tous les trois, il fut, en outre, le supérieur du dernier, qu'il encourageait tant qu'il vécut.

Pour justifier la création des séminaires, il suffit de rappeler l'ordre du Concile de Trente: les décisions de l'Église ne se discutent pas, l'assistance du Saint-Esprit donnant la garantie de ses préceptes aussi bien que de ses dogmes. L'histoire d'ailleurs atteste que trop souvent, au début des temps modernes, les prêtres avaient « les âmes les moins ecclésiastiques du monde ». Les évêques, nous sommes réhabituaés à les vénérer; depuis longtemps, comme il convient à leur paternité spirituelle, à cause de l'héroïsme dont beaucoup firent preuve à la Révolution, de la dignité qu'ils ont généralement manifestée

(1) L'Oratoire de France, P. 203.

## L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES

265

sous le Concordat, du désintéressement apostolique auquel ils s'élevèrent avec la Séparation, suivis de l'unanimité morale des clercs; nous avons peine à croire que par crainte « d'être reconnus parmi les gens de dévotion », au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, les évêques paraissent rarement en public vêtus de la soutane violette, tandis que de petits abbés la traînaient parfois dans les cabarets; ils avaient plus de tenue que les prêtres, mais se montraient oublieux de la résidence et des sollicitudes pastorales. Quant aux curés, bien souvent ils n'en méritaient pas le nom. Ce protestant exagérait sans doute, mais pourtant alléguait des faits navrants, qui disait à saint Vincent de Paul: « Vous m'avez affirmé, Monsieur, que l'Église de Rome est conduite du Saint-Esprit. Et comment puis-je le croire, en voyant d'un côté les catholiques de la campagne abandonnés à des pasteurs vicieux et ignorants, sans être instruits de leurs devoirs, sans que la plupart sachent seulement ce que c'est que la religion chrétienne; et, d'autre part, les villes pleines de prêtres et de moines qui ne font rien? » - Un changement radical s'opéra, Dieu merci, à mesure que les pasteurs d'âmes furent formés dans les séminaires.

11

Saint Jean Eudes a consacré toute une partie des Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie (i), c'est-à-dire près de trente pages, aux règlements des séminaires, des séminaristes et de leurs maîtres. En voici le préambule:

« Comme il n'y a rien de plus nécessaire ni de plus désirable à l'Église de Dieu que d'avoir un bon nombre de saints prêtres, qui l'éclairent, la régissent et la sanctifient

(1) OEuvres complètes, tome IX, p. 340-367.

266 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

par la lumière de leur doctrine, par la vertu de leurs prières et par l'exemple de leurs oeuvres: aussi il n'y a rien de plus important ni de plus utile que les Séminaires ecclésiastiques, qui sont des académies et des écoles saintes, dans lesquelles on s'emploie à former, instruire et exercer ceux qui tendent à l'état du sacerdoce ou qui y sont déjà arrivés, en la vie céleste qu'ils sont obligés de professer et en la manière de faire saintement et décentement toutes les fonctions cléricales. C'est ici la première et principale fin de la Congrégation. »

La raison de passer par le séminaire pour se préparer aux saints Ordres est ainsi marquée: « Car si on ne reçoit personne à la profession monastique et religieuse, même pour y être seulement en qualité de frère-lai ou convers, qu'après avoir passé par toutes les épreuves et exercices d'une et quelquefois de deux années de noviciat; et s'il n'y a point de profession ni de métier dans le siècle, pour vil et abject

qu'il puisse être, qui ne soit précédé d'une année pour le moins d'apprentissage, quelle apparence d'entrer dans l'état si noble, si important, si saint et si divin comme est l'état ecclésiastique, sans préparation?» - Puis tous les prêtres, surtout ceux qui se livrent au ministère pastoral, ont besoin de faire chaque année une retraite de « huit ou dix jours pour le moins, dans le séminaire »

Veut-on savoir maintenant quel était le programme de ces Instituts? Les Constitutions nous répondent: « On enseignera six choses principales aux séminaristes, qui sont nécessaires à un ecclésiastique pour le rendre capable de servir Dieu et son Église, selon les obligations de sa profession. - Premièrement, on leur enseignera la piété, la vertu et la perfection dont tous les ecclésiastiques doivent être ornés... La seconde chose qu'on enseignera aux séminaristes sera ce qu'ils doivent savoir touchant les cérémonies avec lesquelles on exerce les fonctions cléricales...

## L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES

267

La troisième chose sera le plain-chant... La quatrième chose sera la théologie morale ou les cas de conscience... La cinquième chose sera la manière de catéchiser et de prêcher utilement... La sixième chose sera l'intelligence de l'Écriture Sainte. » En outre, « lorsqu'il plaira à Dieu donner assez d'hommes à la Congrégation pour vaquer à tous ces emplois, on pourra encore faire des leçons et conférences des Controverses, des saints Conciles, de l'Histoire ecclésiastique et de la Théologie scolastique ».

On voit que le saint fondateur des séminaires normands envisageait dès l'origine une organisation complète et assez voisine de ce que nous avons maintenant. Toutefois les études spéculatives du Dogme et des branches annexes, se faisant dans les Facultés, n'étaient qu'un accessoire dans l'enseignement ordinaire des « Académies saintes ».

La formation spirituelle, par contre, est au premier plan: « Toutes les conférences et entretiens qu'on fera aux séminaristes, toutes les matières d'oraisons qu'on leur proposera, toutes les lectures spirituelles qu'on leur donnera et tous les autres exercices auxquels on les appliquera tendront à leur donner une grande haine de toute sorte de péché, à leur faire embrasser sérieusement la pratique de toutes les vertus, spécialement de l'humilité, de l'abnégation de soi-même et du monde, de la pureté, de la charité et du zèle du salut des âmes, à leur faire concevoir une haute estime de la dignité et sainteté de leur vocation, à leur en faire connaître et aimer les obligations et les devoirs et à leur enseigner des moyens propres pour s'en acquitter. »

« On s'étudiera spécialement à leur graver dans l'esprit un grand amour et respect pour l'Église et pour toutes les choses qui lui appartiennent, une singulière vénération, soumission et obéissance au regard de N. T. S. P. le Pape et de tous les prélats et pasteurs de la même Église, et nommément

268 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

de leur Illustrissime et Révérendissime Évêque diocésain. - On prendra aussi un soin très particulier de leur imprimer dans le cœur une grande estime et une très cordiale affection pour tous les Ordres religieux qui sont dans l'Église... Surtout, comme la principale obligation des ecclésiastiques est de travailler au salut des âmes et que la dévotion spéciale à la Bienheureuse Vierge est un moyen très puissant pour les conduire dans le ciel, le Préfet de chaque séminaire s'efforcera de la graver bien avant dans les cœurs de tous les séminaristes. »

Suivent des recommandations précises sur l'importance d'apprendre à bien lire, à bien prononcer et accentuer le latin; sur la récitation de l'Office au chœur, sur la tenue et décence de la mise des clercs: « Enfin, il travailleront de tout leur cœur à graver en leur intérieur une image parfaite de la vie, des mœurs et des vertus souverain Prêtre N.-S. Jésus-Christ et spécialement de sa divine modestie, qui est une des principales vertus qui doit reluire dans un ecclésiastique, laquelle il est obligé de pratiquer en tout temps et en tout lieu, mais particulièrement dans l'église, principalement quand il y exerce quelque fonction



cléricale et surtout quand il offre à Dieu le saint sacrifice de l'autel et le sacrifice de louanges qui se fait en célébrant l'Office divin. Car c'est dans ces occasions que les ecclésiastiques doivent être modestes et dévots comme des anges visibles..., comme des statues qui sont dans leurs niches, morts et insensibles à toutes les choses créées, pour n'avoir ni vie, ni sentiment, ni application que pour le Créateur et pour la grandeur des sacrés ministères qu'ils exercent. »

On reconnaît ici le souci prédominant de la vertu de religion, mis à la mode par Bérulle, et le principe du Concile de Trente devenu maxime courante à Saint-Sulpice: « Nihil nisi grave, moderatum ac religione plenum (clerici) prae se ferant! »

## L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES

269 -

Après avoir indiqué qu'il devra y avoir deux confesseurs en chaque séminaire, saint Jean Eudes trace la voie que doivent suivre tous les maîtres qui y sont employés à quelque titre: « Ils s'efforceront tous, avec la grâce de Notre-Seigneur, d'être extrêmement humbles, doux, affables, modestes, patients, condescendants, soumis, obéissants, ponctuels en l'observance des règles, désintéressés, détachés du monde et d'eux-mêmes et pleins de respect et d'affection pour toutes les choses de l'Église... Ils s'étudieront de vivre dans une sincère et cordiale charité les uns vers les autres et dans un grand respect, soumission et liaison vers le Supérieur de la maison. »

Tout cela se termine par une tirade oratoire sur l'importance exceptionnelle de cette oeuvre, où perce l'éloquence coutumière du missionnaire: « Car on verra sortir des séminaires un grand nombre de saints ecclésiastiques de toutes sortes de conditions, qui seront désormais l'exemple et la lumière des fidèles; qui en rapporteront les instructions et les dispositions nécessaires pour vivre selon la discipline ecclésiastique, pour rendre à leurs Prélats les respects et les obéissances qui leur sont dus, pour célébrer l'Office divin avec la majesté et sainteté qui est requise, pour faire l'office de pasteur avec le zèle et la vigilance qu'il requiert, pour administrer les sacrements saintement et avec un grand fruit pour les âmes, spécialement celui de la Pénitence, pour annoncer apostoliquement la parole de Dieu, pour catéchiser utilement les peuples, pour consoler charitablement les affligés, pour assister chrétiennement les malades et pour les aider à bien mourir quand ils sortiront de cette vie, pour exercer décemment toutes les cérémonies de l'Église et pour faire dignement toutes les autres fonctions cléricales, à la plus grande gloire de Dieu, à l'exaltation et augmentation de la sainte Église, au contentement et au soulagement des Messieurs les Illus-

270 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

trissimes Prélats, à l'honneur et à la perfection de l'état du clergé et au salut et édification d'une infinité de personnes. »

Dans une lettre à ses confrères, en date du 2 décembre 1657, saint Jean Eudes revient sur les idées émises dans les Constitutions: « Vous devez vous souvenir que la Congrégation a été établie de Dieu en son Église et qu'il vous a fait la grâce de vous y appeler, pour cestrois fins: La première, pour vous donner des moyens d'arriver à la perfection et à la sainteté conforme à l'état ecclésiastique. La deuxième, pour travailler au salut des âmes par les missions et les autres fonctions du sacerdoce, qui est l'œuvre des apôtres, l'œuvre de Notre-Seigneur, qui est si grand et si divin qu'il semble qu'il ne peut y en avoir de plus grand ni de plus divin: *divinorum divinissimum*. - Néanmoins, il y en a un qui le surpasse: c'est celui de travailler au salut et à la sanctification des ecclésiastiques; ce qui est sauver les sauveurs, diriger les directeurs, enseigner les docteurs, paître les pasteurs, éclairer ceux qui sont la lumière du monde, sanctifier ceux qui sont la sanctification de l'Église et faire dans la hiérarchie de l'Église ce que les Séraphins et les Chérubins font dans la céleste patrie. Voilà la troisième fin pour laquelle Dieu a voulu établir notre petite Congrégation... Il veut mettre entre nos mains ce qui lui est plus cher que la prunelle de ses yeux, le cœur de son corps mystique, c'est-à-dire les ecclésiastiques: c'est la sainte famille dont il

veut que nous ayons le soin et la conduite.»

## 1 1 1

En 1642, au moment même où, pour entrer dans cette carrière, Jean Eudes s'apprêtait à quitter l'Oratoire de Caen, son nouveau supérieur général, le P. Bourgoing

### L'ŒUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES 2 7 1 -

soumit les bruits contradictoires qui circulaient sur son compte à Mgr de Harlay, archevêque de Rouen, sous les yeux duquel il venait de faire, avec éclat, une grande mission de deux mois. Le Primat de Normandie rendit un magnifique hommage au P. Eudes, en souhaitant que ses adversaires fussent animés de son esprit surnaturel.

L'année suivante, Léonor de «Matignon, évêque de Coutances, qui l'avait tant vu à l'œuvre dans son diocèse et sa ville épiscopale, devait adresser au Pape un témoignage aussi net en sa faveur, avec une supplique pour sa Congrégation naissante. Troisième témoin qualifié, Mgr d'Angennes, évêque de Bayeux, notifia à Urbain VIII, le 22 octobre de la même année 1643, qu'après avoir constaté les fruits extraordinaires de grâce procurés dans les missions par un homme vénérable, Maître J. Eudes, prêtre du diocèse de Séez, « qui depuis quinze ans demeure dans celui-ci », remarquant que « ce sont surtout les prêtres et les aspirants à la prêtrise qui tirent profit » de ses enseignements, il lui a donné licence d'établir à Caen un séminaire. Et le prélat sollicite les encouragements du Saint-Siège en faveur d'établissements du même genre. Par ses lettres d'institution du 14 janvier suivant, il reconnaît, pour son compte, le P. Eudes comme supérieur du séminaire de Caen et de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, tout à la fois.

Le plus affectueux de tous, Philippe de Cospéan, évêque de Lisieux, épousait tous les intérêts de Jean Eudes, et, dans ses lettres fréquentes, l'appelait: « Mon cher Père, mon Fils et mon Frère. » Lorsque, dès l'origine de l'entreprise, les ennemis de notre saint apôtre, que sa longue vie ni sa mort ne devaient apaiser, partirent en guerre contre lui, Cospéan entrant pleinement dans ses vues, lui disait: « Je vous félicite de ce que la persécution qui vous attaque n'est armée que de peste et de poison,

### 2 7 2 -

#### SAINT JEAN EUDES

c'est-à-dire de mensonges et de calomnies; c'est la marque la plus évidente que vous appartenez à Celui qui a été traité de buveur et de démoniaque. Comme c'est Lui qu'on attaque en vous, ce sera Lui aussi qui vaincra par vous. »

Puis les deux évêques de Bayeux et de Lisieux soutinrent à l'Assemblée générale du Clergé de France, en 1645, la requête du P. Eudes (1), implorant l'approbation du séminaire de Caen et de ceux qu'il était disposé à fonder encore; demandant, en outre, qu'on obligeât les ordinands à se préparer dans ces solitudes bénies à leurs fonctions sacrées, et tous les curés ou vicaires à s'y retirer chaque année pendant une retraite de huit ou dix jours.

D'autres interventions avaient eu lieu près d'Anne d'Autriche, de Richelieu et de Mazarin.

Autant que les réponses flatteuses et trop platoniques de l'Assemblée plénière, de la cour de France et de Rome (interceptées longtemps par les jaloux), ce qui assura le succès des séminaires eudistes, c'est la bienveillance des prélats de Normandie, animés d'un vif amour de l'Église, éclairés par un grand esprit de foi et par la vue des premiers résultats.

Et pourquoi les bénédictions du ciel, ici comme à Saint-Lazare et à Saint-Sulpice, venaient-elles plus vite que l'approbation du Souverain Pontife et du Roi? alors qu'en tant d'autres endroits, depuis longtemps, on essayait vainement d'ériger des séminaires. Ah! parce que Vincent de Paul, Olier, Eudes, étaient des saints. Parce qu'aussi,

(1) Le mémoire relatif à l'organisation des séminaires, présenté au nom du P. Eudes en 1645, tout en différant sur plusieurs points, était, semble-t-il, inspiré du Collège des saints exercices, proposé à l'Assemblée du clergé de 1625, par CHARLES GODEFROY, curé de Quettreville (près Coutances).

## L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES

273 -

sans se concerter, mais guidés par le bon sens et par l'Esprit de Dieu, les trois instituteurs des séminaires français ont séparé des écoliers de 12 à 18 ans les jeunes clercs susceptibles d'une formation plus ascétique, dégagés des légèretés et des études du premier âge: les coutumes des meilleurs collèges ne doivent point pénétrer dans nos « Académies du Ciel »!

D'autre part, les trois communautés ecclésiastiques des Lazaristes, Sulpiciens, Eudistes, laissaient, conformément au Concile de Trente, leurs sujets, avec leurs maisons, sous la juridiction immédiate des évêques; tout en leur donnant un lien spirituel, une préparation solide, qui les disposait à devenir les modèles en même temps que les maîtres du clergé.

Le séminaire ouvert à Caen le 25 mars 1643 était devenu pour ainsi dire provincial, par la décision de l'archevêque de Rouen, en date du 23 juillet 1647, qui autorisait à y recevoir des clercs de toute la Normandie et engageait ses suffragants à en favoriser le recrutement. Toutefois avec la mort de Jacques d'Angennes, survenue à cette époque-là, s'interrompent pour une période de dix ans les bonnes relations du P. Eudes et de l'évêché de Bayeux. Du reste, la ville de Caen, quoique centrale, ne pouvait attirer, - et rien ne l'imposait non plus, - les ordinands des sept diocèses que comptait alors notre vaste province.

Aussi, ce fut une grande joie pour le P. Eudes que l'invitation qu'il reçut en 1650 de fonder à Coutances le premier séminaire véritablement diocésain. Notre grand évêque de ce temps, Claude Auvry, digne d'une autre célébrité que celle que lui fit le Lutrin de Boileau, donna des lettres d'institution le 8 décembre, en la fête, chère à nos pères, de l'Immaculée-Conception. Toute latitude était laissée aux Prêtres de la Société de Jésus et Marie

274 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

pour déterminer les exercices spirituels ou classiques, fixer le temps que les clercs devaient passer sous leur direction avant d'être admis aux ordres. L'année fut divisée en « quartiers » séparés par des congés, - ce que nous appelons actuellement des trimestres; - l'assiduité s'imposant à tous ceux qui aspireraient dans la suite au sacerdoce. - Le 3 juillet 1652, fut posée la première pierre de la chapelle du séminaire de Coutances, qui est la première église bâtie et dédiée en l'honneur du très saint Cœur de la Bienheureuse Vierge, qui n'a qu'un Cœur avec son Fils bien-aimé (1) ». -

Mgr Auvry, en quittant l'évêché de Coutances, nomma le P. Eudes grand vicaire et le recommanda chaleureusement à son successeur, M. de Lesseville. Tous nos évêques d'ailleurs affectionnèrent le saint homme. En 1684, Loménie de Brienne parlait avec une vive gratitude des maîtres du séminaire: «( C'est par leur moyen, concluait-il, que nous trouvons un si grand changement dans le clergé de notre diocèse (2). »

Le séminaire coutançais servit de modèle à tous les autres des Eudistes.

En 1653, Léonor de Matignon, qui avait été, à Coutances, prédécesseur de Cl. Auvry avant d'être

transféré sur le siège de Lisieux, - à l'issue d'une mission prêchée par le P. Eudes dans sa ville épiscopale, - lui confia la réforme de son collège et l'ouverture de son séminaire. Ce dernier établissement fut copié sur celui de Coutances, avec l'obligation pour les ordinands de s'y présenter régulièrement. (1) Ce sanctuaire vénérable, désigné par Clément X sous le nom de Chapelle du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus et Marie, sert actuellement au lycée de Coutances, qui a pris la place du séminaire des Eudistes, (2) Ce diocèse, sillonné en outre par les missions des Eudistes, leur doit aussi l'origine de plusieurs communautés de religieuses éducatrices et hospitalières.

## L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES

275 -

lièrement. Vingt ans plus tard, Léonor II faisait un magnifique éloge des Eudistes, en constatant les heureux fruits de l'éducation qu'ils donnaient à ses clercs.

Après la disgrâce qu'Édouard Molé, de Bayeux, avait fait subir au P. Eudes, François Servieu, qui le remplaça, revenait progressivement à de meilleures dispositions. En 1657, il reconnut officiellement le séminaire de Caen et décida que les ordinands s'y renfermeraient un mois pour préparer la réception des ordres sacrés (1). Bientôt allait se construire le bel édifice de la place Royale, avec la chapelle des Saints-Cœurs, dont les Caennais n'ont pas dédaigné de faire leur hôtel-de-ville et salle des fêtes.

Ce fut alors le tour de Rouen, où la question était posée depuis longtemps. Dès 1615, le cardinal de Joyeuse avait organisé une communauté de jeunes aspirants à la cléricature, confiée aux Pères Jésuites: les élèves ne devaient jamais dépasser la trentaine dans cette école, qui tenait autant des petits que des grands séminaires, et qui fournit très peu de prêtres dans la première partie du XVIIe siècle, au témoignage de saint Vincent de Paul. - François de Harlay, aussi zélé que plein de confiance dans le P. Eudes, n'osa pas le charger de constituer un séminaire proprement dit, parce qu'il redoutait les adversaires du saint homme, très puissants dans son entourage. Le prélat suppléait autant que possible, enseignant personnellement dans son Palais la théologie, la philosophie, voire les humanités. Enfin, son neveu, qui lui succéda à la tête de l'archidiocèse, M. de Champvallon, résolut de passer outre (1) Mgr de Nesmond ouvrit à Bayeux même, en 1669, un séminaire, qui fut confié aux Lazaristes en 1682. Il y eut aussi un séminaire lazariste à la Délivrande, sorte d'école pratique pour la formation des jeunes prêtres au ministère pastoral. Le séminaire eudiste de Caen se spécialisa comme centre de retraites pour les curés, puis séminaire universitaire, où l'on reçut même des élèves ordinaires de la Faculté des Arts.

276 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

aux menées des novateurs, comme on nommait les hérétiques d'alors, néfastes à l'égal de nos modernistes.

Dès le 30 mars 1656, l'archevêque signa des lettres d'institution, par lesquelles les Prêtres de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie étaient chargés d'ouvrir un séminaire dans sa ville métropolitaine. Le fameux Dufour, abbé d'Aulnay et curé de Saint-Maclou, à Rouen, agita tous les jansénistes de là-bas, pour empêcher la réalisation. Mais Harlay de Champvallon, qui, transféré plus tard à Paris, devait s'y faire une réputation de prélat trop galant et gallican, ne se départit pas à Rouen, du moins en l'occurrence, de l'attitude évangélique et romaine. Il condamna trente-sept traités où se manifestaient les sentiments de Jansénius et soutint si fortement les Eudistes, qu'ils purent inaugurer leurs cours en février 1659.

Chose exceptionnelle, le P. Eudes en personne présida l'ouverture et donna les exercices de la retraite pour les ordinations de décembre 1659 et mars 1660. Sans doute il attachait une importance spéciale au succès de cette maison et se croyait particulièrement obligé envers le métropolitain: ne se considérait-il pas comme relevant directement de son autorité, en qualité de chef des missions et des séminaires de Normandie, double titre qu'il tenait de la haute bienveillance de Mgr de Harlay? L'annaliste ajoute qu'il fut récompensé par une application incomparable des séminaristes de l'archidiocèse, qui «

semblaient les plus fervents novices des maisons religieuses les plus réformées (1) ».

(1) Le chef-lieu de notre province reçut une seconde mission du P. Eudes en 1667; les prédications se firent à la cathédrale, et non plus à Saint-Ouen, comme à la mission de 1642, signalée plus haut. Le saint missionnaire aurait voulu accourir de nouveau en 1668, lors de la peste qui consterna la populeuse cité; ne le pouvant, il écrivit aux Pères du séminaire de s'offrir en victimes, pour conjurer le fléau, s'il plaisait à Dieu.

## L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES 277 -

Qu'on me permette de mentionner, à la gloire des séminaires eudistes de Coutances et de Rouen, que leurs supérieurs en 1792, les PP. Lefranc et Potier, versèrent leur sang pour la foi avec le P. Hébert, supérieur général: l'honneur n'en rejaillit-il pas sur leur bienheureux Père?

A Évreux enfin, l'an 1667, sous l'épiscopat de Maupas du Tour, à l'issue d'une mission encore, le P. Eudes fut invité à organiser le dernier séminaire qu'il ait fondé en Normandie. Il serait intéressant d'insister sur les relations intimes qui s'établirent dès lors entre notre Saint et l'évêque de haute piété qui, sacrifiant en sa jeunesse les perspectives les plus brillantes du talent et de la noblesse à sa vocation ecclésiastique, entretenue sous la protection de la « très pure Mère de Dieu », se montra, en son âge mûr, sur le siège de saint Taurin, l'un des prélats les plus vénérables de l'Église de France à ce moment-là. Henri de Maupas voulut même monopoliser Jean Eudes pour son diocèse, en l'établissant son coadjuteur; l'échec de ce dessein fit le bonheur du principal intéressé et de tous ceux qui avaient besoin de ses services sur un plus vaste champ d'action (1).

En dernier lieu, le séminaire de Rennes s'ouvrit en 1670, après une grande mission préparatoire à la Pâque, que l'apôtre normand donna dans la capitale de la Bretagne, et au cours de laquelle il prêcha « tous les jours, durant douze semaines, à un très grand auditoire dans la cathédrale, avec autant de vigueur qu'à trente ans », alors qu'il en avait 69.

Le 8 mai 1670, donc, Mgr de la Vieuville lui octroya des lettres d'institution; et il signa lui-même l'acte de fondation

(1) La chapelle du séminaire d'Évreux fut consacrée, en 1714, par Mgr Lenormand, et dédiée au Très Saint Coeur de Marie, suivant la tradition eudistique.

278-

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

avec les membres du personnel, en tête duquel se trouvait le P. Blouet de Camilly, son futur successeur comme supérieur de la Congrégation. - La population, enthousiasmée par les missionnaires, se montra très généreuse pour l'établissement et les États de Bretagne accordèrent, en 1671, un subside de 4000 livres. '

Détail glorieux pour la maison de Rennes: c'est là que fut inaugurée la fête propre du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus, séparée désormais de celle du Très Pur Coeur de Marie, qui lui était précédemment conjointe.

## IV

Les Eudistes furent appelés au séminaire d'Avranches, en 1693, par le savant prélat Daniel Huet, à celui de Domfront en 1727, à celui de Valognes en 1729, à Sées en 1744 seulement; il paraîtrait étrange que saint Jean Eudes ne se soit pas établi lui-même au centre de son diocèse d'origine, si l'Évangile n'attestait que « nul n'est prophète en son pays ». - En tout cas, ses fils instruisaient à la fin

de l'Ancien Régime le clergé des sept diocèses de Normandie, celui de la haute Bretagne et, un peu plus loin, les clercs de Senlis et de Blois. A Paris même, leur maison des Tourettes, rue des Postes, était devenue une sorte de pension de famille pour ecclésiastiques, qui jouissaient là des avantages d'une vie régulière jusqu'au jour où vingt-deux de ces prêtres, eudistes ou séculiers, furent menés aux Carmes et à Saint-Firmin pour le grand holocauste de septembre 1792.

Nous voilà déjà renseignés un peu sur le fruit des séminaires fondés par l'émule de saint Vincent de Paul et d'Olier. Si nous remontions le cours de leur histoire, nous verrions la magnifique frondaison et floraison qui pendant un siècle et demi prépara l'éclosion de ces vertus héroïques.

## L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES 279 -

Nous avons cité plus haut les témoignages très laudatifs des évêques de Coutances et de Lisieux; qu'on excuse encore cette citation du P. Costil, parlant de la pauvreté de notre séminaire coutançais à ses débuts: « Si le corps et les sens y étaient mortifiés, l'esprit et le cœur y étaient assurément bien au large par l'abondance des grâces reçues et par les pures délices de la vie intérieure qu'ils goûtaient. » - Et qui peut douter qu'il en était de même dans les maisons dont le passé nous est moins familier?

Voici, du moins, un exemple pris ailleurs. Le séminaire de Caen, tenu longtemps en disgrâce, avait recouvré le 2 décembre 1657, les faveurs avec le patronage de l'évêque de Bayeux. Or il s'y trouva, aux Quatre-Temps de septembre 1658 (neuf mois plus tard) TROIS CENT CINQUANTE ORDINANDS, originaires de toute la région normande. « Après une fervente retraite qui les transforma complètement », ils émurent toute la ville en se rendant de leur établissement à l'église Saint-Jean, où avait lieu l'ordination. « Les chants répétés par les jeunes clercs étaient si pieux, leur marche pleine de modestie, leur recueillement si édifiant, qu'ils firent couler les larmes de ceux qui les virent passer. Tous donnaient bénédiction aux missionnaires qui les avaient si bien préparés (1). »,

Ce récit du plus vieil historiographe de notre Saint montre que ses séminaires furent bien ce que celui-ci voulait, « des écoles de piété et académies de sainteté », et qu'il en sortait, pour une ample contrée du royaume, des « prêtres zélés, ouvriers irréprochables, dignes ministres des autels: apostolicos sacerdotes, operarios inconfusibiles, dignos altaris ministros ».

Ceux qui lisent les ouvrages rédigés par saint Jean Eudes pour l'instruction de ces clercs, auxquels il ouvrait

(1) Martine, Vie du P. Eudes, II, p. 45.

280 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

des noviciats ecclésiastiques, n'en pourraient être surpris. Car quelle excellente doctrine pastorale, quelle touchante ascèse sacerdotale dans les Avertissements aux confesseurs, Le bon confesseur, Le Prédicateur apostolique, le Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique! Et nous avons perdu les Traités de l'Office divin et du Saint-Sacrifice.

J'empiéteraï sur un article postérieur en insistant sur la spiritualité de ces bons livres. Mais ne me convient-il pas de signaler, pour finir, que les séminaristes élevés par le Père Eudes et ses confrères puisaient dans la dévotion au Divin Cœur de Jésus et au Très Pur Cœur de Marie la meilleure inspiration du zèle pour la gloire de Dieu, le salut des âmes et la sanctification personnelle? Et puis, dans la brillante et vibrante liturgie eudistique, à côté des offices, justement renommés, des Saints Coeurs et de tous les saints qui ont eu des relations particulières avec Notre-Seigneur et sa très sainte Mère, comme saint Gabriel, saint Joseph, saint Jean, etc., les clercs trouvaient la fête (avec octave) si particulièrement instructive pour eux, du divin sacerdoce de Jésus-Christ, qui, instituée dès la fondation du séminaire de Coutances, fut adoptée, non seulement par toutes les maisons de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, mais, après la mission du Père Eudes à Saint-Sulpice, par les séminaires de la vénérable Compagnie. Qu'il nous suffise, pour en faire soupçonner la portée, de citer la Collecte: « Deus tuorum gloria sacerdotum, qui

Unigenitum tuum, nobis Summum Sacerdotem et animarum nostrarum, Pastorem vigilantissimum dedisti, quique ci ad sacrifleandam tibi hostiam, mundarn et ad promovendum humani generis salutem sanctos sacerdotes et levitas consortes tribuisti... studeamus amare quod amaverunt et opere exercere quod verbo et exemplo docuerunt ».

Bien comprendre que notre sacerdoce n'est pas autre que celui du Verbe incarné et que notre conduite, par

L'OEUVRE DES SÉMINAIRES 281 -

conséquent, doit être conforme à la sienne (1), telle était la grande leçon que saint Jean Eudes avait retenue de Bérulle et Condren et qu'il s'efforça d'inculquer à l'immense légion cléricale qui a bénéficié de son influence salutare, par la discipline des séminaires, par l'enseignement de ses écrits et par les charmes séduisants de sa piété liturgique, opposant partout et toujours au jansénisme la barrière de la vérité catholique fixée par Rome.

L. LEVESQUE,  
Directeur au grand séminaire  
de Coutances.

(1) En voici un écho, entre cent autres: « Les prêtres, étant les Anges visibles de la terre et représentant la personne du Souverain Prêtre, qui est le Saint des saints, et qui leur dit: Soyez saints parce que je suis saint (Levit., XI, 44), sont obligés à une très grande perfection et sainteté et par conséquent à pratiquer toutes les vertus avec excellence. » (Œuvres, IX, p. 61.)

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

### auteur du culte liturgique des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie

A presque chacune des étapes du procès de béatification et de canonisation du Père Eudes, l'Église s'est visiblement complu à lui attribuer, comme à l'instrument dont s'est servie la Providence, l'institution du culte liturgique des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie. Le décret d'héroïcité des vertus le présente comme « l'auteur de ce culte ». Le bref de béatification développe la même idée de cette façon particulièrement significative: « Ce qui mit le comble aux services que Jean rendit à l'Église, c'est que, brûlant lui-même d'un amour extraordinaire pour les Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, il pensa le premier, non sans une inspiration divine, à leur rendre un culte liturgique. De cette religion si suave on doit donc le regarder comme le Père, car dès l'institution de sa Congrégation de prêtres il eut soin de faire célébrer par ses fils la solennité de ces Sacrés Cœurs; comme le Docteur, car il composa en leur honneur des offices et une messe propres; enfin comme l'apôtre, car il fit tous ses efforts pour répandre en tous lieux un culte si salutaire. » Le décret d'approbation des deux miracles proposés pour la canonisation du Père Eudes reprend exactement la même expression que le décret d'héroïcité des vertus. Enfin le décret de tuto, qui assurait au Bienheureux les honneurs de la glorification suprême, met en un beau relief le zèle avec lequel, « le premier de

#### LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS COEURS

283 -

tous, Jean Eudes a institué et propagé le culte liturgique des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie ».

Aborder cette question, c'est donc toucher le point sur lequel l'Église se montre particulièrement reconnaissante à saint Jean Eudes; c'est aussi attirer l'attention sur le caractère propre de la physionomie spirituelle de ce grand saint, sur ce en quoi il a été auteur et le premier de tous. Quand on lit les Constitutions écrites par lui pour l'Ordre de Notre-Dame de Charité, il est aisé de constater qu'il s'inspire largement de saint François de Sales; il est assez facile, d'autre part, de démarquer, dans le Royaume de Jésus, les emprunts qu'il fait à la spiritualité de l'Oratoire; mais quant à l'idée d'un culte liturgique aux Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, il n'est tributaire que de Dieu, puisque, d'après l'Église elle-même, aucun autre n'y avait pensé avant lui.

Les affirmations que nous venons de lire dans les documents ecclésiastiques trouvent leur fondement et leur justification dans l'histoire.

Un Eudiste, M. Hébert, échappé à la Révolution, avait remis en mourant à un prêtre de Caen, M. l'abbé Lamoureux, un certain nombre de papiers en lui disant: « Gardez-les précieusement, ils serviront plus tard à la canonisation du Père Eudes (1). » Cette prophétie se vérifia à la lettre. Le Père Le Doré, Supérieur général des Eudistes, découvrit ces précieux manuscrits et, parmi eux, six lettres originales par lesquelles les évêques de Rennes, de Coutances, d'Évreux, de Rouen, de Bayeux et de Lisieux,

(1) Nous empruntons ces détails à la Vie du Père Le Doré par le Père Rovolt, Eudiste. A l'heure où nous écrivons, cet ouvrage si suggestif et si édifiant est sous presse.

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

permettaient au Père Eudes, dès 1670 et 1671, de célébrer avec la plus grande solennité la fête du Cœur adorable de Jésus. C'était la preuve aussi authentique qu'irréfutable que ce saint personnage avait institué le premier, en France et dans le monde, la fête du Sacré-Cœur (1). A propos de ces approbations épiscopales, le Père Bainvel a pu écrire: « C'est la première fois que l'Église enseignante parle du Sacré-Cœur (2). »



Toutefois, selon les expressions mêmes de saint Jean Eudes, « la divine Providence, qui conduit toutes choses avec une merveilleuse sagesse, avait voulu faire marcher la fête du Cœur de la Mère avant la fête du Cœur du Fils, pour préparer les voies dans les cœurs des fidèles à la vénération de ce Cœur adorable ». Le 8 février 1648, notre Saint, après avoir fait autoriser par MgrCl. deRagny, évêque d'Autun, la messe et l'office du Cœur de Marie, célébrait solennellement, dans la cathédrale de cette ville, la fête de ce très saint Cœur et constatait en termes enthousiastes que ce premier acte de culte public avait allumé « le feu de cette dévotion en beaucoup de cœurs ». En 1672, à propos de cette même fête ainsi instituée par lui, il pouvait écrire sans hésitation: « Aujourd'hui, elle est solennisée par toute la France, et en plusieurs Ordres et Congrégations, avec tant de bénédictions qu'il y a lieu d'espérer qu'elle se célébrera un jour très solennellement par tout l'univers (3). »

(1) Même après les décrets de saint Pie V et d'Urbain VIII qui réservaient au Souverain Pontife l'approbation des offices nouveaux, les évêques de France se croyaient en droit d'autoriser, dans leurs diocèses, la célébration de fêtes nouvelles avec messe et office propres. Les Souverains Pontifes toléraient cet état de choses. - Cf. Lebrun, La Dévotion au Cœur de Marie, p. 69.

(2) Cf. Bainvel, La dévotion au Cœur de Jésus, éd. 1906, p. 261.

(3) Cf. Lebrun, Le B. J. Eudes et le culte public du Cœur de Jésus, p. 45.

## LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS CŒURS

285 -

Enfin, dans son grand ouvrage: Le Cœur admirable de la très sacrée Mère de Dieu, l'un des chapitres porte ce titre, où l'on sent tant de sainte fierté: « Quinze très illustres Archevêques et Évêques approuvent et autorisent la Dévotion, l'Office et la Fête du très digne Cœur de la Mère de Dieu. »

Les limites de cet article ne nous permettent pas de narrer par le menu tous les faits historiques, qui, s'ajoutant à ceux que nous venons de dire, démontrent jusqu'à l'évidence que saint Jean Eudes est bien l'auteur du culte liturgique des Sacrés Cœurs. Au reste, cette tâche a déjà été accomplie par le R. P. Bernadot dans cette revue même (1), comme aussi par le R. P. Lebrun dans ses deux livres intitulés, l'un: Le Bienheureux Jean Eudes et le Culte public du Cœur de Jésus, et l'autre - La Dévotion au Cœur de Marie. Nous voudrions simplement souligner l'importance et l'ampleur du mouvement suscité par le Père Eudes, sa sainte nouveauté toute basée sur l'Écriture et la Tradition, et enfin son immense portée pour la vie spirituelle des âmes.

Il y a, dans le culte public de l'Église, un acte essentiel et fondamental: le saint sacrifice de la messe. Sans lui, le sacerdoce n'aurait plus sa raison d'être, quelques-unes des plus magnifiques promesses de Notre-Seigneur resteraient vaines et sans objet, et les âmes, privées du Pain de vie, seraient condamnées à la langueur et à l'épuisement. En obtenant de l'Église, pour la première fois, l'autorisation de célébrer les saints mystères en l'honneur des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, le Père Eudes contribuait donc efficacement à l'introduction de ceux-ci au centre

(1) Cf. Vie Spirituelle, juin 1920, P. 209.

286 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

même de la liturgie catholique, vers lequel tout converge et d'où tout découle. Pourrait-on jamais exagérer l'importance de cette initiative?

Et puis, en ce qui concerne le Cœur de Jésus, il faut bien reconnaître que le seul acte de notre religion dans lequel et par lequel ce divin Cœur se donne vraiment, réellement et substantiellement à nous, pour être, non seulement un objet extérieur d'adoration, mais le Cœur reposant sur notre cœur, c'est encore le saint sacrifice de la messe. N'était-il donc pas juste qu'à ce moment auguste, Il fût chanté et entouré d'honneurs tout spéciaux? Saint Jean Eudes comprit à merveille cette souveraine convenance. La première messe du Sacré Cœur de Jésus, nous aimons à le répéter, a été composée par lui. C'était du

même coup - et cela vaut la peine d'être remarqué - l'ouverture de la série des grands triomphes extérieurs et publics de ce Cœur adorable.

Mais l'importance du mouvement suscité par saint Jean Eudes ne se borne pas là. A-t-on assez remarqué la netteté, la précision parfaites avec lesquelles les évêques de France, tandis qu'ils autorisent les offices composés par ce grand initiateur, parlent du Sacré Cœur de Jésus et du saint Cœur de Marie? Il suffirait presque de réunir ces approbations pour avoir un traité complet sur les raisons d'honorer les Sacrés Cœurs. En même temps que le culte et à son occasion, il y a tout un épanouissement doctrinal de premier ordre, et sur lequel il convient d'insister fortement. Que l'on nous permette de reproduire tout d'abord, à l'appui de cette assertion, une page de Mgr de Ségur:

En 1670, le vénérable évêque d'Évreux, approuvant pour son diocèse le culte du Sacré-Cœur et l'office composé à cet effet par le bon Père Eudes, s'exprimait ainsi: « Le Cœur adorable de Notre-Seigneur étant une fournaise « d'amour envers son Père et de charité envers nous, et la

#### LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS COEURS 287 -

« source d'une infinité de grâces et de faveurs au regard « de tout le genre humain, tous les hommes, spécialement tous les chrétiens, ont des obligations infinies de « l'honorer, louer et glorifier en toutes les manières possibles. »

« La même année, un autre évêque français, celui de Coutances, disait de son côté: « Le Cœur adorable de notre « Rédempteur étant le premier objet de la dilection et complaisance du Père des miséricordes, et étant réciproquement tout embrasé du saint amour envers ce Dieu de « consolation comme aussi étant tout enflammé de charité « envers nous, tout brûlant du zèle de notre salut, tout « plein de miséricorde envers les pécheurs, tout rempli de « compassion envers les misérables, et le principe de toutes les gloires et félicités du ciel, de toutes les grâces et « bénédictions de la terre, et une source inépuisable de toutes sortes de faveurs pour ceux qui l'honorent, tous « les chrétiens doivent. s'efforcer de lui rendre toutes les « vénération et adorations possibles (1). »

Il est vraiment frappant de constater que dès cette époque, c'est-à-dire deux ans avant les premières grandes révélations faites à sainte Marguerite-Marie, des évêques de France présentaient déjà, dans des documents officiels, le Sacré Cœur de Jésus comme le principe de toutes les gloires et félicités du ciel, de toutes les grâces et bénédictions de la terre, et que, par voie de conséquence, ils faisaient à tous les hommes, spécialement à tous les chrétiens, des « obligations infinies de l'honorer, louer et glorifier en toutes les manières possibles ». On croirait, en lisant les textes que nous venons de citer, entendre tel ou tel évêque

(1) Cf. Ségur, Le Sacré Cœur de Jésus, PP. 57 et 58- Cet opuscule ne fait d'ailleurs que reproduire, en plus d'un endroit, la doctrine du Père Eudes sur le Sacré-Cœur.

#### 288- SAINT JEAN EUDES

du XXe siècle exposant à ses diocésains la légitimité de la consécration du genre humain au Sacré-Cœur.

La même précision et la même splendeur d'expressions se retrouvent dans les lettres par lesquelles les évêques français du XVIIe siècle approuvent la fête du Cœur de Marie instituée par saint Jean Eudes.

L'évêque de Toul, considérant ce très saint Cœur comme « le premier et principal organe que le Saint-Esprit a choisi pour « opérer notre Rédemption » et comme « le trésor de « ses dons et de ses grâces », en conclut qu'il est, « après celui de Jésus-Christ, le centre de notre bénédiction, « auquel partant nous devons avoir une dévotion très singulière ».

L'évêque du Puy met en lumière « cette sorte de souverain empire que le Cœur de Marie a sur le Cœur de Jésus quand il s'agit de l'intérêt des hommes », puis il s'écrie: « Approchez donc du Cœur de Marie pour approcher de celui de Jésus. »

Deux vicaires apostoliques de la Chine, contemplant dans le Cœur de Marie « le premier de tous les cœurs qui ait reçu en soi la foi chrétienne », espèrent de la divine Bonté, par son entremise, « des assistances » protections et bénédictions toutes spéciales » pour les conversions de leurs peuplades infidèles et approuvent « très volontiers » l'office et la messe composés par le Père Eudes.

Enfin et surtout François de Montmorency-Laval, vicaire apostolique du Canada, exprime le désir que « le très aimable Cœur de la Mère de Dieu, qui est tout embrasé d'amour vers Sa divine Majesté, et de charité au regard de tous les hommes, et son très auguste Nom, soient loués et honorés par tout le monde (1). »

(1) Pour la preuve plus détaillée de chacune de nos assertions, Cf. OEuvres complètes de saint Jean Eudes, t. VII, P 350-367, et aussi Lebrun, Le Bienheureux Jean Eudes et le culte public du Cœur de Jésus, 2e éd., pp. 26-52

## LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS COEURS

289 -

Il faudrait citer encore, nous ne le pouvons pas. Mais, après ce que nous venons de dire, l'on comprend suffisamment l'importance immense du mouvement dont saint Jean Eudes a été l'instigateur. Alors qu'avant lui la dévotion aux Sacrés- Cœurs n'avait pas encore franchi les bornes des consciences individuelles, grâce à son apostolat elle est organisée en un culte public se traduisant par des formules bien précises. Et non seulement les évêques approuvent les offices et les messes composés par le Père Eudes, mais beaucoup d'entre eux exhortent les prêtres, les séminaristes et les fidèles à s'en servir, ordonnent pour les fêtes des Sacrés-Cœurs toute la solennité que l'Église accorde aux fêtes de première classe avec octave, permettent l'exposition du Saint-Sacrement et recommandent de faire un sermon de circonstance. Plusieurs vont même jusqu'à autoriser l'office du Sacré Cœur de Jésus « pour le premier jeudi de chaque mois non occupé d'un office de neuf leçons, hors l'Avent et le Carême (1) ». Comme il est doux de penser que grâce à notre Saint la dévotion au Sacré Cœur de Jésus et au Saint Cœur de Marie était entrée triomphalement, dès cette époque, dans bien des Ames d'évêques et de prêtres, et qu'elle s'exprimait sur leurs lèvres par des paroles claires et ardentes à la fois! Et le Père Eudes souffrait terriblement quand les portes d'un séminaire refusaient de s'ouvrir au Sacré-Cœur. Nous en avons une preuve dans ce passage d'une lettre qu'il écrivit à Mgr de Médavy, archevêque de Rouen: « Considérez, s'il vous plaît, que tous nos prélats nous ont donné leur approbation et permission là-dessus. C'est

(1) Cf. Lebrun, Le Bienheureux Jean Eudes et le culte public du Cœur de Jésus, p. 31.

290 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

pourquoi je vous supplie très humblement, par ce très adorable Cœur, qui est la source de tout ce qu'il y a de saint et de vénérable dans toutes les fêtes que l'Église célèbre, par l'amour dont il est embrasé vers vous et par tous les effets de cet amour que vous avez ressentis, et que vous désirez ressentir à l'heure de votre mort, de n'empêcher pas que cette fête se fasse dans votre séminaire aussi bien que dans les autres. Si vous me refusez cette grâce, que je vous demande avec tout le respect et la soumission qui m'est possible, j'avoue que j'en recevrai un très grand déplaisir; et si vous me l'accordez, comme je l'espère de votre bonté, vous me donnerez une très grande joie et m'obligerez infiniment. Ne rejetez donc pas la très humble et très instante prière qui vous est faite par celui qui est en vérité de tout son cœur et dans tout le respect, etc. »

Mgr de Médavy ne put pas résister à d'aussi pressantes supplications. Saint Jean Eudes était souverainement conquérant quand il s'agissait du Sacré-Cœur!

\* \* \*

De cette nouveauté inaugurée par le Père Eudes d'aucuns ne pouvaient manquer de s'effaroucher. Ce fut même la raison pour laquelle le prélat dont nous venons de parler se montra tout d'abord si hostile à l'introduction de la fête du Sacré-Cœur dans son séminaire. Le saint novateur lui répondit en ces termes: « Il est vrai, Monseigneur, que la nouveauté dans les choses de la foi est très pernicieuse et tout à fait damnable; mais je vous prie, Monseigneur, de considérer que ce n'est pas de même dans les choses de piété; car il y a grand nombre de fêtes dans l'Eglise qui n'ont pas été établies dès le commencement, et qui sont nouvelles. »

Puis il rapportait plusieurs exemples de ces fêtes suc-

## LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS CŒURS

291 -

cessivement introduites dans la liturgie, et il ajoutait: « Certainement, si toutes ces nouveautés étaient mauvaises, l'Eglise ne les admettrait pas (1). »

Il faut croire que la nouveauté instituée par saint Jean Eudes n'était pas mauvaise, puisque l'Eglise l'accueillit avec la joie que nous avons décrite.

Du reste, ce nouveau culte était très ancien par ses origines et ses fondements, puisqu'il jaillissait des pures sources de l'Ecriture et de la Tradition. Telle était bien l'impression des évêques français du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle qui lui accordèrent leur approbation. Ainsi l'évêque de Rennes regardait l'office et la messe du Cœur de Jésus comme « recueillis et composés des divines Écritures et des écrits des Saints Pères, et conformes à la foi et piété de la sainte Eglise catholique, apostolique et romaine ». L'évêque de Coutances, l'évêque d'Évreux et l'évêque de Lisieux se servaient de locutions toutes semblables. En parlant de l'office du Saint Cœur de Marie, l'évêque d'Évreux s'exprimait ainsi: « Tout y respire la foi orthodoxe, la sainte Écriture et l'esprit des Saints Pères. » L'évêque de Noyon écrivait dans le même sens: « Tout y est pieux et saint, tout y est tiré des Saintes Lettres et des Saints Pères. » L'évêque de Soissons employait exactement les mêmes termes.

De nos jours, S. Ém. le cardinal Billot, faisant écho à tous ces prélats, a pu écrire à propos du culte du Sacré Cœur de Jésus: « Le Père Eudes l'avait établi, et l'avait trouvé, ou dans une révélation privée faite à lui-même ou à d'autres, mais dans les plus belles pages de l'Évangile et les plus pures sources de la théologie (2) »

(1) Cf. Boulay. Vie du Vénérable Jean Eudes, t. IV, p. 238.

(2) Lettre de S. Ém. le cardinal Billot au R. P. Lebrun. Cf. Le B. J. Eudes et le culte public du Cœur de Jésus.

292 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

Le culte institué par le Père Eudes était donc bien une sainte nouveauté: il avait la note essentielle de tout culte public, nous voulons dire une stricte dépendance vis-à-vis de l'Ecriture et de la Tradition. C'est là la raison de sa solidité et de sa beauté à la fois; car, dans cet ordre de choses, rien n'est résistant, rien n'est splendide, qui ne s'appuie sur le dépôt de la foi.

\* \* \*

Le Père Eudes a écrit quelque part: «Le propre des âmes saintes est de procurer devant Dieu l'avancement spirituel de nos âmes. » Et précisément parce qu'il était un saint et un grand saint, il n'a pas échappé lui-même à cette règle. Même dans ses compositions liturgiques, il est missionnaire: ce qu'il veut, c'est attirer les âmes à Dieu. Pour lui les fêtes du Sacré Cœur de Jésus et du Saint Cœur de Marie sont avant tout deux mers de grâces et de sainteté. Citons ses propres paroles: elles sont magnifiques, et l'on se demande, en les lisant, si, quand il les écrivait, l'on était seulement à l'aurore du culte liturgique des Sacrés Cœurs ou bien plutôt à son plein midi:

« Admirons et adorons la bonté incompréhensible de notre très aimable Rédempteur de nous avoir donné cette sainte fête, car c'est une grâce extraordinaire qu'il nous a faite.

« Pour la bien connaître, il faut savoir que toutes les fêtes que la sainte Église célèbre durant le cours de l'année sont autant de fontaines de grâces et de bénédictions. Mais celle-ci est une mer de grâces et de sainteté, parce que c'est la fête du très Saint Cœur de Jésus, qui est un océan immense de grâces innombrables (1). »

(1) Cf. Œuvres complètes, t. VIII, p. 313.

## LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS CŒURS

293 -

Cet texte précise bien l'importance que revêtait, aux yeux de saint Jean Eudes, la fête du Sacré Cœur de Jésus pour notre vie spirituelle (1). À propos de la fête du Saint Cœur de Marie il se sert d'expressions analogues:

« Considérons que toutes les fêtes que l'on célèbre dans l'Église sont autant de fontaines de grâces, spécialement celles de Notre-Seigneur et de sa Bienheureuse Mère. Mais entre les fêtes de cette Mère admirable, celle de son très sacré Cœur est comme le cœur et la reine des autres; parce que le cœur est le siège de l'amour et de la charité, laquelle est la reine de toutes les autres vertus et la source de toutes les grâces. C'est pourquoi cette solennité est un océan de grâces et de bénédictions, non pas pour toutes sortes de personnes, mais pour ceux-là seulement qui se disposent à les recevoir. »

A côté de ces points de vue généraux, il en est un autre, très spécial, que nous voudrions examiner ici. L'un des spectacles les plus touchants de l'heure actuelle, c'est de voir, au-delà et au-dessus de tant de turpitudes, d'égoïsme, d'indifférence, l'enthousiasme avec lequel un grand nombre d'âmes, dans le monde et dans le cloître, désirent la vraie et solide union à Dieu, l'intimité avec lui. Or le culte des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, tel que nous le présente saint Jean Eudes, a ceci de très particulier qu'il pousse les âmes dans ce sens et leur fournit plusieurs moyens de satisfaire cette noble et sainte aspiration.

Tout d'abord cette grande et belle vie d'union nous apparaît beaucoup plus facile à réaliser. C'est avec le Cœur de Jésus, devenu nôtre, que nous aimons Dieu, que nous

(1) Nous avons développé ces idées dans notre opuscule sur Le Sacré Cœur de Jésus principe de toute la vie spirituelle, d'après le B. J. Eudes, P. 111.

(2) Cf. Œuvres complètes, t. VIII, p. 119.

294 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

entrons en relations intimes avec lui. Nous entendons, dans l'office composé par le Père Eudes, Jésus qui nous dit:

« Je vous donnerai un esprit et un cœur nouveau. Mon Esprit et mon Cœur, je les poserai au milieu de vous, afin que vous aimiez voire Dieu d'un grand cœur et d'une âme résolue. Parce que vous êtes les fils de Dieu et les membres du Christ, Dieu a posé son Esprit et le Cœur de son Fils au milieu de vous,

afin qu'avec le Père et votre Chef vous n'ayez qu'un esprit et qu'un cœur » (21 répons du 1er nocturne).

D'autre part, cet office, dans plusieurs de ses parties, est un exercice, pour ainsi dire, d'union de l'âme au Sacré-Cœur, c'est un entretien d'amour, c'est, dirions-nous volontiers, une oraison. Nous trouvons, par exemple, des répons comme celui-ci:

« Donnez-moi votre cœur, mes petits enfants, et je vous donnerai le mien. -- Notre cœur est dans votre main, ô Seigneur Jésus: par la force de votre bras, possédez-le à jamais (1). »

Et encore: « Mes petits enfants, mettez le comble à ma joie: en sorte que tout en vous se fasse dans la charité de mon cœur. - Il est prêt, notre cœur, ô le Dieu de notre cœur; il est prêt, notre cœur (2). »

Les antiennes des premières vêpres sont toutes ou presque toutes consacrées à l'intime familiarité de l'âme avec le Sacré-Cœur par l'amour, et les âmes contemplatives seront heureuses de rencontrer, au second nocturne, cette antienne qui résume si bien l'un de leurs désirs les plus profonds: « Je n'ai demandé qu'une seule chose au Seigneur, et je la requerrai: c'est qu'au jour du malheur il me cache et me protège dans le secret de son Cœur. » Elles aimeront à exprimer la confiance aveugle qu'elles ont en

(1) 1e répons du II, nocturne.

(2) 5e antienne des secondes vêpres.

## LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS COEURS

295 -

la tendresse de Jésus par cette belle strophe de l'hymne des matines:

O Cor meum, Cor unicum,  
Virtus, salus, fiducia,  
Thesaurus, sol et jubilation,  
n te mihi sunt omnia.

O mon Cœur, Cœur unique,  
Vertu, salut, confiance,  
Trésor, soleil et jubilation,  
Pour moi tout est en toi.

Dans les épreuves particulièrement intimes et senties qui caractérisent plusieurs phases de la vie mystique, elles se sentiront encouragées et fortifiées par ce cri sorti des profondeurs de la sainte âme du Père Eudes:

Ave Dolorum Victima,  
Centrum crucis,  
Rex Martyrum.  
Fac nostra sit crux gloria,  
Amor, corona, gaudium.

Salut, Victime de douleurs,  
Centre de la Croix, Roi des Martyrs.  
Oh! fais que la croix soit notre gloire,  
Notre amour, notre couronne, notre joie (1).

Mais à la vie d'intimité avec Dieu il fallait un modèle. Saint Jean Eudes nous le présente dans le Cœur de la très sainte Vierge. C'est à ce Cœur très pur qu'il applique, dans l'office et dans la messe, les plus beaux textes du Cantique des cantiques:

Te candidala lilia,  
Nardus rosaequefulciunt,  
Te mala coeli dulcia  
Amore languens ambiunt.

C'est vous que les blancs lis,  
Le nard et les roses soutiennent,  
C'est vous que les doux fruits du ciel.  
Environnent dans vos langueurs d'amour (2).

(1) Hymne des 1<sup>e</sup> vêpres. -

(2) Hymne des matines.

296-

SAINT JEAN EUDES

Notre Saint se complaît à redire que toute la gloire de la Fille du Roi se tire de son intérieur, et il met sur les lèvres de Marie ces belles paroles: « La méditation de mon Cœur est toujours en présence de Dieu. »

Toutefois, si l'on veut comprendre plus pleinement tout ce que le Père Eudes a mis de poésie mystique et de science profonde de la vie intime de la très sainte Vierge dans ces deux compositions liturgiques, il faut chercher l'explication et le commentaire de celles-ci dans son grand ouvrage, déjà cité par nous, intitulé: Le Cœur admirable de la Mère de Dieu (1). L'étude mystique du Saint Cœur de Marie, pour reprendre l'expression d'un auteur contemporain (2), y est déjà faite et de main de maître. La sainte contemplation ayant son principe dans la charité et son terme dans l'accroissement et la perfection de cette vertu (3), il est bien permis de la rattacher, à ce point de vue du moins, au cœur. Saint Jean Eudes, dans son office et dans son livre, nous la montre pleinement épanouie dans le Cœur de la sainte Vierge. « C'est, dit-il, un Cœur plus élevé en contemplation que les cœurs de tous les saints (4). » Cette Mère du bel amour, comme il aimait à appeler Marie, nous apparaît désormais comme la patronne et le céleste guide de toutes les âmes qui se sentent appelées à la vie contemplative.

Dans le même ordre d'idées, ajoutons encore une remarque. Les chères âmes dont nous venons de parler comprennent parfaitement que leur Dieu, Vérité première et essentielle, est en même temps la Fin dernière de tous les

(1) Cf. OEuvres complètes, t. VII, pp. 156-167, 217-225.

(2) L'étude mystique du Saint Cœur de Marie par le Père Robert Marchal, S. J. (Beauchesne).

(3) Cf. 11, 1111, q. 180, a. 8, ad il-.

(4) Cf. OEuvres complètes, t. VII, p. 252.

LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS COEURS

297 -

désirs et de toutes les affections de l'homme: c'est pourquoi, quand on leur parle de lui, elles ne sont vraiment rassasiées que par un langage qui porte l'empreinte, non seulement des clartés de l'esprit, mais aussi des transports du cœur. A cet égard elles trouveront pleine satisfaction dans les offices et les messes des Sacrés Cœurs composés par le Père Eudes. Mgr Lemonnier, évêque de Bayeux et Lisieux, a pu écrire récemment que dans cette double composition il faut voir « comme le dernier effort et la suprême efflorescence de la vie intime (1) » de ce saint. Provoquées par la contemplation des deux grandes Fournaises d'amour, les effusions de cette belle âme y ont un accent encore plus ardent, plus passionné que celles dont il avait constellé le livre écrit par lui au temps de sa jeunesse sacerdotale: Vie et Royaume de Jésus dans les âmes chrétiennes.

Jean Eudes est bien «le Docteur du culte liturgique des Sacrés Coeurs », comme s'exprime le Bref de Béatification, mais un Docteur très aimant qui exprime ses vues dogmatiques en termes enflammés. Parlant de la messe du Sacré-Cœur, le Père de Curley a pu dire: « Si nous avions à lui donner un nom, nous l'appellerions la messe de feu, car dans toutes ses parties c'est l'éternel amour éclatant en notes suppliantes et attendries (2) »; et si, selon les expressions de Notre Saint-Père le pape Pie XI; la sainteté dans sa fin et dans sa substance n'est autre chose que l'amour de Dieu, il faut bien dire que les offices des Sacrés Coeurs composés par le Père Eudes sont singulièrement révélateurs de sa sainteté, car d'un bout à l'autre ce sont des chants d'amour. C'est avec bonheur que les âmes mystiques

(1) Lettre pastorale à l'occasion des canonisations du B. J. Eudes et de la Bse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus.

(2) Cf. Vie de la Mère de Saumaise, ch. VIII, pp. 166 et 184.

298 -

#### SAINT JEAN EUDES

On retrouve, en un degré très élevé, cet effet de l'amour, dont elles ont parfois l'impression, et que saint Thomas d'Aquin appelle la liquéfaction (1), c'est-à-dire l'écoulement en l'objet aimé. Vraiment, saint Jean Eudes est tellement uni aux Sacrés Coeurs qu'il ne vit plus, pour ainsi dire, de sa vie à lui, mais qu'il s'écoule en eux par l'amour. Voici, par exemple, quelques strophes de ses hymnes de l'office du Saint Cœur de Marie

Eia, Parens, cor supplicum  
Intra pium serva sinum;  
Amore Nati langueat;  
Amore matris ferveat.

O Mère, ces coeurs qui vous supplient,  
Gardez-les dans votre Cœur si bon;  
Qu'ils languissent d'amour pour le Fils  
Et qu'ils brûlent d'amour pour la Mère.

O fax amanda cordium,  
Flammis sacris nos devora;  
Fac ut crementur omnium  
Amore Jesu pectora.  
O aimable flambeau des coeurs,  
De vos flammes sacrées dévorez-nous;  
Faites que tous les coeurs  
Soient consumés de l'amour de Jésus.

Amor, sacri fons nectaris,  
Mentes replens inebria;  
Cordis sagitta Virginis,  
Transfige cordis intima.

Amour, source d'un nectar sacré,  
Emplissez et enivrez nos âmes.  
De la flèche qui perça le Cœur de Marie  
Transpercez le fond de notre coeur.

(1) Cf. II' 11«1, q. 28, a. 5.

LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SAGRÉS COEURS

299 -

Mais c'est surtout dans l'office du Divin Cœur de Jésus que se manifeste le bienheureux



écoulement dont nous venons de parler. Le Père Eudes s'écrie dans des transports de charité: « Voici qu'à mes yeux s'ouvre la fournaise embrasée de l'amour; je veux me livrer à ses flammes; que la mort me dévore dans ses feux. - Oh! je te veux, Cœur de flamme. Brûle à jamais au-dedans de moi... - O Cœur, Père des vivants, fais-nous vivre d'amour. Fais que dans ton sein pour toi nous mourions d'amour. - O Christ, fournaise des cœurs, plonge-nous dans tes flammes, nous t'en supplions! Amour, dévorant ceux qui t'aiment, fais-nous martyrs d'amour. »

Peut-on résister à de tels accents? et si, selon les paroles du Docteur Angélique, « la fin de la vie spirituelle, c'est l'union à Dieu par la charité (1) », ne voit-on pas immédiatement l'immense portée, pour la vie spirituelle des âmes, d'un culte liturgique qui les pousse si instamment vers les sommets les plus élevés de cette sainte vertu? On est ému en pensant à la magnifique floraison d'amour que saint Jean Eudes a suscitée dans les âmes de ses contemporains et l'on se prend à désirer d'alimenter soi-même sa vie intérieure à une source si pure et si abondante.

Au sujet du culte liturgique des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, qu'il venait d'instituer, saint Jean Eudes avait de hautes et larges ambitions, et comme des intuitions secrètes.

L'on se rappelle les paroles triomphales qu'il écrivait en 1672 à ses chers fils à propos de la fête du Cœur de Marie - « Aujourd'hui elle est solennisée par toute la

(1) Cf. IP II<sup>e</sup>, q. 44, a. i.

300 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

France, et en plusieurs ordres et congrégations religieuses, avec tant de bénédictions qu'il y a sujet d'espérer qu'elle se célébrera anjour très solennellement par tout l'univers (i). »

En ce qui concerne le Sacré-Cœur de Jésus, il est plus explicite encore, et ses désirs revêtent une ardeur extrême qui fait clairement comprendre quelle place ce divin Cœur avait dans ses pensées.

« C'est ici la fête des fêtes », disait-il... « Si on célèbre, ajoutait-il, dans le cours de l'année, tant de fêtes en l'honneur des saints, quelle solennité mérite ce divin Cœur, qui est le principe de tout ce qu'il y a de noble et de glorieux dans tous les saints! (2) »

Et un peu plus loin:

« Si donc on célèbre une si grande fête dans l'Église en l'honneur de ce divin Sacrement (la sainte Eucharistie), quelle solennité doit-on faire en l'honneur de son très Sacré Cœur, qui est l'origine de tout ce qu'il y a de grand, de rare et de précieux dans cet auguste Sacrement! (3) »

Pour rendre efficaces ces désirs, saint Jean Eudes invitait les peuples à accourir au Sacré-Cœur, et le Sacré-Cœur à exercer sur eux sa royauté d'amour:

Venite, gentes, carrite  
Ad Cor Patris mitissimum;  
Omnes amat, confidite,  
Amoris est incendium.

Venez, peuples, accourez  
Au Cœur si doux de votre Père;  
Il vous aime tous, confiance,  
C'est un incendie d'amour (4).

(1) Cf. Lebrun, Le B. J. Eudes et le culte public du Cœur de Jésus, P. 45.

(2) Cf. OEuvres complètes, t, VIII, P. 242.

(3) Cf. OEuvres complètes, t. VI.11, P. 242.

(4) Cf. Hymne des premières vêpres.

## LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS COEURS

301 -

O te volo, Cor flammeum,  
Tu semper intus ardeas!  
Fons omnium charismatum,  
Totum per orbem diffluas.  
O je te veux, Cœur de flamme,  
Brûle à jamais au-dedans de moi,  
Source de toutes les grâces,  
Par tout l'univers épanche-toi (1).

C'était bien un embrasement d'amour qu'il appelait sur le monde. Voici comment il s'exprime à cet égard: « Une infinité de raisons nous obligent de rendre nos adorations et nos honneurs au divin Cœur de notre très aimable Sauveur, avec une dévotion et un respect extraordinaire. Toutes ces raisons sont comprises dans trois paroles du Bienheureux saint Bernardin de Sienne, qui appelle ce très aimable Cœur: « Fornax ardentissimae « caritatis ad inflammandum et incendendum orbem universam, : Fournaise d'une charité très ardente pour « enflammer et embraser tout l'univers (2). » Ce texte précise bien la place qu'occupait, dès le XVIIe siècle, dans l'esprit du Père Eudes, le règne social du Sacré-Cœur. L'une des fins du culte liturgique institué par lui, c'est, selon les belles expressions de Dom. Lambert Beaudouin, « le règne du Roi éternel des siècles restauré par l'ascendant d'un amour sans bornes, symbolisé dans son cœur de chair, et manifesté par toute l'œuvre de la Rédemption, sans en exclure les mystères joyeux et glorieux (3) ».

(1) Cf. Hymne des matines. On trouvera tous ces textes, ainsi que leur traduction française, dans l'appendice II de notre opuscule: « Le Sacré Cœur de Jésus principe de toute la vie spirituelle d'après le B. J. Eudes ».

(2) Cf. OEuvres complètes, t. VIII, P. 208.

(3) Cf., dans les « Quéstions liturgiques et paroissiales » de Louvain, de mai 1923, le bel article intitulé: « Le Sacré-Cœur de Jésus dans la liturgie ».

302-

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

Nous n'avons pas besoin d'ajouter combien, à ce point de vue encore, il a été initiateur. Les livres composés de nos jours sur la royauté, sociale du Sacré-Cœur n'ont pas, pour nous Eudistes, du moins en ce qui concerne leur substance et leurs idées fondamentales, le mérite et la saveur de l'originalité: nous avons déjà lu cela dans les oeuvres de notre saint Fondateur.

Sans doute l'Esprit de Dieu illuminait le Père Eudes sur l'extension que prendrait dans le cours des âges le culte du Sacré-Cœur. Cela semble ressortir assez clairement de la circulaire rédigée, en 1766, parla Mère Marie de Saint-Basile, supérieure du Monastère de Notre-Dame de Charité de Caen. Nous y lisons ces paroles:

« Quoique ce divin Cœur ait été longtemps le trésor particulier des Enfants de notre digne Instituteur, nous nous réjouissons de ce que bientôt il va être connu et honoré de toute la terre, selon que notre bon Père l'a prédit avant sa mort (1). »

Jean Eudes ne fit pas d'ailleurs qu'écrire et que chanter en faveur du règne social du Sacré-Cœur;

il était disposé à se sacrifier totalement, à être anéanti pour le procurer.

«O mon Sauveur, s'écriait-il dans un transport d'amour, que tout l'univers soit converti en adoration au regard de votre divin Cœur! Oh! que de bon cœur je consentirais, moyennant votre grâce, d'être anéanti tout maintenant et pour jamais, afin que le Cœur de mon Jésus fût adoré incessamment par tout l'univers! (2) »

Par une divine harmonie, ce sera à l'occasion des révélations faites par le Cœur de Jésus à une fille spirituelle de saint Jean Eudes, la Mère Marie du Divin-Cœur, que

(1) Cf. les Origines de Notre-Dame de Charité, par le P. Ory, P. 273

(2) Cf. OEuvres complètes, t. VIII, P. 314.

## LE CULTE LITURGIQUE DES SACRÉS CŒURS

303 -

Léon XIII consacrera solennellement le genre humain à ce Divin Cœur (1).

Le 8 février 1925, jour auquel les Eudistes célèbrent la fête du Cœur de Marie, Sa Sainteté le pape Pie XI, dans un discours prononcé à l'occasion de la lecture du décret d'approbation des deux miracles proposés pour la canonisation du Père Eudes, comparait celui-ci à l'un de ces immenses navires qui traversent les mers, chargés de richesses et laissant après eux un large et profond sillage. Ce sillage, saint Jean Eudes l'a tracé sans doute par la fondation de plusieurs instituts, par celle de nombreux séminaires, par son apostolat si original et si puissant; mais à notre sens il l'a tracé surtout par l'institution du culte liturgique des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, puisqu'à ce point de vue - nous aimons à le répéter avec l'Église - il est « le premier de tous ».

Désormais tous ceux qui voudront étudier ce culte, non pas superficiellement et incomplètement, mais à fond et dans ses sources, devront jeter sur la vie et les œuvres de ce grand saint un long et attentif regard. Et pour notre France religieuse quelle gloire n'est-ce pas que d'avoir été, grâce à l'apostolat de l'un de ses enfants les plus illustres, l'instigatrice et la maîtresse d'une forme de dévotion extérieure et publique si bien faite pour sanctifier les âmes et pour les emporter vers les sommets de l'union à Dieu?

J. GAUDERON,

Eudiste.

(1) Cf. Sœur Marie du Divin-Cœur, par l'abbé Chasle, ch. xi.

### Sa Spiritualité

S'unir à Dieu par l'amour et dans l'amour, tel est le but visé par tous les vrais chrétiens. Les y diriger par des voies sûres et autorisées, telle est la prétention des maîtres qui s'offrent à leur servir de guides. Mais, si pour tous ceux-ci le terme est le même, les chemins qu'ils conseillent de prendre pour y atteindre sont variés; et cette variété tient à ce que, sur la terre, malgré les lumières de la foi, le même objet ne présente pas un aspect unique aux regards des observateurs. L'œil de l'homme est aussi impuissant à embrasser la totalité d'une vérité que sa volonté à réaliser la plénitude du bien.

Or, l'objet dont il s'agit, c'est la vie chrétienne; et cette vie, qui est la vie même du Christ, peut être envisagée et reproduite à des points de vue très divers. Substantiellement et foncièrement la même en tous les fidèles - en tous naissant et grandissant par la participation aux mêmes sacrements, exposée aux mêmes dangers et aux mêmes épreuves, réclamant les mêmes exercices fondamentaux, et s'épanouissant dans l'exercice des mêmes vertus, elle n'en revêt pas moins en chacun une forme particulière. Il en est d'elle comme de la nature humaine, dont chaque homme réalise en soi le type, mais avec sa physionomie propre et son caractère particulier.

### SA SPIRITUALITÉ

305 -

De là vient que les saints se distinguent si nettement entre eux que l'Église peut dire de chacun: « Non est inventus similis illi: Il n'a pas eu son semblable. »

Cette divergence se retrouve dans la théorie.

Il y a certes une ascétique traditionnelle, et nul écrivain catholique ne voudrait s'en écarter. Mais, dans la manière de la présenter, que de différences! Les uns insistent sur certains motifs de pratiquer la vertu, que les autres laissent dans l'ombre. Ceux-ci préconisent certains exercices négligés par ceux-là. Bref, les voies que les uns et les autres indiquent pour aller à Dieu, pour s'unir à Dieu, ne sont pas tout à fait les mêmes (1).

C'est ainsi que - sans remonter aux solitaires de la Thébaïde, ou à saint Benoît, ou à saint François d'Assise, dont les voies pour aller à Dieu étaient bien différentes, - nous voyons, au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, sainte Thérèse faire de l'oraison le principal élément de sa spiritualité, tandis que, à la même époque, saint Ignace, dans un des ouvrages qui ont exercé l'action la plus puissante et la plus féconde sur la vie religieuse des temps modernes, les Exercices Spirituels, se plaisait à considérer la vie chrétienne dans sa fin dernière, qui est la gloire de Dieu et la béatitude de l'homme, et condensait toute sa doctrine dans la célèbre maxime: Ad maiorem Dei gloriam, adoptée par lui comme règle de vie et laissée comme devise à ses disciples.

De ces deux recommandations: « Vigilate et orate Veillez et priez », faites par Notre-Seigneur à ses disciples, la première, qui écrivait pour les âmes tendant à la perfection, appuyait davantage sur celle-ci: Orate; le second, qui visait surtout à l'action et à l'apostolat,

(1) Cf. l'Introduction au Royaume de Jésus par le P. Lebrun I. L'Idée fondamentale du Royaume de Jésus.

### SAINT JEAN EUDES

insistait plus sur celle-là: Vigilate, l'examen lui semblant avoir plus d'importance.

Après eux, saint François de Sales suivit et enseigna une autre méthode. Il envisagea principalement la vie chrétienne dans ce qui la constitue, dans son principe interne, qui est la charité, ou plutôt dans son acte essentiel, qui est l'amour de Dieu. Ce qu'il veut apprendre aux chrétiens, c'est à

conserver, à développer, à pratiquer la divine charité.

Au reste, et ces divers points de vue, et tous les autres auxquels on peut se placer, loin de s'exclure, se complètent, si bien qu'on ne peut, sans inconvénient, en négliger aucun. Seulement, la prédominance de l'un d'eux a pour conséquence de modifier sensiblement la vie intérieure et de lui imprimer une physionomie très distincte de toute autre.

Cela dit, venons à saint Jean Eudes.

A proprement parler, ce saint n'a pas fondé d'école, comme les éminents personnages que nous venons de citer. Formé à l'Oratoire de Jésus par le cardinal de Bérulle et le P. de Condren, il s'est nourri de leur doctrine, qu'il a traduite dans sa vie et développée dans ses Oeuvres, mais en la marquant d'un cachet très personnel. Sa conception de la vie spirituelle est bien à lui, et il énonce dans un choix de vérités catholiques, qu'ils en expriment, à ses yeux, les principes essentiels. De même, parmi les moyens que conseillent les docteurs de l'Église, il en accepte de préférence quelques-uns, avec lesquels il oriente et dirige, d'une façon qui lui est propre, les âmes vers la sainteté. Quel'on compare ses ouvrages avec les Exercices Spirituels, ou même avec l'Introduction à la vie dévote et le Traité de l'amour de Dieu, et l'on verra, au premier coup d'œil, que, s'il y prêche la même perfection, il l'y fait néanmoins envisager et pratiquer différemment.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ 307 -

Saint Jean Eudes, à la suite de ses illustres maîtres, fonde sa spiritualité sur les enseignements de saint Paul relatifs au corps mystique de Jésus-Christ. « Il voit sans cesse dans l'Église, écrit le P. Hérabourg, son premier biographe, le développement progressif de ce grand corps. Pour lui, chaque chrétien est avant tout un membre, qui, tout en venant prendre sa place dans l'ensemble, doit reproduire en soi les différents mystères qui s'accomplissent dans le corps entier, comme ils se sont accomplis dans la personne même de Jésus-Christ (1). » Cette idée ne paraît pas avoir beaucoup frappé saint Ignace; et saint François de Sales est loin de la placer au premier rang dans ses traités.

La doctrine spirituelle de notre nouveau saint se retrouve dans tous ses ouvrages, elle en est comme le cœur et l'âme (2); mais il en est un, la Vie et Royaume de Jésus dans les âmes chrétiennes, où elle est condensée avec une lumineuse précision. C'est là qu'il expose complètement et méthodiquement ses idées sur la vie chrétienne: sa nature, ses fondements, son complet épanouissement dans la pratique des vertus. C'est là aussi que, nous aidant de la « Regula Domini Jesu », qui en est comme un sommaire logiquement disposé, nous allons puiser les développements qui vont suivre et que nous groupons sous trois chefs:

(1). Base de sa spiritualité.

II. But idéal de sa spiritualité.

III. Méthode pour l'atteindre.

(2) Le P. Eudes, ses vertus. - (2) En dehors des deux que nous citons, voici les principaux ouvrages, ou opuscules, utiles à étudier pour bien connaître la spiritualité de saint Jean Eudes: le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le saint Baptême, Méditations sur l'Humilité, Entretiens de l'âme chrétienne avec son Dieu, le Manuel de piété pour une communauté d'ecclésiastiques.

L'idée fondamentale de la spiritualité de saint Jean Eudes, c'est que la vie chrétienne n'est que la continuation et l'achèvement en chacun de nous de la vie de Jésus-Christ. Cette expression, cette formule revient souvent, comme un principe, sur ses lèvres et sous sa plume. Elle n'est du reste que la répétition, en d'autres termes, de cette parole de saint Paul: « Je vis, non, ce n'est pas moi qui vis, c'est Jésus-Christ qui vit en moi. »

Or, cette conception de la vie chrétienne découle de la doctrine du même Apôtre sur le corps mystique du Sauveur, qui est l'Église. On sait, en effet, que, d'après lui, les fidèles sont mystiquement, mais très étroitement unis à Jésus-Christ, comme les membres du corps humain le sont à la tête. C'est une allégorie qu'il aime à développer dans ses épîtres, et dont il fait, pour ainsi dire, le fond de son enseignement: elle n'exprime d'ailleurs qu'une vérité proclamée par Notre-Seigneur lui-même, quand il se compare à la vigne dont nous sommes les branches (1).

En fait, entre la vie du chrétien et la vie de Jésus, il est aisé de discerner les rapports de conformité et de dépendance que l'on constate, dans le corps humain, entre la vie des membres et la vie de la tête.

Dans le corps humain, la tête et les membres possèdent la même vie; c'est le même sang qui circule, pour l'alimenter, dans les artères et dans les veines de la tête et des membres. Ainsi en est-il de Jésus-Christ et de nous: une même vie circule en lui qui est notre chef, et en nous qui sommes ses membres; vie supé

(1) Cf. L'introduction au Royaume de Jésus du P. Lebrun.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ

309 -

rieure, participation de la nature divine, qui nous met à même de connaître Dieu comme il se connaît, de l'aimer comme il s'aime, de le posséder comme il se possède dans l'infinie béatitude. Cette vie s'appelle la vie de la grâce.

Hypostatiquement unie à la personne du Verbe, la sainte Humanité de Jésus a été remplie de la grâce, dès le premier instant de son existence, elle l'a possédée dans sa plénitude, et c'est elle qui, par le Saint-Esprit, l'Esprit de Jésus, l'infuse en nous, avec ce magnifique cortège d'habitudes surnaturelles, vertus et dons, qui l'accompagne. Ainsi, à la différence de ce qui se passe dans le corps humain, où la tête, condition de vie, suppose la vie, mais ne la donne pas, Jésus, pour les membres de son corps mystique, est non seulement la condition de la vie, mais encore le principe de la vie, et d'une vie toute divine, qu'il leur a méritée par sa mort et qu'il leur dispense de diverses manières, spécialement par les sacrements.

Condition de la vie, la tête, dans le corps humain, influe sur les membres; c'est d'elle que part la force qui les meut et leur fait exercer leurs fonctions, en sorte que l'on peut dire que la vie de la tête se continue et s'achève dans les membres. De même en est-il dans le corps mystique du Christ, et pour chacun de ses membres, les fidèles. Reliés au Christ par la grâce sanctifiante, c'est lui qui les meut au bien par les impulsions de la grâce actuelle: « Comme la tête dans les membres », dit le concile de Trente, l'influence actuelle de Jésus « ne cesse de projeter dans les âmes justifiées une puissante vivifiante qui précède, accompagne et suit leurs actes de vertu. » D'où il suit que la vie chrétienne n'est pas seulement l'image de la vie personnelle de Jésus, mais qu'elle en est l'extension, le

310 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

prolongement. La vie de Jésus se continue, s'achève en chaque âme qui lui est unie par la foi et la grâce; ce qui fait dire à saint Paul que l'Église est le complément de Jésus, plenitudo ejus (1), et que nous concourons tous à la plénitude de la vie de Jésus. In virum perfectum; in mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi (2).

De ces enseignements de l'Apôtre qu'il expose sommairement mais avec une grande netteté, saint Jean Eudes tire des conclusions qu'il aime à répéter, et qui, comme des principes indiscutables, servent de base à sa spiritualité.

Écoutons-le, au § 1 de la partie IIe du Royaume de Jésus: « Jésus, Fils de Dieu et Fils de l'homme, Roi des hommes et des Anges », n'est « pas seulement, dit-il, notre Dieu, notre Sauveur et notre Souverain Seigneur », il est encore « notre Chef », et nous sommes « ses membres et son corps, comme parle saint Paul, os de ses os et chair de sa chair. » Par conséquent nous lui sommes « unis de l'union la plus étroite qui puisse être, telle qu'est celle des membres avec leur chef: spirituellement par la foi et par la grâce qu'il nous a données au saint Baptême; corporellement par l'union de son très saint corps avec le nôtre en la sainte Eucharistie. » Ce principe posé, il en conclut tout aussitôt. que, comme les membres sont animés de l'esprit de leur chef et vivants de sa vie, nous devons aussi être « animés de l'esprit de Jésus, vivre de sa vie, marcher dans ses voies, être revêtus de ses sentiments et inclinations, faire toutes nos actions avec les dispositions et intention dans lesquelles il. faisait les siennes; en un mot, continuer et accomplir la vie, la religion et la dévotion qu'il a exercée sur la terre.» On le voit, c'est

(1) Ephes., 1, 23.

(2) Ibid., iv, 13.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ 311

tout un programme, et celui-là même que nous allons développer dans les deux articles suivants.

Un peu plus loin, au § II de la même partie du même ouvrage, rappelant ces paroles de saint Paul: J'accomplis en moi ce qui manque aux souffrances de Jésus-Christ pour son corps qui est l'Église (1), il fait remarquer qu'on peut dire de chaque chrétien souffrant avec esprit de soumission et d'amour envers Dieu, ce que saint Paul dit de lui-même; et que l'on peut étendre à toutes les actions d'un chrétien ce que l'Apôtre affirme des souffrances:

« On peut dire, en vérité, qu'un vrai chrétien, qui est membre de Jésus-Christ et qui est uni avec lui par sa grâce, continue et accomplit, par toutes les actions qu'il fait en l'esprit de Jésus-Christ, les actions que le même Jésus-Christ a faites durant le temps de sa vie passible sur la terre. De sorte que, quand un chrétien fait oraison, il continue et accomplit l'oraison que Jésus-Christ a faite en la terre, lorsqu'il travaille, il continue et accomplit la vie laborieuse de Jésus-Christ; lorsqu'il converse avec le prochain en -esprit de charité, il continue et accomplit la vie conversante de Jésus-Christ; lorsqu'il prend son repas ou son repos chrétiennement, il continue et accomplit l'assujettissement que Jésus-Christ a voulu avoir à ces nécessités. Et ainsi de toutes les autres actions qui sont faites chrétiennement...

... « Vous voyez par là ce que c'est que la vie chrétienne: que c'est une continuation et accomplissement de la vie de Jésus; que toutes nos actions doivent être une continuation des actions de Jésus, que nous devons être comme autant de Jésus en la terre pour y continuer sa vie et ses oeuvres, et pour faire et souffrir

(1) Coloss., 1, 24.

tout ce que nous faisons et souffrons, saintement et divinement, dans l'esprit de Jésus, c'est-à-dire dans les dispositions saintes et divines, dans lesquelles ce même Jésus se comportait dans toutes ses actions et souffrances. »

Tout cela est fort net. Voici pourtant une page de son grand ouvrage, Le Cœur admirable de la très sacrée Mère de Dieu (1), qui met encore mieux en lumière, et notre union avec Jésus-Christ, notre chef, et les admirables conséquences qui en découlent:

1e « Notre-Seigneur est à vous, comme le chef est à ses membres; tout ce qui est à lui est à vous, son esprit, son Cœur, son corps, son âme et toutes les facultés de son corps et de son âme; et vous devez en faire usage comme de choses qui sont vôtres, pour servir, louer, aimer, et glorifier Dieu.

2e « Vous êtes à lui, comme les membres sont à leur chef. À raison de quoi il désire ardemment faire usage de tout ce qui est en vous pour le service et la gloire de son Père, comme de choses qui sont à lui.

3e « Non seulement il est à vous, mais il veut être en vous; il veut être vivant et régnant en vous, comme le chef est vivant et régnant dans ses membres, et il veut que tout ce qui est en lui soit vivant et régnant en vous - que son Esprit soit vivant et régnant dans votre esprit; que son Cœur soit vivant et régnant dans votre cœur; que toutes les puissances de son âme, tous ses sens, intérieurs et extérieurs, et toutes ses passions, soient vivantes et régnantes dans les facultés de votre âme, dans vos sens, intérieurs et extérieurs, et dans vos passions, afin que ces divines paroles s'accomplissent au regard de vous: Glorifiez et portez Dieu dans

(1) Livre I, ch. Y, section 111.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ

## 313

vos corps (1); et que la vie de Jésus paraisse visiblement même dans votre chair et dans votre extérieur (2).

4e « Non seulement vous êtes au Fils de Dieu, mais vous devez être en lui, comme les membres sont dans leur chef; tout ce qui est en vous doit être incorporé en lui et recevoir vie et conduite de lui: il n'y a point de véritable vie pour vous qu'en lui seul, qui est la très unique source de la vraie vie; hors de lui, il n'y a que mort et perdition pour vous; il doit être le seul principe de tous les mouvements, usages et fonctions de votre vie; enfin, vous ne devez vivre que de lui, en lui et pour lui, suivant ces divines paroles: Personne d'entre nous ne vit pour soi, et Personne ne meurt pour soi. Car, soit que nous vivions, nous vivons pour le Seigneur; soit que nous mourions, nous mourons pour le Seigneur; soit donc que nous vivions, soit que nous mourions, nous sommes au Seigneur. Car Jésus-Christ est mort et ressuscité, afin de régner sur les morts et les vivants (3).

5e « Vous n'êtes qu'un avec ce même Jésus, comme les membres ne sont qu'un avec leur chef; et, par conséquent, vous ne devez avoir qu'un même esprit, une même âme, une même vie, une même volonté, un même sentiment, un même cœur, tant corporel que spirituel avec lui, et lui-même doit être votre esprit, votre cœur, votre amour, votre vie et votre tout. »

Assurément, il était difficile d'exprimer avec une plus lumineuse concision, et l'essence de la vie chrétienne, et le principe intérieur qui préside à tous ses actes.

A noter, dans le 3e paragraphe, un membre de phrase bien digne de retenir notre attention; c'est qu'il faut que « la vie de Jésus paraisse visiblement même



- (1) 1 Cor., vi, 20. -  
 (2) Ibid., iv, 10. -  
 (3) Rom., x,v, 7, 8, 9.

314 -

#### SAINT JEAN EUDES

dans notre chair et dans notre extérieur », doctrine conforme à celle de l'Apôtre: Ut et vita Jesu manifestaretur in carne nostra mortali. Effectivement, cette vie de Jésus en nous et de nous en Jésus se manifeste au dehors par la perfection morale des actes et souvent par leur héroïsme; mais elle se traduit aussi, fréquemment sinon toujours, dans le corps même, par une sorte de rejaillissement, de rayonnement de l'âme sur la physionomie, dans l'attitude, dans la démarche. Alors se produit quelque chose d'analogue à ce qui se produisit en Jésus au jour de sa transfiguration: Et resplenduit facies ejus sicut sol; vestimenta autem ejus facta sunt alba sicut nix. Le regard s'illumine; le visage brille d'une beauté surhumaine, d'un éclat tout céleste; on sent dans toute la personne quelque chose de divin. Que de saints ont été ainsi transfigurés au lit de la mort, dans l'oraison au saint autel, après la communion! Mais, sans aller jusqu'à ces états extraordinaires, le vrai chrétien, uni à Jésus-Christ et -vivant de sa vie, respire dans son visage, dans sa parole, dans ses gestes, dans tout son extérieur, une paix, une modestie, une bonté miséricordieuse, une douceur, une humilité, charmante, une patience inaltérable, qui en fait un être tout céleste et une parfaite image du Christ. Christam induistis (1), vous devez revêtir, vous avez revêtu le Christ, aime à répéter saint Jean Eudes, à la suite de saint Paul; et lui-même n'était-il pas un portrait vivant de son divin Maître, tant il avait dépouillé le vieil homme et revêtu le nouveau, tant il marchait, sous la dépendance de Jésus, dans la justice et la sainteté véritable? (2)

Il est évident d'ailleurs qu'une telle vie est admira

- (1) Gal-, 111, 27  
 (2) Eph., iv, 23.

#### SA SPIRITUALITÉ

315 -

blement féconde en fruits de vertu, en actes méritoires pour le ciel.

Elle l'est déjà du seul fait de notre union à Jésus par la grâce: Qui manet in me et ego in eo, hic fert fructum multum (1). « Tout de même, dit saint Jean Eudes (2), que les branches, les feuilles, les fleurs, les fruits et tout ce qui est dans un arbre, est à celui auquel le tronc de l'arbre appartient; ainsi, tant que vous appartiendrez à Jésus-Christ et que vous lui serez uni par la grâce, toute votre vie avec toutes ses dépendances, toutes les actions que vous ferez qui de soi ne seront pas mauvaises, lui appartiendront. »

Elle l'est bien davantage par l'oblation répétée, que nous faisons à Jésus, même de nos plus petites actions, et jusque de nos respirations et des battements de notre cœur, avec l'intention de les accomplir pour sa gloire et pour son amour. Mais nous reviendrons sur ces idées. Pour le moment, contemplons à loisir la vie idéale, à laquelle saint Jean Eudes veut conduire et conduit son disciple fidèle.

#### II. - BUT IDÉAL DE SA SPIRITUALITÉ

Saint Jean Eudes se propose, évidemment, le même but que tous les maîtres de la vie spirituelle, c'est-à-dire le règne de la grâce dans les âmes. Il veut que, dans ses disciples, non seulement elle vive, mais qu'elle règne et domine partout et toujours, à l'exclusion de toute faute grave ou légère, voire de toute négligence: « Semper in vobis et maneat et regnet... in gratia Dei conversemini in hoc mundo (3). » Et ce règne, il veut

- (1) Joan., xv, 5. -  
 (2) Royaume de Jésus, P. 1, S in. -

le réaliser par une entière et amoureuse soumission à la volonté de Dieu, la meilleure des mères, dans la voie royale de la croix, suivie avec humilité, patience et amour, au moyen d'une sincère et vraie dévotion aux Cœurs sacrés de Jésus et de Marie, laquelle ne consiste pas seulement à les honorer et à les prier, mais à imiter, à reproduire leurs vertus, à vivre de leur vie.

Voilà sa caractéristique.

Le disciple de saint Jean Eudes mènera donc la vie immortelle et triomphante du Christ ressuscité: «Christus, resurgens ex mortuis, jam non moritur (1). » Le Christ ressuscité ne meurt plus: lui, non plus, ne mourra plus. Le Christ est mort pour le péché une seule fois pour toutes; lui aussi mourra au péché pour jamais. Le Christ vit désormais pour Dieu; lui, de même, ne vivra que pour Dieu. Il n'obéira plus à ses convoitises; ses membres ne seront plus des instruments d'iniquité, mais des instruments de justice; il évoluera dans une sainteté toujours grandissante, - au milieu des clartés de la foi, - avec une agilité toute divine, - avec une souplesse qui passe au travers de tous les obstacles, - sans se souiller ni se corrompre, au contact de la perversion du monde.

Et cette admirable évolution s'accomplira sous la conduite du Saint-Esprit, qui est l'Esprit de Jésus, puisqu'il procède du Fils aussi bien que du Père et que, d'autre part, la sainte humanité du Sauveur, remplie de ce divin Esprit, suivit toujours sa conduite et ses inspirations. Le Saint-Esprit, voilà, Pour saint Eudes, le Maître des maîtres dans la vie spirituelle, le conducteur des âmes chrétiennes en même temps que leur force, dans l'ensemble et les détails de leur vie, celui

(1) Rom., xi, 9.

#### SA SPIRITUALITÉ 317 -

dont elles ne doivent jamais gêner l'action. Aussi, chez lui, point de ces méthodes savantes, qui ont pour but d'utiliser toutes les ressources et de les faire concourir au succès d'un exercice. « La pratique des pratiques, le secret des secrets, la dévotion des dévotions, écrit-il, c'est de n'avoir point d'attache à aucune pratique ou exercice particulier de dévotion, mais d'avoir un grand soin, dans tous vos exercices, de vous donner au Saint-Esprit de Jésus, et de vous y donner avec humilité, confiance et détachement de toutes choses, afin que, vous trouvant sans attache à votre esprit propre, et à vos propres dévotions et dispositions, il ait plein pouvoir et liberté d'agir en vous selon ses désirs, de mettre en vous telles dispositions et tels sentiments de dévotion qu'il voudra, et de vous conduire par les voies qu'il lui plaira. »

Puis, après vous être ainsi donné à lui, « rendez-vous fidèle à recevoir les bons sentiments et dispositions qu'il mettra en vous, et à suivre son mouvement, son attrait et sa conduite (1) ».

Le disciple de saint Eudes sera donc en tout régi par l'Esprit-Saint; il fera par conséquent toutes ses actions dans l'Esprit de Jésus et dans les dispositions saintes et divines de Jésus; et cette docilité constante le conduira à la plus haute sainteté, parce que les dons du Saint-Esprit agiront pleinement en lui, pour développer et perfectionner les vertus morales de prudence, de justice, de force et de tempérance, et leurs annexes, et pour donner aux vertus théologiques de foi, d'espérance et de charité, principe de son union avec Dieu, leur plein épanouissement. De sorte que, transfiguré à l'image du Christ par les actes consommés, héroïques,

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. VI, § xviii.

de plusieurs vertus signalées dans l'Évangile, il se rapprochera excellemment de sa fin et de la souveraine béatitude qu'elle engendre; et, en raison de la perfection de ses actes vertueux et de l'amour de Dieu qui les anime, il sera rempli de délices ineffables, analogues à l'inexprimable saveur de fruits parvenus à leur maturité.

Dès lors, quelle vie toute céleste, vie ici-bas cachée en Dieu avec le Christ, mais qui, un jour, se révélera là-haut dans toute sa splendeur; vie où toutes les pensées et tous les désirs tendent vers le ciel, où c'est dans le ciel qu'est fixé le cœur!

Vie de louange et d'action de grâces, et d'oraison perpétuelle. Sans doute il y a, dans la journée, des moments, des heures même, où, dans une respectueuse et amoureuse élévation de son esprit et de son cœur, le disciple de saint Eudes s'entretient, converse avec Jésus, avec son Dieu, le considère et le contemple dans ses divines perfections, dans ses mystères et dans ses œuvres; l'adore, le bénit, l'aime, le glorifie, se donne à lui, s'humilie devant lui, implore sa miséricorde, apprend à imiter, à reproduire ses vertus, ses exemples ou ceux de ses saints, lui demande tout ce dont il a besoin pour le servir et l'aimer; tout cela, encore une fois, suivant le mouvement de l'Esprit-Saint. Ce sont là des moments, des heures délicieuses et fécondes, où, uni à Jésus, à son Dieu, qui est son centre, sa fin, son souverain bien, il le possède et est possédé par lui, il lui rend ses devoirs d'adoration, de louange et d'amour, il reçoit de lui lumières, bénédictions, mille témoignages de tendresse, il vit déjà très amplement de la vie du ciel. Mais sa journée entière doit s'écouler dans les mêmes sentiments, dans la même application, dans la même élévation d'esprit et

SA SPIRITUALITÉ 319 -

de cœur, pour répondre à la volonté de Notre-Seigneur qui veut que nous priions toujours et sans interruption (1). Aussi fera-t-il toutes ses actions en esprit d'oraison, commençant par les offrir à Notre-Seigneur, et répétant, de temps à autre, cette oblation pendant leur accomplissement. Aussi lira-t-il de bons livres, sans hâte, sans précipitation, mais à loisir, s'arrêtant à considérer, à réfléchir, à goûter les vérités qui le touchent davantage, afin de les imprimer dans son esprit et de les traduire dans sa conduite. Aussi prendra-t-il plaisir à converser avec le prochain de Dieu et des choses de Dieu, puisant en Dieu tout ce qu'il dit, sans perdre la pensée de Dieu présent partout, dans les dispositions et intentions avec lesquelles Jésus-Christ conversait lui-même avec les hommes. Sicut ex Deo, coram Deo, in Christo (2).

Dès lors la pensée de Dieu présidera à toutes ses démarches; et, marchant en sa présence, il se tiendra dans la réserve et la modestie; pas d'éclats dans la voix, pas de rire bruyant; sa conversation sera marquée au coin de la grâce et de la sagesse; l'Esprit-Saint lui-même lui inspirera, lui dictera ses réponses. Bienveillant, reconnaissant à l'égard de tous, et surtout de ses bienfaiteurs, il se montrera miséricordieux et compatissant aux ignorances et aux faiblesses d'autrui.

Que dis-je? Il marchera dans la dilection, à l'exemple de son divin Maître, et pour accomplir le précepte qu'il lui en a donné autant que pour le payer de son amour; de là une charité continuelle envers les autres; de là le support des défauts, la recherche de la paix, le souci des intérêts, de l'édification, du bon plaisir du prochain,

(1) Cf. Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, 5 xi et suivants.

(2) II Cor., 11, 17

320 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

sincèrement chéri, respecté dans ses droits et entouré d'honneur; de là le pardon des injures, l'amour des ennemis, le bien même rendu pour le mal, les bons offices répondant aux mauvais procédés,

le dévouement le plus absolu et poussé jusqu'à la mort.

Et toutes ces admirables choses s'accompliront dans l'humilité, la mansuétude, la patience, l'union des Cœurs.

Et les oeuvres salutaires se multiplieront, et tous les devoirs de la vie privée et de la vie sociale seront remplis dans leur perfection, grâce à la vigilance, à la prière, à la force puisée en Jésus-Christ.

Voilà, en peu de mots, l'idéal visé par saint Eudes voyons par quels chemins il y conduit.

### III. - MÉTHODE POUR ATTEINDRE CET IDÉAL

Saint Jean Eudes demande deux actes fondamentaux à ses disciples: un acte de RENONCEMENT à soi-même, un acte de DONATION à Jésus. En cela se résume sa méthode. Écoutons-le:

« Vous devez, tous les jours une fois, reconnaître votre misère, telle que Dieu la voit, et renoncer... entièrement à vous-même, à votre propre esprit et à toute la puissance et capacité que vous pourriez penser et ressentir en vous. Car toute la puissance qu'Adam a laissée dans la nature de l'homme n'est qu'impuissance; le sentiment que nous en pourrions avoir n'est qu'illusion, présomption et fausse opinion de nous-mêmes; et nous n'aurons jamais une puissance véritable et une liberté parfaite au bien qu'en renonçant à nous-mêmes et en sortant de nous-mêmes, et de tout ce qui est nôtre pour vivre dans l'esprit et la vertu de Jésus.

#### SA SPIRITUALITÉ 321 -

« En suite de cette renonciation, adorez Jésus-Christ, donnez-vous à lui, et priez-le de prendre en vous les droits d'Adam et les vôtres aussi, puisqu'il a acquis les droits des pécheurs par son sang et par sa mort, et de vouloir vivre en vous au lieu d'Adam, et de vous déposséder de votre nature, et de s'approprier tout ce que vous êtes et d'en prendre l'usage. Protestez-lui que vous voulez vous démettre de tout ce que vous êtes entre ses mains, et que vous désirez sortir de votre esprit propre, qui est un esprit d'orgueil et de vanité, et de toutes vos intentions, inclinations et dispositions, pour ne plus vivre que dans son esprit, dans ses intentions, inclinations et dispositions divines et adorables (1). »

Tels sont les deux actes qu'il introduit dans chacun des exercices de piété qu'il recommande, et dans l'accomplissement de tout acte de vertu. Et la raison n'en est pas seulement le néant de la créature et le caractère surnaturel de la vie chrétienne, mais aussi la déchéance originelle de notre nature. En effet, le péché d'Adam n'a pas seulement dépouillé la nature humaine des dons surnaturels dont Dieu l'avait gratifiée, il l'a encore pervertie; elle a, par lui, perdu sa rectitude primitive, si bien que, désordonnées, ses inclinations se portent, désormais, sans frein ni mesure, vers les biens inférieurs. C'est cette dépravation de la nature que l'Écriture appelle la concupiscence, la chair, le vieil homme, dépravation qui constitue pour nous un obstacle, permanent au bien et un entraînement continu au mal. De là vient que nous trouvons en nous, dans notre sensualité, dans notre orgueil, dans notre esprit propre, dans notre volonté propre, dans notre amour-propre,

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. II, § xxviii.

#### 322 - SAINT JEAN EUDES

et généralement dans tout ce qui en nous vient de nous, le principe de tous les péchés, le germe de tous les vices, et, selon l'expression de notre saint, un véritable « antéchrist » (1).

« Si nous nous regardons, dit-il, en la lumière de Dieu, nous verrons que, de nous-mêmes, en tant que pécheurs, nous sommes autant de démons incarnés, autant de Lucifers, autant d'Antéchrists,

n'ayant rien en nous de nous-mêmes, qui ne soit contraire à Jésus-Christ; que nous portons en nous un démon, un Lucifer, un Antéchrist, à savoir notre volonté propre, notre orgueil et notre amour-propre, qui sont pires que tous les démons, que Lucifer et que l'Antéchrist...; que, de nous-mêmes, nous ne sommes qu'un enfer plein d'horreur, de malédiction, de péché, d'abomination; que nous avons en nous, en principe et en semence, tous les péchés de la terre et de l'enfer, la corruption que le péché a mise en nous étant une racine et une source de toutes sortes de péchés... (2). »

Puisque telle est la corruption de la nature par le péché, nous n'avons évidemment d'autre voie de salut que de RENONCER A NOUS-MÊMES, et de NOUS DONNER A JÉSUS, pour agir sous son influence. Saint Eudes ne cesse de nous le répéter. Il nous demande, il nous presse de combattre constamment les instincts dépravés, qui sont le grand obstacle à la vie de Jésus en nous. Or, ces instincts font partie de nous-mêmes, ils sont nous-mêmes, tels que nous sommes déformés par le péché; il faut donc, et notre saint l'exige, que nous travaillions sans relâche à sortir de nous-mêmes, à nous dépouiller de nous-mêmes, et, comme il le dit dans son

(1) P. Lebrun. Cf. Revue des SS. Cœurs, septembre 1917, P P. 263-264.

(2) Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, § xxvi.

### SA SPIRITUALITÉ 323 -

énergique langage, à « nous anéantir nous-mêmes ». « C'est ici, ajoute-t-il, le premier principe et le premier pas de la vie chrétienne. C'est ce qui s'appelle, dans la Parole sacrée et dans les livres des saints Pères, se perdre soi-même, mourir à soi-même, périr à soi-même, renoncer à soi-même. C'est un des principaux soins, que nous devons avoir, un des premiers exercices auquel nous devons nous employer, par les pratiques de l'abnégation, de l'humiliation et de la mortification intérieure et extérieure, et un des plus puissants moyens dont nous devons nous servir pour former et établir Jésus en nous (1).

Cet anéantissement de ce qu'il y a de vicié en nous n'est pas l'œuvre d'un jour, ni d'une année, c'est l'œuvre de toute la vie; il suppose des efforts incessants. Car la chair ne meurt que lentement; encore les saints sont-ils les seuls à la maîtriser complètement. Il ne suffit donc pas de renoncer de temps en temps à la nature corrompue: il faut la pratique habituelle du renoncement et de la mortification; seule elle conduit à des résultats durables.

D'ailleurs, quels que soient nos efforts, ils ne font, sachons-le bien, que seconder l'action de la grâce, sans laquelle ils demeureraient stériles. Dans l'ordre surnaturel, c'est de Jésus qu'il faut tout attendre, même la destruction des obstacles qui s'opposent à son action. Aussi, tout en nous demandant de faire tout ce qui dépend de nous pour dépouiller le vieil homme, saint Eudes insiste-t-il pour que nous priions Jésus de nous en délivrer:

« Anéantissons-nous souvent, écrit-il, aux pieds de Jésus et tout ce qui est de nous, et supplions-le, par ce

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, 5 XLI. -

### 324 - SAINT JEAN EUDES

très grand amour par lequel il s'est anéanti lui-même, d'employer sa divine puissance, pour nous anéantir et pour s'établir en nous (1). »

D'autre part, s'agit-il d'accomplir des actes positifs de vertu, nécessité est également de recourir à Jésus, sans lequel nous ne pouvons rien. La pensée du bien vient de lui; c'est lui qui nous la donne, et de même la volonté de l'accomplir; c'est également lui qui, dans son accomplissement, soutient notre volonté. Il est donc, par ses inspirations, le principe du peu de bien que nous faisons, en même temps qu'il en est le consommateur par les secours de toute espèce qu'il nous prodigue pour le conduire à sa

perfection. Il est clair, d'autre part, que l'action de Jésus doit être secondée par notre coopération. Aussi saint Jean Eudes, loin de nous dispenser du travail pénible qu'exige la pratique de la vertu, veut-il que nous ne reculions devant aucun effort pour nous y exercer, et que, de notre côté, nous y travaillions comme si nous n'attendions rien du côté de Dieu. Mais, ce qui importe le plus à ses yeux, c'est de nous OFFRIR et de nous DONNER à Jésus, en le priant de prendre possession de nos cœurs, d'y « imprimer » lui-même une image parfaite de ses vertus et de ses mystères, et d'y établir le règne de son saint amour.

'De là cette prière qu'il invite à adresser chaque jour aux Coeurs de Jésus et de Marie: Nous vous offrons notre cœur, nous vous le donnons, nous vous le consacrons, nous vous l'immolons, acceptez-le et possédez-le tout entier, purifiez-le, éclairez-le, et sanctifiez-le, afin qu'en lui vous viviez et régniez maintenant et toujours dans tous les siècles des siècles.

Toutefois cet aperçu général sur ces deux actes fondamentaux

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, § XLI.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ

3 2 5 -

de la méthode spirituelle de notre Saint ne suffit pas à en donner une idée précise. Il est donc nécessaire que nous entrons dans plus de détails; afin de montrer clairement de quels éléments chacun se compose, à quels objets ils s'appliquent, à quels buts ils tendent.

A) La loi du Renoncement d'après saint Eudes son objet, son étendue, sa perfection.

Notre Saint rattache naturellement au baptême la loi du renoncement, comme toute sa théorie sur la vie chrétienne. En recevant le baptême, dit-il, « nous avons promis à Dieu de renoncer à Satan et à ses oeuvres, c'est-à-dire à toutes sortes de péchés, et à ses pompes, c'est-à-dire au monde (1) ».

Satan, le péché, le monde, trois objets qui, à certains égards, n'en font qu'un, car le péché est l'œuvre à laquelle pousse Satan, et le monde est l'instrument dont il se sert, l'auxiliaire qu'il emploie pour amener les hommes à l'accomplir; trois objets aussi auxquels chaque jour, et plusieurs fois le jour, le chrétien doit renoncer sérieusement, Joncièrement, de toute la force de sa volonté.

À ces trois objets du renoncement, Notre-Seigneur en a ajouté un quatrième: celui qui veut le suivre, c'est-à-dire marcher dans ses voies, guidé par ses maximes, animé de ses sentiments, pratiquant ses vertus, en un mot, vivant de sa vie, doit se renoncer lui-même. Et ce renoncement, saint Eudes le réclame de ses disciples avec une singulière perfection, comme nous le verrons.

(1) Entretiens intérieurs, XI, iii.

3 2 6 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

a) Satan. - Saint Eudes n'est point de ces prédicateurs ou de ces moralistes qui craignent de parler du diable et de lui attribuer une grande part dans les crimes et les iniquités qui se commettent par le monde; surtout il n'est point de ceux qui n'ont aucun souci de sa désastreuse activité, si même ils n'ont cessé d'y croire. Lui, il croit, lui, il sait, lui, il rappelle sans cesse au chrétien que Satan existe, que les démons existent, que ce ne sont point des êtres imaginaires, mais des êtres très réels, très actifs, répandus de toutes parts, in caelestibus, dans les airs, dit saint Paul; qu'ils rôdent autour de nous, selon l'affirmation de saint Pierre, pour dévorer les âmes, c'est-à-dire pour tuer en elles la vie de la grâce, la vie de Dieu; pour détruire en elles le règne de Jésus-Christ et y établir le leur, pour les arracher au ciel et à ses éternelles délices et les précipiter dans l'enfer et ses feux vengeurs.

Il sait et il répète fréquemment, avec saint Paul, que le démon, instigateur et père du péché, traite le pécheur comme un esclave, dont il dispose à son gré. Car, si, d'après la doctrine de l'Apôtre, l'âme

juste, toute abandonnée aux mouvements de l'Esprit-Saint, obéit docilement au moindre souffle de la grâce, l'âme pécheresse, elle, livrée à la puissance de l'esprit malin, se prostitue à ses tyranniques volontés. Elle va où il veut; elle fait ce qu'il veut; démarches et paroles, il lui dicte tout, il l'emploie à l'extension de son empire; et, lorsqu'elle ose secouer ses chaînes, il lui en fait sentir tout le poids. Que l'esclave de Satan a donc de peine à recouvrer sa liberté!

Il sait cela, et il sait aussi que « le péché change les enfants de Dieu en enfants du diable »; que le démon devient le père de celui qui l'a fait: non qu'il lui coïncide

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ 327 -

munique sa nature, mais parce qu'il lui insuffle son esprit, ses moeurs, ses passions. Le pécheur agit à son exemple~ il l'imité avec une vraie sympathie: comme lui, il se meut dans le mensonge; comme lui, il se constitue dans la révolte et dans la haine.

En conséquence, nous dit saint Eudes, tandis que les Justes, fils de Dieu, ont droit à l'héritage du ciel, où la vue de Dieu les rendra semblables à Dieu, les pécheurs, fils du diable, n'attendant d'autre héritage que « les feux, les flammes, les tourments et les rages de l'enfer », partage de leur père, où leur ressemblance avec lui se consommera pour l'éternité.

Il sait encore, et il le rappelle sans cesse, que « le péché change les membres de Jésus-Christ en membres de Satan », c'est-à-dire qu'au lieu que le juste, membre du corps mystique de Jésus-Christ, est, sous la dépendance de Jésus, son chef, mû par les impulsions de la grâce actuelle, le pécheur, devenu membre de Satan, est, sous la dépendance de Satan, mû par les inspirations, par les impulsions de Satan. C'est par Satan que les actes criminels se multiplient, que les mauvaises inclinations se développent, que les habitudes perverses se contractent et se resserrent; c'est par Satan que l'imagination nourrit les appétits dépravés, que la pensée alimente les désirs désordonnés de la volonté; c'est Satan, enfin, qui, par la licence du regard, de la lecture, des spectacles, foment dans le pécheur la licence du rêve, de l'imagination, de la pensée. Bien plus, Satan fait le plus souvent de ses membres ses coadjuteurs et ses ministres.

Notre Saint sait tout cela, et il veut en convaincre ses disciples. Aussi leur demande-t-il de renoncer à Satan, au moins chaque matin et chaque soir, en disant: Abrenantio Satanae, Je renonce à Satan.' Aussi les exhorte-t-il à se mettre en garde contre ses embûches,

## 328 - SAINT JEAN EUDES

à lui résister énergiquement, victorieusement, au moment de l'attaque, et il a toute une section de sa Regula Domini Jesu (1) pour les revêtir, à cet effet, d'armes à la fois défensives et offensives, empruntées à saint Paul. Ils doivent d'abord se tenir fermes, et prêts à la lutte, bien instruits de la vérité sur ce qu'ils sont, sur les ennemis qu'ils ont à combattre, sur les conditions et les conséquences du combat. Puis, qu'ils revêtent la cuirasse de sa justice, c'est-à-dire qu'ils recouvrent, s'il en est besoin, et qu'ils conservent et accroissent en eux l'état de grâce; car, pour se battre, il faut être vivant, pour vaincre, il faut entretenir et développer ses forces, ce qui se fait principalement par l'usage des sacrements. Qu'ils, prennent pour chaussure le zèle« à marcher dans les voies de l'Évangile et à y faire marcher les autres: l'apostolat n'est-il pas le grand moyen de se préserver des défaites et des chutes? Qu'ils emploient, pour éteindre les traits enflammés du méchant, le bouclier de la foi, c'est-à-dire la méditation des principales vérités de la religion. Que leur tête soit protégée contre les coups mortels par le casque du salut, qui n'est autre que la confiance en notre divin Sauveur. Que leur main s'arme du glaive de la parole de Dieu, car Satan, devant elle, perd son audace et s'enfuit. Mais aussi et surtout, que, dans le combat, ils prient, ils prient sans cesse oralement, mentalement, et qu'ils veillent assidûment, afin de ne point être surpris.

Voilà comment un disciple de saint Eude triomphera du démon, se délivrera de ses assauts, et méritera la couronne promise aux vainqueurs par Jésus-Christ.

b) Le péché. -- « Le chrétien, nous dit en second lieu

(1) Regula Domini Jesu, C. ii, sect. 1.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ

329 -

saint Eudes, est tenu de renoncer aux œuvres de Satan, c'est-à-dire à toute sorte de vices et de péchés », et, ce disant, il s'appuie sur cette parole de saint Paul: « Qui autem sunt Christi, carnem suam crucifixerunt, cum vitis et concupiscentiis - Pour ceux qui appartiennent au Christ, ils ont crucifié leur chair avec ses vices et ses convoitises (1). » Et d'où dérive pour lui cette obligation? De ce que le chrétien, continuant sur la terre la vie sainte et divine de Jésus, doit par là même « revêtir les sentiments et les inclinations de Jésus, conformément à cet enseignement du même Apôtre:

« Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu: Ayez en vous les sentiments de Jésus-Christ (2). »

Or, ajoute notre Saint, « Jésus-Christ a eu en soi deux sortes, de sentiments extrêmement contraires, à savoir - un sentiment d'amour infini au regard de son Père et de nous, et un sentiment de haine extrême au regard de ce qui est contraire à la gloire de son Père et à notre salut, c'est-à-dire au regard du péché; car comme il aime son Père et nous infiniment, il hait le péché infiniment (3). »

D'où il suit que c'est pour procurer la gloire de son Père et notre salut et, conséquemment, pour anéantir en nous le péché, que Jésus-Christ s'est incarné, qu'il a enduré mille tourments, qu'il a sacrifié sa vie: donc le chrétien, qui continue les sentiments de Jésus, doit, à son tour, poursuivre la guerre qu'il a faite au péché, et, de même qu'il est « obligé d'aimer Dieu souverainement et de toutes ses forces », il est « obligé de haïr le péché infiniment et de toutes ses forces ».

Pour cela, évidemment, il ne faut pas regarder le

(1) Regula Domini Jesu, C. II, sect. II.

(2) Philip., 11, 5. -

(3) Royaume de Jésus, P. II, § VI.

330 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

péché comme les hommes le regardent, « avec des yeux charnels et aveugles », en jugeant par ses effets sensibles, par l'influence qu'il exerce sur la santé, la fortune, la sécurité, les avantages sociaux, et, si ces différents biens n'ont pas trop à en souffrir, l'excusant, ou du moins disposés à l'excuser sur la faiblesse humaine, sur la force de l'habitude, ou en raison de sa généralité. Mais il faut le regarder comme Dieu, comme Jésus-Christ le regardent, avec des yeux éclairés par les lumières de la foi. Il faut considérer les châtements terribles dont Dieu l'a puni dans l'ange, dans l'homme, dans son Fils bien-aimé, chargé des péchés du monde, Il faut considérer notre divin Sauveur, l'innocence et la sainteté même, entrant dans les sentiments de son Père à l'égard du péché, et l'expiant par les plus cruelles souffrances et par la mort la plus ignominieuse et la plus horrible, tant il le trouve exécration, abominable. Or, d'où vient cette laideur, cette malice du péché? De ce qu'il introduit un désordre essentiel dans les rapports établis par le Créateur entre l'homme et lui; de ce que volontairement, délibérément, l'homme se détourne de son souverain Seigneur et Maître, de son Rédempteur, de son Père, son Ami, sa fin dernière, pour se tourner vers la créature et se donner à elle; en sorte que le péché est la négation pratique des perfections divines, le mépris pratique des droits divins. « Il porte donc en lui, conclut notre Saint, une malice, une folie, une laideur et une horreur aussi grandes en quelque manière que Dieu est infini en bonté, en sagesse, en beauté et en sainteté (1). »

Il faut, de plus, considérer en détail les funestes conséquences, les désastreux effets du péché: c'est



un

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, S Yi.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ

3 3 1 -

homicide, puisqu'il est la seule cause de la mort du corps et de la mort surnaturelle de l'âme. C'est un dèicide, puisque le pécheur a fait mourir Jésus-Christ sur la croix, et qu'il le crucifie encore tous les jours en lui-même. C'est l'anéantissement de l'ordre de la nature, puisque le pécheur se constitue son propre Dieu; qu'il préfère sa -volonté, son intérêt, son plaisir et sa gloire, à la volonté, à l'intérêt, au bon plaisir, à la gloire de Dieu; qu'il ne veut point avoir d'autre fin que soi, d'autre règle que sa passion, d'autres lois que ses inclinations; puisque, d'autre part, il se fait comme le centre et la fin de l'être et de la vie de ses semblables et des autres créatures, se les appropriant pour ainsi dire, et exigeant qu'ils se plient à ses volontés et à ses desseins. C'est l'anéantissement de l'ordre de la grâce, puisque, se séparant de Dieu, le pécheur se sépare de la source de la vie; et que, Dieu se retirant, la grâce sanctifiante se retire, et avec elle la charité, et tout le cortège des habitudes infuses, vertus et dons, sauf la foi et l'espérance qui subsistent, mais amoindries, sans force et sans fécondité surnaturelles. C'est, par suite, l'anéantissement de l'ordre de la gloire: puisque le pécheur, mort sans repentir et sans pardon, ne verra jamais Dieu, n'aimera jamais Dieu, ne possédera jamais Dieu; mais que, livré à la haine de Dieu et à la rage qu'elle engendre, sans paix, sans joie, il sera éternellement en proie à d'inexprimables souffrances, dans un lieu de ténèbres et d'horrible confusion; en sorte qu'au lieu de chanter les miséricordes de Dieu, il maudira sa justice.

Enfin il faut voir dans le péché le mal des maux et le malheur des malheurs; car, dit notre Saint, « il est la source de tous les maux et de tous les malheurs qui remplissent la terre et qui comblent l'enfer; voire il n'y a que ce seul mal au monde qui doive être appelé

3 3 2 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

mal... il est plus effroyable que la mort, plus affreux que le diable et plus épouvantable que l'enfer, puisque tout ce qu'il y a d'horrible, d'affreux et d'effroyable dans la mort, dans le diable et dans l'enfer, procède du péché. »

Conclusion: tout chrétien animé, pénétré des sentiments de Jésus, doit, à ce spectacle, s'écrier avec notre Saint « O péché, que tu es détestable! Oh! si les hommes te connaissent! Oh! qu'il faut bien dire qu'il y a quelque chose en toi qui est infiniment plus horrible que tout ce qu'on en peut dire et penser, puisque l'âme qui est souillée de ta corruption ne peut être lavée et purifiée que dans le sang d'un Dieu, et que tu ne peux être détruit et anéanti que par la mort et l'anéantissement d'un Homme-Dieu! (1) »

Donc le disciple de saint Eudes aura le péché mortel en horreur: il le craindra plus que la peste, plus que la mort, plus que tous les maux imaginables; il conservera toujours une puissante résolution de souffrir plutôt mille morts avec toutes sortes de tourments que de se séparer de Dieu par un seul péché mortel.

Et comme le péché véniel achemine au péché mortel, en paralysant l'activité de la grâce, en détachant le cœur de Dieu pour l'attacher à la créature; comme il participe, d'ailleurs, dans une certaine mesure, aux désordres du péché mortel, puisque celui qui s'en rend coupable se recherche lui-même et non Dieu, qu'il abuse de la créature et la détourne de sa fin, qu'il s'oppose au progrès de la grâce en son âme, et que, son degré de grâce étant moindre, son degré de gloire sera moindre aussi; comme enfin, pour l'effacer, Notre-Seigneur a dû verser son sang et sacrifier sa vie; le vrai

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, S VI.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ

3 3 3 -

chrétien l'aura, lui aussi, en horreur, et il aimera mieux mourir et souffrir toutes sortes de mépris et de tourments plutôt que d'en commettre un seul, si léger soit-il. S'il ne sent pas en lui ces dispositions, il priera Jésus de les y établir, et il ne se donnera pas de repos qu'il ne l'ait obtenu. Quesi, par surprise ou par faiblesse, il lui échappe quelque faute légère, il tâchera de la réparer aussitôt par une fidélité plus généreuse, par un amour de Dieu plus pur, plus fort, voire même héroïque. Enfin si, par malheur, il tombait dans une faute grave, il se relèverait incontinent au moyen de la contrition et de la confession, et reprendrait ses premières résolutions.

c) Le monde et les choses du monde. - « Ce n'est pas assez pour un chrétien, enseigne notre Saint, d'être détaché du vice et d'avoir en horreur toute sorte de péché; il est encore nécessaire que vous travailliez soigneusement et fortement à vous établir dans un parfait dégagement du monde et des choses du monde (1). »

Renoncer au monde et aux choses du monde, se dégager du monde et des choses du monde, il n'est guère d'idées sur lesquelles notre Saint revienne plus souvent dans ses ouvrages, de dispositions qu'il réclame davantage de ceux qui se rangent sous sa conduite. Pour lui c'est une condition nécessaire de toute vie sincèrement chrétienne. Comment, en effet, être dégagé du vice, avoir en horreur tout péché, si l'on se complait, même légèrement, dans ce qui y conduit inévitablement? Aussi demande-t-il à ses disciples de travailler soigneusement, c'est-à-dire avec réflexion et discernement, en

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, § vii.

334 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

se rendant un compte exact et des choses et de leurs propres actes, fortement, c'est-à-dire de toute leur âme, sans discontinuité, à s'établir dans ce parfait dégagement.

Mais qu'entendre par le monde et les choses du monde? Il est nécessaire de le savoir, pour travailler à s'en dégager.

Le monde, saint Eudes nous le définit nettement un ensemble de vies et de mœurs, de sentiments et d'inclinations, de lois et de maximes, inspirés par un esprit radicalement opposé à celui de Jésus-Christ: vies et mœurs déréglées, puisqu'elles vont à l'encontre de la règle établie par Dieu; vies et mœurs corrompues, puisque ce dérèglement entraîne à toutes les faiblesses, à tous les abaissements, à toutes les dégradations, à tous les vices, inclinations et sentiments pervers, puisqu'ils portent et aboutissent au mal, qui est le renversement de l'ordre voulu par le Créateur; lois et maximes pernicieuses, puisqu'elles font, dans le temps et l'éternité, le malheur et la perte de ceux qui les suivent; esprit damnable enfin, car c'est l'esprit de Satan, qui travaille à damner.

Mais vies et mœurs, inclinations et sentiments, lois et maximes, esprit, ne sont pas des entités ayant une existence propre en dehors de l'humanité; elles n'existent réellement que dans les hommes soumis aux influences et à l'empire de Satan, et non de Jésus-Christ. En sorte que, en définitive, ces hommes constituent ce qu'on appelle le monde, et ils sont de trois sortes: en premier lieu, tous ceux qui, livrés à Satan, enchaînés à ses volontés, vendus à sa cause, travaillent à l'extension de son royaume et à la destruction du royaume de Jésus-Christ; en second lieu, tous ceux qui, sans être aussi pervers, vivent comme si Jésus-Christ n'existait pas,

SA SPIRITUALITÉ

335 -

comme s'il n'était pas venu les sauver, comme s'il ne s'était pas fait leur maître, leur docteur, leur guide; en troisième lieu, tous les mauvais chrétiens qui veulent allier Satan et Jésus-Christ et servir deux maîtres à la fois: esprits pleins d'ombres et de lacunes, où s'opère un triste mélange des opinions du monde et des vues de la foi; pauvres gens qui ne voudraient pas se séparer de l'Église, mais qui

ne se plient guère à ses lois. A cette catégorie peuvent se rattacher des chrétiens sincères, qui, momentanément, par inadvertance, ignorance, lâcheté, négligence, tiédeur, amour-propre, esprit propre, volonté propre, professent les maximes du monde, obéissent à ses lois, cèdent à ses sentiments, suivent ses inclinations, se plient à ses mœurs, adoptent sa vie.

Quant aux choses du monde, nous dit saint Eudes, c'est « tout ce que le monde estime, aime et recherche tant, à savoir: les honneurs et louanges des hommes, les vains plaisirs et contentements, les richesses et commodités temporelles, les amitiés et affections qui sont fondées sur la chair et le sang, sur l'amour-propre et le propre intérêt ».

Eh bien, à ce monde qui est l'ennemi de Jésus, qui lui a été et qui lui est toujours opposé, qui l'a toujours persécuté et qui le persécute encore, qui le persécutera et le crucifiera jusqu'à la consommation des siècles; à ce monde dont les sentiments et les inclinations, les lois et les maximes, la vie et l'esprit combattent sans cesse les sentiments et les inclinations, les lois et les maximes, la vie et l'esprit de Jésus; comme aux choses du monde, qui tendent à entraîner les âmes au péché et à la perdition; le vrai chrétien, le vrai disciple de saint Eudes, doit renoncer entièrement, dire un éternel adieu. Non que, pour cela, il quitte le monde et « se renferme

336 -

#### SAINT JEAN EUDES

entre quatre murailles », à Moins d'une vocation spéciale; mais il fera « une profession publique, généreuse et constante de ne point vivre de la vie du monde, de ne point se conduire par son esprit et par ses lois »; il se fera une « sainte gloire d'être chrétien, d'appartenir à Jésus-Christ, et de préférer les saintes maximes et vérités de l'Évangile aux pernicieuses et fausses maximes » du monde; il montrera « autant de courage et de fermeté pour se départir généreusement des lois, des sentiments et inclinations du monde, et pour mépriser vertueusement tous ses vains discours, toutes ses opinions trompeuses, que » le monde « fait paraître de témérité et d'impiété à mépriser méchamment les lois et les maximes chrétiennes, et à se moquer impertinemment de ceux qui les suivent ».

Il ira plus loin. Non content de se séparer du monde et des choses du monde, il les aura en horreur, comme Jésus-Christ, son divin Chef. Jésus-Christ a haï le monde, il le haïra; Jésus-Christ a condamné le monde, il le condamnera; Jésus-Christ a maudit, excommunié le monde, il le maudira, il l'excommuniera. Avec Jésus-Christ, il regardera les choses du monde, plaisirs, honneurs, richesses, amitiés et affections mondaines, comme néant et fumée, tromperie et illusion, vanité et affliction d'esprit. Et, comme il connaît sa faiblesse et la puissance de son ennemi, il demandera chaque jour à Jésus-Christ d'imprimer en tout son être la haine, l'horreur, l'abomination du monde et des choses du monde; il fuira plus que la peste les lieux, les personnes, les compagnies où l'on ne fait qu'en parler; car impossible en les fréquentant de goûter les délices de la conversation du Bien-Aimé; il n'aura d'amitié et de communication qu'avec les personnes qu'il peut aider ou qui peuvent l'aider, d'exemple ou de parole, à aimer

#### SA SPIRITUALITÉ

337 -

Jésus, à vivre dans son esprit, à détester tout ce qui lui est contraire (1).

d) Le dégagement de soi. - Tout cela ne suffit point, selon saint Eudes, appuyé sur la parole de Jésus, pour être dans un parfait dégagement - il faut encore se renoncer soi-même, c'est-à-dire « renoncer à son propre esprit, à son propre sens, à sa propre volonté, à ses désirs et inclinations, à son amour-propre, qui porte à haïr et à éviter tout ce qui peut apporter quelque mortification à l'esprit et à la chair, à aimer et à rechercher tout ce qui peut leur donner quelque plaisir (2) ».

Et cela pour deux raisons: sans doute parce que la nature humaine est dépravée, mais surtout parce

que Jésus-Christ, chef et exemplaire du chrétien, « a vécu dans un tel dégagement de soi, dans un tel anéantissement de son esprit humain, de sa propre volonté et de l'amour de soi-même, qu'il n'a jamais rien fait par son propre sens et esprit humain, mais par la conduite de son Père; qu'il n'a jamais suivi sa propre volonté, mais celle de son Père »;... qu'il s'est privé en ce monde d'une gloire infinie et de tous les plaisirs et contentements humains », et qu'il a « recherché et embrassé tout ce qui pouvait le faire souffrir en son corps et en son âme ».

Donc le disciple de saint Eudes, qui, en tant que membre du Christ, doit entrer dans les sentiments et les dispositions de son chef, prendra « une puissante résolution » de vivre dans une entière séparation de lui-même, bien plus, dans l'oubli et la haine de lui-même. Il adorera Jésus dans son parfait dégagement de soi; et

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, § viii.

(2) Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, § ix.

338

#### SAINT JEAN EUDES

il le suppliera de lui accorder cette même grâce, et, dans une intime et parfaite union, de « le régir en toutes choses selon son esprit, sa volonté, son pur amour », qu'il s'agisse de contestations, de désirs, d'affections sensibles, de louanges, de sujets de mortification ou de consolation.

Saint Eudes exige plus encore pour la perfection de l'abnégation chrétienne. Il veut qu'on se détache en quelque façon de Dieu même, ou, pour parler plus exactement, « des douceurs et consolations qui accompagnent, d'ordinaire la grâce et l'amour de Dieu; des pieux desseins que l'on forme pour la gloire de Dieu; des désirs d'une plus grande perfection, d'un plus grand amour de Dieu; et même de celui d'être délivré de la prison du corps pour voir Dieu, lui être uni parfaitement, l'aimer purement et continuellement ». En tout cela, ce que nous devons rechercher uniquement, c'est la seule volonté, le seul contentement de Dieu, dans lesquels se trouvent la paix et le repos de notre esprit.

On voit combien le cardinal Pitra avait raison de dire, parlant des Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, qu'il ne connaissait pas de règle qui poussât à une plus grande abnégation, et, partant, à une plus éminente sainteté. L'âme, ainsi dégagée de tout et d'elle-même, est, en effet, toute préparée à recevoir les impulsions du Saint-Esprit, à coopérer docilement à son action, à réaliser cet idéal de vie spirituelle esquissé plus haut.

Saint Eudes le reconnaît et l'affirme: « Ah! mon Sauveur, écrit-il, quelle gloire vous avez, quelles délices vous prenez, et que de grandes choses vous opérez dans une âme qui marche courageusement dans ces voies, abandonnant ainsi tout et se détachant de tout, voire de vous-même en une certaine manière, pour se donner

SA SPIRITUALITÉ

339 -

toute à vous plus parfaitement! Comme vous l'unissez fortement à vous! Comme vous vous l'appropriez saintement! Comme vous la plongez divinement dans l'abîme de votre saint amour! Comme vous la transformez admirablement en vous-même, la revêtant de vos qualités, de votre esprit et de votre amour Ah! quels contentements, quelles suavités a une âme qui peut dire avec vérité: Mon Dieu, me voilà! libre et détaché de tout! Qui pourra m'empêcher maintenant de vous aimer parfaitement? (1) »

Si cet absolu et saint dégagement est la condition nécessaire de la vie de grâce idéale que nous avons exposée, il ne l'est pas moins de l'oblation, de la donation totale à Jésus qui la réalise et dont nous avons maintenant à préciser les éléments.

B) Oblation, Donation à Jésus

On. s'offre, on se donne à Jésus, d'après saint Eudes: a) pour s'associer à sa vie et la reproduire: ViVERE cum CHRISTO; b) pour tout faire pour sa gloire et pour son amour: VIVERE CHRISTO; c) pour agir en tout dans ses intentions et dans ses dispositions: VIVERE IN CHRISTO - d) Et cette offrande, cette donation se scelle et se consomme par la manducation de son corps sacré, pain d'union en même temps que pain de vie: VIVERE DE CHRISTO.

Développons ces pensées.

a) Vivere cum Christo. Vivre avec le Christ, c'est tout d'abord penser et vouloir comme le Christ; c'est entrer dans ses pensées et dans ses affections. Dans ses peu

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. 11, § x.

340 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

sées, on entre par la Foi. Aussi notre Saint, comme tous les saints et les docteurs de l'Église, fait-il de la Foi le premier fondement de la vie chrétienne poussée à sa perfection; mais, plus que d'autres peut-être, il insiste sur cette obligation pour le chrétien de ne penser et de ne se conduire que par la Foi, qui est une communication et comme une extension de la lumière et de la science divine, infuse dans l'âme sainte de Jésus, au moment de son Incarnation, en sorte que son acquiescement aux vérités enseignées par Jésus est « une continuation et un accomplissement de la soumission, amoureuse et très parfaite que l'esprit humain de Jésus a eue aux vérités que son Père éternel lui a annoncées (1). »

Donc, « au commencement de ses actions, spécialement des plus importantes », afin d'agir et de marcher uniquement à cette divine clarté, le disciple de saint Eudes adorera Jésus « comme l'auteur et le consommateur de la foi, et la vraie lumière qui illumine tout homme venant en ce monde »; il renoncera « à la prudence de la chair et à la sagesse mondaine »; il priera Jésus « de les détruire en lui », et de « l'éclairer de sa céleste lumière », de le « conduire par sa divine sagesse », pour qu'il ne fasse que son bon plaisir, enfin de lui « donner grâce et force », pour qu'en tout il « préfère courageusement les vérités et les maximes de la foi... aux discours des hommes qui se conduisent selon les maximes du monde ».

Pour cela, il lira tous les jours à genoux un chapitre du Nouveau Testament qui contient la vie et les enseignements de Jésus.

Entrer dans les sentiments de Jésus, c'est entrer dans

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. II, 5 vii.

SA SPIRITUALITÉ 341 -

cette haine du péché et du monde dont nous avons amplement parlé; c'est surtout, car cette haine en découle, entrer dans l'amour immense dont Jésus brûle pour son Père et pour les âmes. Le vrai chrétien, tel que le veut saint Eudes, se propose en tout la glorification de Dieu, il a pour programme de vie les trois premières demandes du Pater: la sanctification du nom de Dieu, l'établissement du règne de Dieu, le parfait accomplissement en toutes choses de la sainte volonté de Dieu, qui, au fond, ne sont qu'une seule et même chose. Et comme cela ne peut se faire sans s'occuper des âmes, sans se dévouer aux âmes dont Dieu veut le salut et dont il tire sa gloire, il devient nécessairement un apôtre zélé, préparé à toutes sortes de bonnes œuvres.

Vivre avec Jésus, c'est, avec ces dispositions fondamentales, se revêtir des vertus de Jésus, dont les vertus chrétiennes ne sont que la continuation et l'extension en chaque chrétien. Le disciple de saint Eudes ne les considère pas en elles-mêmes, dans leur excellence intrinsèque, mais en Jésus, qui en est le principe et le modèle achevé; c'est en Jésus qu'il les étudie, c'est pour être semblable à Jésus, et pour glorifier le divin Père de Jésus comme lui-même l'a glorifié par elles, qu'il s'exerce à les pratiquer.

Vivre avec Jésus, c'est encore et surtout participer aux divers états et mystères de sa vie. Conformément à la doctrine que nous avons exposée dans la première partie de cet article: « Le Fils de Dieu, dit notre Saint, a dessein de consommer et accomplir en nous tous ses états et ses mystères (1). »

Et, donnant des exemples, il ajoute « Il a dessein  
(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. 111, § Iv.

#### 3 4 2 - SAINT JEAN EUDES

de consommer en nous le mystère de son Incarnation, de sa naissance, de sa vie cachée en se formant et comme s'incarnant dedans nous et en prenant naissance dans nos âmes, par les saints sacrements du Baptême et de la divine Eucharistie, et en nous faisant vivre d'une vie spirituelle et intérieure, qui soit cachée avec lui en Dieu.

« Il a dessein de perfectionner en nous le mystère de sa Passion, de sa mort et de sa résurrection, en nous faisant souffrir, mourir et ressusciter avec lui et en lui, etc. »

D'après lui, « la vie que nous avons sur la terre ne nous est donnée que pour l'employer à l'accomplissement de ces grands desseins que Jésus a sur nous ». Si donc nous ne sommes en cette vie que pour connaître, aimer et honorer les états et mystères de Jésus, à tel point que ceux qui ne l'auront pas fait ici-bas par amour et volontairement, devront le faire en enfer par, contrainte et par les effets de la justice de Dieu sur eux, le disciple de saint Eudes emploiera tout son temps, toute sa vie à coopérer avec Jésus en ce divin ouvrage de la consommation de ses mystères en nous ». Il y coopérera par ses actions vertueuses et par ses prières, surtout par une application fréquente de son esprit et de son cœur à les contempler, adorer, honorer, se donnant à Jésus pour qu'il opère en lui, par ces mêmes mystères, tout ce qu'il désire. Et notre Saint indique en détail et l'ordre dans lequel il faut les honorer dans le cours de l'année, et les choses qu'il y faut contempler et honorer, et les manières dont on peut le faire.

Or, parmi ces mystères, il en est trois pour lesquels saint Eudes avait une affection particulière et qu'il recommandait instamment à la dévotion de ses enfants: le mystère de la sainte Enfance de Jésus, le mystère de,

#### SA SPIRITUALITÉ 3 4 3 -

sa Passion et le mystère de l'Eucharistie, objet de sa prédilection. Tels seront aussi les mystères qu'honoreront avec plus d'affection ceux qui marcheront à sa suite.

D'autre part, Dieu se plaît à faire passer les âmes par des états intérieurs et extérieurs qui sont une participation aux mystères de Jésus. Telles, la faiblesse et l'impuissance où plonge la maladie, la pauvreté, volontaire ou forcée, les sécheresses et les aridités, les croix de toute sorte dont la vie est semée, qui nous associent à la faiblesse et impuissance de Jésus enfant, à son dénuement, aux angoisses de son agonie, aux douleurs de sa Passion. Ces états ont pour but de perfectionner en nous l'image de Jésus, et notre devoir est de nous soumettre amoureusement aux desseins de la Providence et d'entrer dans les sentiments de notre divin modèle.

Enfin vivre avec Jésus, c'est adhérer à tout ce que Jésus a fait en notre nom. En effet, dans chacun de ses états et mystères, étant notre chef, il a rendu à son Dieu tous les devoirs que nous, ses membres, nous devrions lui rendre; il y a pratiqué les actes et les exercices que nous y devrions pratiquer. Nous pouvons donc, en toute occasion, réparer nos défaillances et suppléer à la pauvreté de nos hommages, en offrant à Dieu et les œuvres extérieures et les exercices intérieurs de son Fils. C'est ainsi qu'en toutes circonstances Jésus deviendra notre divin supplément.

Et comme le chef ne se sépare point de ses membres, la vie des membres nous appartient aussi bien que celle du chef; nous pouvons donc employer, dans le même but desuppléer à notre misère, le coeur, l'âme et toutes les puissances des saints du ciel et de la terre, afin qu'ils réparent nos fautes et glorifient Dieu en notre nom. '

3 4 4 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

Voilà ce que c'est que vivre avec Jésus. Quel puissant moyen de sanctification! Quelle source d'intime union avec Jésus, et, conséquemment, avec Dieu!

b) Vivere Christo. Vivre pour le Christ, c'est, d'après saint Eudes, n'avoir que lui en vue dans tout ce que nous proposons, dans tout ce que nous faisons: c'est mettre en lui « toutes nos complaisances », en faire « l'objet unique de nos pensées et de nos affections, la fin de toutes nos actions, notre centre, notre paradis, notre tout »; c'est ne penser qu'à Jésus, ne parler que de Jésus, n'aimer et ne glorifier que Jésus, ne tendre qu'à l'établir dans les âmes. Non que ce culte porte préjudice à celui que nous devons au Père et au Saint-Esprit, car Jésus ne peut être séparé ni du Père dont il procède, ni du Saint-Esprit, qui procède de lui; il n'est avec l'un et l'autre qu'un seul et même Dieu.

Vivant pour Jésus, le disciple de notre Saint ne sera, dans tout son être, que louange et amour pour Jésus, comme Jésus est lui-même tout amour pour lui; ou, du moins, il s'efforcera d'atteindre cet idéal, et, pour s'y exciter, il contempera souvent comment Jésus nous a aimés de toute éternité, comment il nous a comblés de bienfaits de toute sorte, comment il s'est donné lui-même à nous sans réserve, et comment il continue à le faire chaque jour dans l'Eucharistie. È levant souvent son coeur vers Jésus, A lui en consacrera toutes les affections, tous les battements, tâchant de ne pas laisser passer une heure sans lui payer ce tribut d'amour. Il arrivera même, par l'habitude, à multiplier sans fatigue les actes d'amour, tout en vaquant à ses occupations ordinaires, et ainsi il marchera dans la dilection, comme le veut saint Paul. Il trouvera d'ailleurs

SA SPIRITUALITÉ

3 4 5 -

en tout le motif de glorifier et d'aimer Jésus: dans ses perfections infinies; dans les louanges qu'il reçoit des anges et des saints, des âmes justes, et, en un certain sens, des créatures sans raison; dans le triomphe de sa justice sur les damnés; dans les bienfaits et les grâces dont il nous a comblé; mais, par-dessus tout, dans la gloire et l'amour qu'il se donne lui-même et que lui donnent constamment son Père et son Saint-Esprit. Les épreuves de la vie spirituelle lui seront même un nouveau motif d'amour. Au lieu de se laisser emporter à la tristesse et au découragement, il se réjouira de ce que Jésus est toujours Jésus, c'est-à-dire toujours Dieu, toujours grand et admirable, toujours dans le même état de gloire, de jouissance et de contentement, sans que rien soit capable de diminuer sa félicité; il se réjouira aussi de ce qu'il lui est alors donné d'aimer plus purement Jésus, de l'aimer pour lui-même et non pour les consolations qu'il lui accordait auparavant.

Vivant pour Jésus, il ne s'en tiendra pas à ces affections, il traduira son amour par des actes: il se fera le fidèle observateur des préceptes et des conseils évangéliques ainsi que de ses devoirs d'état; il obéira à ceux qui ont charge de le conduire; il se soumettra entièrement aux dispositions de la divine Providence, manifestées par les événements de chaque jour; il mettra sa personne au service de son bon Maître, et se dépensera, corps et âme, dans l'intérêt de sa gloire et des âmes de ses frères, puisqu'au baptême « nous faisons, d'après saint Eudes, profession de serviteur au regard de Jésus-Christ et de tous ses membres ». Surtout, il s'efforcera de ne rien faire qu'en vue de plaire à Jésus, par pur amour pour lui, sans aucun motif d'intérêt personnel. Certes, il désirera le ciel avec ardeur, mais il l'at

3 4 6 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

tendra de la bonté de Jésus, avec une inébranlable confiance, et quand Jésus voudra l'y appeler. Ce n'est pas même pour cette ineffable récompense qu'il servira son Jésus, mais seulement « pour son seul contentement, pour sa seule gloire et pour son très pur amour ». Enfin, il sera disposé à tout souffrir, et même à mourir pour Jésus-Christ, ce qui est un suprême témoignage d'amour: car, au baptême, dit saint Eudes, nous avons fait profession d'être avec Jésus-Christ des hosties et des victimes sacrifiées à la gloire de Dieu. D'autre part, puisque Jésus-Christ a bien voulu mourir pour nous de la mort la plus cruelle et la plus ignominieuse, et que, tous les jours, il renouvelle pour nous son sacrifice sur l'autel, il faudrait être bien ingrat pour ne pas être prêt à verser son sang pour un Dieu qui nous a aimés jusqu'à donner pour nous la dernière goutte du sien.

Vivant pour Jésus seul et pour son unique amour, c'est Jésus seul que le disciple de saint Eudes aimera dans tous les êtres, comme dans tous les événements. C'est moins en eux-mêmes que dans leurs rapports, avec Jésus, qu'il contempera et aimera le Père et le Saint-Esprit. C'est pour Jésus qu'il aimera Marie, c'est Jésus qu'il aimera en Marie, qu'il regardera et adorera en Marie, soit dans ce qu'il y opère de grâce et de gloire, soit dans les louanges et dans l'amour qu'il en reçoit incessamment. Et de même pour les anges et pour les saints. De même aussi pour le prochain, qu'il aimera non en lui-même et pour lui-même, mais pour l'amour de Jésus, pour obéir à la recommandation suprême de Jésus, pour le porter, l'unir à Jésus. De même enfin pour les créatures privées de raison, dont il se servira en action de grâces, pour la plus grande gloire de Celui qui les a mises à sa disposition.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ

347 -

Ainsi Jésus sera véritablement son « unique objet », puisqu'il ne verra que lui dans les personnes et dans les choses: *Omnia in omnibus Christus* ».

c) Vivere in Christo. - Vivre dans le Christ, c'est, selon saint Eudes, et conformément à la doctrine du

P. de Condren, se retirer en Jésus avant d'agir, pour l'adorer, s'humilier, s'anéantir, se donner à lui, afin qu'il détruise en nous tout ce qui lui déplaît, tout ce qui peut contrarier son action, pour le prier de nous conduire et aider de sa grâce et de sa force dans l'acte que nous allons accomplir, lui protestant que nous ne voulons rien faire que pour sa gloire et son amour. C'est, durant l'action, répéter de temps en temps les mêmes protestations, les mêmes prières. C'est, l'action achevée, remercier Jésus du concours qu'il nous y a prêté, s'humilier des fautes qu'on y a pu commettre, et le prier de suppléer aux imperfections qui en sont la conséquence et peuvent nuire à sa gloire et au bien des âmes.

Vivre en Jésus, c'est, dans cette sorte de retraite, entrer dans les intentions de Jésus, précédemment énoncées, et nous les proposer comme unique but de notre activité.

Vivre en Jésus, c'est enfin entrer dans les dispositions de Jésus, c'est-à-dire dans des sentiments d'humilité et de défiance de soi, de confiance en Dieu et de total abandon à sa Providence toujours si sage et si bonne, d'entière et pleine soumission à sa volonté sainte, de mortification intérieure et extérieure et de renoncement absolu, de patience, de douceur et de mansuétude, et, par-dessus tout, d'ardente charité: sentiments qui, d'après saint Eudes, doivent animer toutes nos actions, même les plus communes.

Vivre ainsi, c'est évidemment vivre dans le Christ, et

348 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

le Christ en nous: c'est réaliser le désir de Jésus, disant à ses disciples: « *Vos aulem videtis quia ego vivo et vos vivetis. In illo die vos cognoscetis quia ego sum in Patre, et vos in me, et ego in vobis: Vous voyez que je vis et -que vous vivrez. En ce jour, vous connaîtrez que je suis dans mon Père, et que vous êtes en moi, et que je suis en vous.* » C'est la consommation de la vie d'union avec Jésus.



d) Vivere de Christo. -Vivre du Christ, c'est se nourrir de sa chair sacrée, viande divine qui a pour effet de réparer, sustenter et développer la vie chrétienne, et de lui donner cette splendeur que nous venons de décrire.

« La nouvelle vie dans laquelle vous êtes entré par la nouvelle naissance de votre baptême, dit notre saint, et que vous avez reçue de ce divin Chef, auquel vous avez été incorporé comme l'un de ses membres, cette vie, dis-je, étant toute céleste et divine, il faut qu'elle soit alimentée et soutenue par un pain tout céleste et une viande toute divine, selon ces belles paroles du grand saint Denis l'Aréopagite: « Ex Deo nati de Deo vivere debent: Ceux qui sont nés de Dieu doivent vivre de Dieu. » De là vient que Notre-Seigneur nous déclare qu'il est le pain de vie; que le pain qu'il donnera, c'est sa chair pour la vie du monde; que quiconque ne mangera pas sa chair et ne boira pas son sang, n'aura point de vie; que sa chair est vraiment une nourriture et que son sang est vraiment un breuvage, que celui qui mange sa chair et qui boit son sang, demeure en lui et le possède en soi-même; et que, comme il a employé toute sa vie pour son Père, ainsi celui qui mange ce pain divin, ne doit vivre que pour lui: c'est-à-dire que sa vie doit être si sainte qu'elle soit un vif portrait et une image parfaite de la sienne. De là vient aussi qu'en la primi

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ

349 -

tive Église on donnait le Saint-Sacrement à ceux que l'on baptisait, immédiatement après le baptême (1). »

Aussi saint Eudes pousse-t-il les âmes saintes, avides de perfection, à communier chaque jour, puisqu'elles sont revêtues de la grâce. C'est la conseil qu'il donnait, nous le savons, à Mme d6 Camilly:

« Toutes ces grandes choses (c'est-à-dire n'avoir qu'un esprit, une âme, une vie, une volonté, un coeur, etc., avec Jésus), dit-il 1, se commencent par le saint Baptême, et elles s'accroissent et se fortifient par le sacrement de la confirmation et par le bon usage que (l'on fait) des autres grâces que Dieu communique. Mais elles recevraient leur souveraine perfection par la très sainte Eucharistie, si nous apportions les saintes dispositions qui doivent précéder; accompagner et suivre la réception d'un si grand sacrement (2). »

La sainte Eucharistie développe, en effet, en notre âme la vie de la grâce dans toute son extension, dans tout son ensemble d'opérations multiples, telle que le Baptême l'y a mise en nous, et non pas seulement dans une direction déterminée, comme les autres sacrements; elle donne à la vie chrétienne et à tout son cortège de vertus et de dons leur plus magnifique épanouissement, en accroissant surtout et en excitant la ferveur de la charité qui répare les défaillances et imprime à l'activité surnaturelle une énergique impulsion. D'où l'admirable surabondance de vie de nous en Jésus et de Jésus en nous, qui nous transforme progressivement en son image et ressemblance, réalisant de plus en plus la parole de l'Apôtre que nous citons en commençant

(1) Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le saint Baptême, ch. iii.

(2) Coeur admirable, L. I, ch. v.

350 -

## SAINT JEAN EUDES

« Je vis; non, ce n'est plus moi qui vis, c'est Jésus-Christ qui vit en moi. »

A remarquer, en passant, cette recommandation adressée par notre Saint aux âmes « plus spirituelles et élevées », de recevoir Notre-Seigneur, non en elles-mêmes, comme étant trop indignes, mais en lui-même, avec l'amour qu'il se porte, et de s'anéantir à ses pieds pour qu'il s'établisse en elles et y établisse le règne de son divin amour. « C'est, nous dit-il, la vraie disposition... la préparation des

préparations (1). »

Vivre avec Jésus, vivre pour Jésus, vivre en Jésus, vivre de Jésus, ou mieux, pour parler avec saint Eudes, apôtre des Sacrés-Cœurs, vivre avec le Cœur de Jésus, dans ses états et mystères; vivre pour le Cœur de Jésus, pour sa seule gloire et son seul amour, vivre dans le Cœur de Jésus, en entrant dans ses intentions et ses dispositions; vivre du Cœur de Jésus en le recevant avec la chair sacrée du Sauveur, comme le principe de la vie d'union, voilà, en quelques mots, l'idéal auquel notre saint convie ses disciples...

Vie de splendeur, vie de vertu héroïque, au souffle de l'Esprit de Vérité et d'amour; où l'âme fuit le péché comme le serpent, d'un mouvement instinctif; où elle aime Dieu comme un bon père avec une respectueuse confiance et un filial abandon; où elle conçoit de hauts desseins pour sa gloire et les accomplit avec une patience et un courage invincibles; où elle est si vigilante et sait si bien ordonner ses actions qu'elle évite tous les pièges et triomphe de tous les efforts de ses

(1) Royaume de Jésus, P. 1, § xviii.

## SA SPIRITUALITÉ

351 -

ennemis; où, devant la grandeur de Dieu mieux connue, elle comprend sa misère et le néant des créatures, se référant et les référant toutes à lui comme à leur origine et leur fin; où, pénétrant toujours plus avant dans les choses divines et dans les mystères de la foi, elle en découvre l'admirable beauté, la parfaite harmonie; où enfin, dans une paix profonde, elle goûte, elle savoure les choses de Dieu, les vérités, les dons célestes, et, par ce goût expérimental du vrai, du bien, du beau, elle arrive à les mieux comprendre.

Vie de sérénité radieuse et continue, de joie très douce, intime, profonde, où l'âme amoureusement et entièrement soumise à Dieu, purifiée, éclairée, transfigurée par la croix acceptée, embrassée généreusement et de grand cœur, reçoit comme les prémices des lumières béatifiantes du ciel, un avant-goût du bonheur de la patrie.

Vie d'union parfaite en toutes choses aux Cœurs sacrés de Jésus et de Marie, tous les deux inséparablement honorés, aimés et servis - car du Fils notre saint ne veut pas qu'on sépare la Mère - et, dans ces deux fournaies d'amour, vie d'ardent amour, purifiant, illuminant, sanctifiant, transformant, déifiant, qui est comme l'aurore toujours croissante du grand jour de l'éternité.

Voilà l'admirable vie dont saint Jean Eudes a donné l'exemple au monde et que, du haut de la gloire, il conseille plus que jamais à ses enfants et à ses disciples.

D. BOULAY

La bibliographie de saint Jean Eudes est relativement abondante. Nous ne mentionnerons dans ces pages que les ouvrages les plus marquants et les plus propres à mettre en lumière sa personne et ses oeuvres. Nous les diviserons en trois catégories - les oeuvres du Saint, les biographies, et les divers écrits qui le concernent.

### 1. - OEUVRES DE SAINT JEAN EUDES

Un nombre trop considérable d'ouvrages de saint Eudes restés manuscrits ont été détruits ou perdus à la Révolution, notamment; un **Recueil de méditations**, trois volumes de **Sermons**, un traité de l'**Office divin**, un autre intitulé **Le Sacrifice admirable de la Sainte Messe**, et dont seul un chapitre a survécu, **La manière de bien servir à la Sainte Messe**, **La divine Enfance de Jésus**, **La vie admirable de Marie des Vallées**, en trois tomes, etc. Malgré ces pertes regrettables, ce qui reste, douze volumes in-8 écu, constitue un dépôt précieux où les enfants du Saint et toutes les âmes pieuses, religieuses et sacerdotales, peuvent trouver un aliment solide à leur vie intérieure, puisqu'au témoignage de S. S. Pie X, ses écrits « exhalent le parfum de la piété: insignem redolentia pietatem » (Bref de Béatification). Nous allons insister sur chacun d'eux, en les groupant par catégories.

#### A. - OUVRAGES POUR LES FIDELES.

Le premier ouvrage publié par saint Jean Eudes fut un **Exercice de piété**, contenant en abrégé les choses principales qui sont nécessaires pour vivre chrétiennement, petit in-32, Caen, 1636.

Remanié et développé, cet Exercice devenait un an plus tard **La Vie et le Royaume de Jésus dans les âmes chrétiennes**, in-12 de plus de 800 pages. De cet ouvrage, du vivant même de l'auteur, parurent au moins quinze éditions connues; après sa mort, et pendant tout le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, il resta un livre de piété très goûté et recommandé. On fait pendant le dernier siècle plusieurs éditions, la dernière date de 1924; et, presque simultanément, une traduction italienne a été éditée à Rome. Des extraits en ont été publiés par le P. BOULAY, C. J. M., SOUS les titres de **La Vie chrétienne** et **La Journée chrétienne**, in-12 écu. - Toutes ces multiples éditions s'expliquent par la valeur même de l'ouvrage. On a dit qu'il était « un écoulement du ciel » (P. Hérabourg). Il est du moins bien certain qu'il a été vécu avant d'être écrit, et qu'il est comme le miroir de la vie intérieure de celui qui l'a composé. Du premier coup il y a « condensé ses idées essentielles sur la vie chrétienne, sa nature, ses fondements et son plein épanouissement dans la pratique des vertus ». Véritable « code de perfection », il a formé des générations d'âmes à la vie intérieure. Récemment encore, en 1907, il était indiqué par l'Alliance des séminaires de France comme livre de piété pour les séminaristes (Compte-rendu de l'Alliance).

Si Jean Eudes n'a jamais rien changé ni corrigé au **Royaume de Jésus**, dénomination courante de son livre, il y a fait cependant plusieurs additions. En 1648, il y inséra avant l'Exercice pour la Messe ce qu'on a appelé depuis **Traité de l'honneur dû aux lieux saints**; en 1662, il ajouta une huitième partie comprenant des **Méditations sur l'humilité**, et les **Entretiens intérieurs de l'âme chrétienne avec son Dieu**. Ces additions étaient en dehors de l'idée mère de l'ouvrage, aussi ont-elles été rééditées, à plusieurs reprises, séparément, les Méditations surtout. Sous le titre de **Misère et Grandeur du chrétien**, Méditations et Entretiens ont été réunis en un volume in-32 à l'occasion de la canonisation.

En 1642, saint Jean Eudes publia **La Vie du Chrétien ou le Catéchisme de la mission**, in-12, Caen, un des premiers ouvrages d'enseignement religieux, rédigé sous forme de demandes et de réponses. Il devint vite populaire, et de

nombreuses éditions en parurent de divers côtés, souvent à l'insu de l'auteur. Toujours d'actualité, car on n'a guère mieux fait depuis, il a été publié en 1912 dans la Revue des Catéchismes.

Un dernier ouvrage pour les fidèles est le **Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le Saint Baptême**, in-32, Caen, 1654. Il valut au Saint une lettre très élogieuse du Père Ignace de Jésus-Maria, Carme déchaussé, où celui-ci lui déclarait que c'était « le livre le plus rempli de l'onction du Saint-Esprit qu'aucun de notre siècle ». Il s'en est fait de très nombreuses éditions, voire traductions; il en existe présentement une édition illustrée, petit in-12.

### **B. - OUVRAGES POUR LES PRETRES.**

Les ouvrages du Saint à l'usage des prêtres sont de deux sortes: les uns destinés à leur sanctification personnelle, les autres à leur instruction pastorale.

De ceux-ci le premier en date est **l'Avertissement aux confesseurs**, in-32, 320 pages, Caen, 1644. Réédité à plusieurs reprises, puis considérablement augmenté, il devint en 1666 **Le Bon Confesseur**, in-12, Caen. Les éditions se succédèrent, plus de vingt, à notre connaissance, en vingt-cinq ans. Pendant tout le XVIIIe siècle, tenu à jour des décisions nouvelles, spécialement par le Père Cousin, un des successeurs du Saint, Le Bon Confesseur resta très en faveur dans le clergé. Traduit en plusieurs langues, il était encore en usage dans des séminaires d'Allemagne au cours du XIXe siècle.

Cinq ans après la mort de saint Jean Eudes, par les soins de son successeur, le Père Blouet de Camilly, parut **Le Prédicateur apostolique**, in-12, Véritable traité de prédication, et traité toujours d'actualité sur bien des points, malheureusement trop peu lu, étudié et suivi.

Pour la sanctification du clergé, le Saint a composé un vrai code de perfection sacerdotale, publié seulement un an après sa mort, et intitulé **Le Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique**, in-12.

Sous le titre de **Prêtre et Pasteur**, la substance de ces divers ouvrages a été réunie en un volume in-12 de 550 pages par les soins du P. BOULAY, C. J. et M., et imprimée en 1912. L'Ami du Clergé a dit de ce travail qu'il était « un traité complet du Sacerdoce et de ses devoirs » (Ami, 1912).

### **BIBLIOGRAPHIE 355 -**

### **C.- OUVRAGES DE DISCIPLINE RELIGIEUSE.**

Sous ce titre sont groupés les ouvrages que saint Jean Eudes a composés pour ses familles religieuses.

Ce sont, pour la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie: d'abord les **Regulae Congregationis Jesu et Marias**, in-32, magnifique synthèse de vie chrétienne et sacerdotale, au moyen de textes scripturaires habilement enchaînés; puis les **Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie**, un des meilleurs ouvrages du Saint et dont le cardinal Pitra disait: « Je ne connais pas de règle qui pousse à une plus grande abnégation et à une vie plus sacerdotale »; enfin un **Manuel pour l'usage d'une communauté religieuse**, in-32, Caen, 1668. Ce Manuel pourrait être utile à toute âme désireuse d'union toujours plus parfaite avec Notre-Seigneur. D'autre part, certains aperçus et pratiques de la spiritualité du Saint ne se trouvent que là.

Pour son Institut de religieuses, saint Eudes a rédigé les **Règles et Constitutions de N.-D. de Charité**. Quoique empruntées, pour une grande part aux Constitutions de la Visitation, elles n'en constituent pas moins un ouvrage original, dont on a dit que c'est « un véritable chef-d'œuvre » (Vie de

la Mère Pelletier par le chanoine Portais).

#### **D. - OUVRAGES DE MARIOLOGIE.**

En 1676, saint Eudes publia **L'Enfance admirable de la Très Sainte Mère de Dieu**, in-12 de 684 pages. Ouvrage peu connu, rempli de doctrine, ouvrage auquel, dit-il lui-même, il a « travaillé plus du coeur que de la main », et qui fait bien connaître « les épanchements d'un coeur tout dévoué à Marie et consumé du désir de la faire aimer » (W Le Goulx, dans son approbation).

Moins d'un mois avant sa mort, il mit la dernière main à son grand ouvrage sur la sainte Vierge, **Le Coeur Admirable de la Très Sacrée Mère de Dieu**, qui fut édité l'année suivante par son successeur le P. Blouet de Camilly en un bel in-4 de près de 800 pages. Trop ignoré, car il n'a eu que trois éditions, cet ouvrage est le premier qui ait été écrit sur les Sacrés-Coeurs de Jésus et de Marie, et cela avec une

356- SAINT JEAN EUDES

sûreté de doctrine, une précision telle que les théologiens n'y trouvent rien à reprendre ni à ajouter. On pourrait en extraire deux traités complets, et de quelle beauté: l'un sur le Coeur de Marie, et l'autre sur le Coeur de Jésus. Plein de piété et de science, il provoque, en dépit de quelques longueurs, l'admiration du lecteur qui ne peut que souscrire au jugement de M. H. joly . « Le Père Eudes a élevé au Coeur de la Vierge un monument portant sa marque et digne à lui seul de perpétuer son souvenir » (Vie du P. Eudes).

Ce grand ouvrage n'est que le développement d'un autre plus court, intitulé: **La dévotion au Très Sainte Coeur et au Très Sacré Nom de Marie**, où notre Saint se proposait d'exposer et répandre le culte public du Coeur de Marie qu'il avait inauguré Autun en 1648. Il s'en fit de son vivant, plusieurs éditions tant à Caen qu'à Paris.

#### **B. - OUVRAGES DE LITURGIE.**

Sous ce titre sont compris les divers Offices et Messes composés par saint Eudes pour le **Propre** de sa Congrégation, et spécialement les **offices et Messes de la fête du Coeur de Marie**, le 8 février, de la fête **du Divin Coeur de Jésus**, le 20 octobre (offices et messes approuvés en 1860 par usage dans la Sacrée Congrégation des Rites et toujours en Instituts eudistes), et de la fête **du Divin Sacerdoce**. Ceux qui les ont lus et étudiés en ont toujours fait le plus bel éloge, tant au point de vue de la piété et de la doctrine qu'au point de vue de la composition. « il est bien difficile de le lire sans se sentir le coeur saintement attendri », disait M. Boudon de l'office du Coeur de Marie. Et il y a quelques années, M. A. Gastoué écrivait, dans l'*Eucharistie* (juin 1912), de l'Office du Coeur de Jésus: « Le B. Eudes, réunissant la moelle la plus suave de tout ce qu'on avait écrit sur ce sujet, arrive à une élévation de pensée et de force rarement atteinte. »

#### **F. - CORRESPONDANCE.**

Il ne subsiste plus de la volumineuse correspondance du Saint que 241 lettres ou fragments. Ce modeste reliquat permet cependant de pénétrer à fond dans son âme pour y découvrir

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHIE**

357

les qualités naturelles et morales de l'homme, l'esprit surnaturel du saint, la sagesse du supérieur, la prudence du directeur.

#### **G. - Divers.**

Sous cette appellation, peuvent se ranger son **Memoriale Beneficiorum Dei**, son **Testament**, son **Vœu du martyre**, son **Contrat d'alliance avec la Sainte Vierge**, une **Lettre à la Sainte Vierge**, une **Protestation de haine contre le péché**, divers autres pièces et

documents précieux soit par les renseignements historiques qu'ils contiennent, soit par la haute idée qu'ils donnent de la sainteté du P. Eudes.

Enfin à tous ces ouvrages et divers, il faut ajouter **La Vie admirable de Marie des Vallées et des choses prodigieuses qui se sont passées en elle**, manuscrit in-4 qui n'a jamais été imprimé et dont on ne sait s'il est un abrégé ou le texte même de l'original qui est perdu. Le Saint y fait preuve d'une science consommée de la mystique la plus élevée, et d'une rare prudence, en même temps qu'il fait entrer dans l'intime d'une âme d'élite, émule de sainte Catherine de Gènes et de plusieurs autres, et appelée communément « la Sainte de Coutances ». (Ms de Québec) (JRC)

## **II. - BIOGRAPHIE DE SAINT JEAN EUDES.**

Aucune vie du Saint ne fut imprimée au cours des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles; seuls quelques articles de dictionnaires le firent connaître du public, et pas toujours avec impartialité. Aussi sa figure allait-elle s'estompant de plus en plus dans les ombres de l'oubli. Les Eudistes tentèrent bien, à plusieurs reprises, de publier sa vie, trois fois même dans un quart de siècle. Mais, d'une part, la haine dont les jansénistes l'avaient poursuivi et qui ne désarmait pas, de l'autre, la trop grande réserve de ses fils, furent cause que ces tentatives n'aboutirent pas, et les divers manuscrits qui se succédèrent restèrent dans les archives de la Congrégation.

La première biographie en date est du P. PIERRE HÉRAMBOURG, et a pour titre: **La Vie du vénérable Serviteur**

358 -

SAINT JEAN EUDES

**de Dieu, Jean Eudes**, Prêtre missionnaire, Instituteur et premier Supérieur de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, et des Religieuses de N.-D. de Charité, divisée en deux parties. Elle fut écrite à la demande du successeur du Saint, le P. Blouet de Camilly, auteur lui-même d'une petite Vie abrégée du P. Eudes. Homme d'une intelligence rare et d'une haute vertu, le P. Hérambourg (1661-1720) avait eu l'incalculable avantage pour un biographe de vivre dans la familiarité des compagnons les plus intimes de celui dont il avait à faire revivre la personne. Ayant eu en mains tous les documents et pièces nécessaires, il put composer « un ouvrage extrêmement précieux » à tous égards.

AU P. PIERRE COSTIL (1669-1749) revient l'honneur d'avoir écrit deux volumes sur saint Jean Eudes. D'abord dans les **Annales de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie**, commencées en 1722, il a fait l'histoire du Père Eudes et de sa société religieuse, réunissant là des documents des plus importants pour les historiens futurs. Puis dans les **Fleurs de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie**, succession de biographies d'Eudistes remarquables par leur sainteté et leur vertu, il a consacré le premier volume au P. Eudes, « la plus belle assurément des fleurs de ce jardin fermé ». Les travaux du P. Costil dénotent un esprit critique très averti, et, pour le fond, sont de première valeur.

Peu après le P. Costil, un autre eudiste, le P. JULIEN MARTINE, écrivit à son tour, en deux volumes, une biographie du Saint, intitulée: **Vie du Révérend Père Eudes**, Instituteur de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie. Les conditions dans lesquelles l'ouvrage fut composé, les réviseurs qui furent adjoints à l'auteur, les qualités personnelles de celui-ci enfin, permettent d'avoir toute confiance en son oeuvre.

Après 1750, d'autres tentatives devaient encore être faites sans plus de résultat que les précédentes. Un Prêtre du séminaire de Caen, le P. BESSELIÈVRE, selon toute apparence, rédigea une vie abrégée, mais précieuse par certaines pièces inédites, sous ce titre: **Mémoires authentiques pour servir à l'histoire de Monsieur Eudes**, Missionnaire apostolique, Instituteur de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie.

En 1765, un Père jésuite breton, le P. DE MONTIGNY, admirateur des vertus du P. Eudes, entreprit de les faire revivre plus pour lui que pour le public dans un travail intitulé: **Vie du Père**

## Eudes.

### BIBLIOGRAPHIE

359 -

Enfin en 1780, à la demande de l'assemblée générale des Eudistes de 1779, le P. VINCENT LE BEURIER, prédicateur célèbre et prêtre de vertu, composa une nouvelle vie qui n'était guère qu'une réplique de celle du P. de Montigny et qui resta comme toutes les autres manuscrites.

Le XVIIIe siècle s'était terminé sans qu'il eût été possible de mettre en lumière la belle figure de saint Jean Eudes. Le XIXe, qui devait le voir sortir de l'oubli, n'a donné cependant que des vies populaires ou l'édition de plusieurs manuscrits du siècle précédent.

Parmi les vies populaires, il faut signaler **Le Père Eudes, Missionnaire apostolique**, in-12, par CHARLES DE MONTZEY, un parent du Saint; - une **Notice sur les trois Frères: Jean Eudes**, prêtre, fondateur des Eudistes, **François Eudes de Mézeray**, Académicien, historiographe de France, et **Charles Eudes d'Houay**, Échevin d'Argentan, par Gustave LE VAVASSEUR, in-8, 1855, à l'occasion d'un monument érigé, en leur honneur à Argentan; - une petite vie par le R. P. LE DORÉ, **Le Vénérable Jean Eudes**, premier apôtre des Sacrés-Cœurs de Jésus et Marie, in-12, 1870; - **Le Vénérable Jean Eudes**, par le P. AUGUSTE PINAS, C.J.M., vie éditée par Paillart, réimprimée en 1909 et 1925 à près de cent mille exemplaires, traduite en espagnol par le P. FRALEU, C. J. M., en 1890, pour la Colombie espagnole, et en anglais, en 1909, pour le Canada; - **Le Père Eudes et ses œuvres**, in-8, Paris, 1905, par le même.

En 1827, L'ABBÉ TRESVAUX imprima à Rennes le manuscrit du P. de Montigny, **Vie du Père Eudes**, in-12: c'était la première biographie du Saint qui paraissait, et il était mort en 1680!

En 1868, le R. P. LE DORÉ, C. J. M., au moment où il entreprenait le procès de béatification du futur Saint, publiait la seconde partie du manuscrit du P. Hérambourg, les Vertus, sous ce titre: **Le R. Père Jean Eudes: ses vertus**, in-12. L'année suivante, il en donnait une nouvelle édition, mais profondément remaniée et augmentée au point d'être plus son œuvre que celle du P. Hérambourg: **Le P. Père Jean Eudes**, apôtre des Sacrés-Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, ses vertus, in-8.

En 1880, L'ABBÉ LE COINTE, prêtre du diocèse de Bayeux,

360-

### SAINT JEAN EUDES

éditait, à son tour, en deux volumes in-8, le manuscrit du P. Martine. Enrichie de notes abondantes et copieuses, de pièces justificatives riches et variées, cette édition a été pendant un quart de siècle l'ouvrage cher aux amis de saint Eudes.

Au début du XXe siècle, l'approche de la béatification du vénérable serviteur de Dieu fut l'occasion de plusieurs biographies.

Entre les années 1805 et 1908, le P. DENIS BOULAY, C. J. M., a fait paraître en 4 volumes grand in-8 la **Vie du Vénérable Jean Eudes**, Instituteur de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, et de l'Ordre de N.-D. de Charité, Auteur du culte liturgique des Sacrés-Cœurs. Avec ses notes nombreuses, ses Appendices si riches, cette vie est et restera la Somme à laquelle devront toujours se référer ceux qui voudront étudier à fond le P. Eudes. Un auteur récent, M. l'abbé Bremond, dans son Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux, en a porté ce jugement, auquel personne ne contredira, qu'elle fait « honneur soit à la formation littéraire, soit à la critique des Eudistes contemporains », (tome III, p. 564).

Un abrégé de cette vie fut traduit en italien et édité à Rome pour les fêtes de la béatification, le 25 avril 1909.

Pour cette même circonstance, le P. Boulay a donné, en deux formats in-8 et in-8 écu, deux réductions de sa grande édition, sous le titre **Le Bienheureux Jean Eudes**, Instituteur de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, et de l'Ordre de N.-D. de Charité, Auteur du culte liturgique des Sacrés Cœurs; puis, sous le même titre, une petite vie illustrée, in-j 2. Cette dernière fut avec quelques modifications traduite en anglais par le P. O'REILLEY, C. J. M., et parut au Canada en 1909. Elle vient d'être traduite en espagnol, pour la Colombie.

Dans la collection « Les Saints », HENRI JOLY, membre de l'Institut, publia en 1907 **Le Vénérable Père Eudes**, ouvrage de vulgarisation, plein d'aperçus psychologiques dignes de l'auteur, et dont, après lecture, on comprend la vérité de cette parole du début: « un rude saint... dans une rude époque ».

Après la béatification, en 1909, un anglais, le P. RUSSELL, S. J., écrivit également, dans sa langue, une vie populaire, in-12 de 200 pages. Elle est particulièrement intéressante par la place qu'il donne au Bienheureux dans la dévotion au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

361

Pour la canonisation, une nouvelle vie vient de paraître: **Saint Jean Eudes**, Missionnaire apostolique, Instituteur de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, de l'Ordre de N.-D. de Charité du Refuge et du Bon Pasteur, et de la Société du Cœur de la Mère Admirable, Père, Docteur, et Apôtre du culte liturgique des Sacrés-Cœurs de Jésus et Marie, par le **P. ÉMILE GEORGES, C. J. M.**, in-8. Écrite avec aisance et chaleur, présentée par tableaux d'ensemble plutôt que dans l'ordre chronologique, elle fait ardemment aimer la belle et grande figure du Saint dont elle veut propager le rayonnement d'éclatante sainteté. Elle vient d'être traduite en italien et de paraître à Rome pour les fêtes de la canonisation.

### III. - OUVRAGES SUR SAINT JEAN EUDES

Peu d'hommes ont été aussi combattus que le Père Eudes. Les vingt volumes in-folio et in-quarto de la seule Bibliothèque Nationale, et qui, pour une bonne part, sont remplis de libelles, factums et pamphlets, montrent assez les haines et les oppositions qui s'étaient dressées contre sa personne et contre ses oeuvres. Il n'est pas jusqu'aux Archives Vaticanes qui ne contiennent de nombreuses pièces attestant la collusion d'adversaires à qui tout était bon pour empêcher le succès de ses démarches auprès du Saint-Siège. **Les Mémoires domestiques pour servir à l'histoire de l'Oratoire**, 2 Vol. in-8, du P. **Louis BATTEREL**, et réédités au début du siècle par le P. INGOLD, de l'Oratoire, peuvent aussi, à juste titre, être rangés parmi les écrits opposés à notre Saint. C'était un bel arsenal où le promoteur de la foi, lors du procès de béatification, put choisir des armes. Mais les réponses à toutes les **Animadversiones** échafaudées par lui n'ont fait que prouver définitivement la vertu du serviteur de Dieu et la malice de ses détracteurs.

Parmi les études générales sur saint Jean Eudes, il y a lieu de citer un article du **Dictionnaire de théologie catholique**, intitulé: **Eudes (le B. Jean)** de C. LEBRUN, C. J. M.

362 - **SAINT JEAN EUDES**

(tome V, col. 1466 à 1482). Il semble bien qu'il ait été le premier article de Dictionnaire écrit avec justesse et sans avoir subi des influences contraires, comme Moreri au XVIIIe siècle, Hélyot et d'autres.

Il faut rapprocher de cet article un opuscule des PP. DAUPHIN ET LEBRUN, C. J. M.: **Le Bienheureux Jean Eudes, son Apostolat, sa Doctrine, ses Instituts**, in-12 écu de 125 pages.

À la fin de **1922**, un auteur très estimé, et reçu à l'Académie en 1924, **M. L'ABBÉ BREMOND**, a, dans le tome 111 de son Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux, consacré plus de cent pages au B.



Jean Eudes. Cette étude semble quelque peu trahir la hâte; à côté d'excellentes remarques, certaines affirmations appelleraient plus d'une réserve.

La spiritualité de saint Jean Eudes a été longuement étudiée sous ses divers aspects par le P. CH. LEBRUN, C. J. M., dans les Introductions aux Oeuvres complètes. Réunies, elles formeraient un fort volume in-8. Qu'il s'agisse de la doctrine spirituelle du Saint en général, ou de ses vues sur le sacerdoce, sur la sainte Vierge, sur les Sacrés Cœurs, c'est à ces introductions qu'il faut recourir, si l'on veut avoir sur ces sujets des idées nettes et précises. M. l'abbé Bremond s'en est inspiré dans le tome 111 de son Histoire littéraire et les a souvent citées.

A des titres divers, mais mettant bien en lumière le rayonnement de l'influence spirituelle de saint Jean Eudes, sont à consulter: M. **Souriau**, Le mysticisme en Normandie, in-8, Paris 1913 ouvrage très documenté et de saine doctrine; - **L'ABBÉ ADAM** Le mysticisme à la renaissance ou Marie des Vallées, dite la Sainte de Coutances, in-8 écu, Paris, 1894, travail dans lequel l'auteur s'est largement inspiré du manuscrit du Père Eudes cité précédemment sur Marie des Vallées; - **LE CHANOINE LELIEVRE**: Madame de Bois-David, en religion Sœur Marie de l'Enfant-Jésus, de l'ordre de N.-D. de Charité, in-12, Coutances, 1925, une fille spirituelle du Saint, nouvelle sainte Chantal au XVIIe siècle.

Parmi les études traitant de l'établissement des séminaires en France, quelques-unes sont à lire si l'on veut connaître la part qui revient à saint Jean Eudes dans cette œuvre de rénovation du clergé. En dehors des Annales de la Congrégation

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

363

gation de Jésus et Marie, il faut mentionner: **L'ABBÉ DEGERT**: Histoire des séminaires français jusqu'à la Révolution, 2 vol. in-12, Paris, 1910; - **L'ABBÉ BONNENFANT**: **Les séminaires normands au XVII, et XVIII, siècle**, in-8, Paris, 1913, ouvrage d'érudition locale et complétant heureusement le précédent en ce qui regarde le rôle du Père Eudes; - le **P. DAUPHIN**, C. J. M.: Les Eudistes dans le diocèse de Rennes, **Histoire des séminaires de Rennes et de Dol**, in-12, Paris, 1910; - enfin le P. LEBRUN, C. J. M.: Le Bienheureux Jean Eudes, les Eudistes et l'Oeuvre des retraites, in-8, Paris, 1916, brochure faisant partie de la Bibliothèque des Exercices de S. Ignace par le P. Watrigant, S. 3.

A ces ouvrages sur les séminaires, on peut rattacher un Directoire à l'usage des missionnaires de la **Congrégation de Jésus et Marie**, du **P. MASSICOT**, C. J. M., in-8, Abbeville, 1900, livre tout rempli de l'esprit et des méthodes du saint missionnaires et utile à quiconque se livre à l'œuvre des missions.

Il a été aussi publié deux ouvrages sur l'Ordre de N.-D. de Charité, institué par saint Jean Eudes: l'un, qui en fait l'histoire jusqu'à la Révolution, l'autre, tout récent, qui a pour but de faire connaître l'Ordre et son œuvre de rénovation morale des âmes pécheresses. Ce sont: **Les Origines de N.-D. de Charité, ou son Histoire depuis la fondation jusqu'à la Révolution**, par le **P. J.-M. ORY**, C. J. M., grand in-8, Abbeville, 1801, travail excessivement précieux par sa documentation; - **Une oeuvre de Miséricorde et d'Apostolat par plusieurs Eudistes**, in-8, 1922, Besançon.

Très propres à montrer la vitalité de cet Ordre de N.-D. de Charité, l'esprit qui l'anime, et en même temps fournissant une contribution précieuse à l'histoire du Saint qui eut l'idée d'une telle œuvre, sont les vies suivantes: **La Vénérable Marie de Sainte-Euphrasie Pelletier, fondatrice du Bon-Pasteur d'Angers**, 2 vol. in-8, Angers, par Mgr **PASQUIER**, ou 2 vol. in-8, Angers, 1893, par le chanoine **PORTAIS**; **La Mère Marie de Sainte-Victorine Houette**, in-8, par le chanoine **POUAN**; **Sœur Marie du Divin-Coeur**, in-8, 1905, Paris, par **L'ABBÉ CHASLES**.

## 364 SAINT JEAN EUDES

L'apostolat de saint Jean Eudes relativement au culte du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus a donné lieu à toute une bibliographie abondante. L'oubli dans lequel il était demeuré pendant près des trois quarts du XIX,

siècle avait fait perdre de vue son rôle, et l'on s'était accoutumé à faire dépendre le culte et la dévotion des Révélations de Notre-Seigneur à sainte Maguerite-Marie. Quelques auteurs méconnaissant la part du Père Eudes, d'autres la passant sous silence ou tendant à la diminuer, il en est résulté une suite de brochures qui ont contribué à remettre les choses au point; puis Rome, dans plusieurs documents officiels, a définitivement tranché la discussion en donnant au Saint la place qui lui revient.

C'est vers 1870 que le B. P. LE DORÉ posa la question pour la première fois dans sa petite vie populaire: **Le Vénérable Jean Eudes, premier apôtre des Sacrés Cœurs**. Il devait y revenir bien des fois dans des brochures, articles de revues. En 1891 il publia son grand ouvrage: **Les Sacrés Cœurs et le Vénérable Jean Eudes**, 2 vol. in-8, Paris, où il étudiait à fond toute la question, au point de vue historique et doctrinal. C'est un des travaux les plus documentés qui aient été encore écrits sur les Sacrés Cœurs, et même, théologiquement, il est un de ceux qui ont le plus profondément étudié la dévotion. En 1908 il réunissait en une brochure: **Le Sacré Cœur de Jésus, son Amour**, in-8, toute une série d'articles écrits par lui en réponse à des attaques diverses contre le Vénérable Jean Eudes; puis en 1909, après la béatification, il la rééditait augmentée sous le même titre, en y ajoutant **d'après la doctrine du B. Jean Eudes**, in-i2, Paris. En 1916, il donnait **La Naissance du culte liturgique des Sacrés Cœurs**, in-i2, Paris, ouvrage de moindre importance, et enfin, en 1917, **Le Message du Sacré-Cœur**, petite plaquette de 120 pages, avec, en appendice, deux lettres inédites du Comte de Paris se rapportant au Message et au Voeu de Louis XVI.

**La Vie du Très Révérend Père Ange Le Doré**, par le P. Rovolt, 2 vol. in-8, Besançon, en cours de publication, sera consultée avantageusement sur toute cette question.

A la suite du P. Le Doré, un de ses fils, le P. CH. LEBRUN, a publié sur le même sujet, en plus des deux **Introductions** au livre du Cœur Admirable et au Propre de la Congrégation

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

365

de Jésus et Marie, deux ouvrages de première valeur: **La Dévotion au Cœur de Marie, étude historique et doctrinale**, - **Le Bienheureux Jean Eudes et le Culte public du Cœur de Jésus**, in-8. l'un et l'autre, Paris, 1918.

Antérieurement à tous ces derniers ouvrages, le chanoine GRANGER, missionnaire de N.-D. de la Délivrande, dans **Les Archives de la Dévotion au Sacré Cœur de Jésus et au Saint Cœur de Marie**, avait consacré son deuxième tome tout entier au rôle et à l'étude de saint Jean Eudes.

A côté de tous ces travaux sur les Sacrés Cœurs, où apparaît souvent une préoccupation historique, il en est d'autres qui sont de purs ouvrages de piété.

Pour propager ses dévotions dans le peuple, saint Jean Eudes avait établi une Confrérie du Sacré Cœur de Jésus et de Marie en faveur de laquelle, dès 1674, il avait obtenu des Bulles d'Indulgences. A l'usage des membres de cette confrérie, le P. BLOUET DE CAMILLY, C. J. M., selon toute apparence, rédigea **L'Institution de la sainte Confrérie et Société du Sacré Cœur de Jésus et de Marie**, in-18 de 178 pages, Coutances, 1688. Ce Manuel, tout rempli de l'esprit et des pratiques du Saint, a servi de modèle à d'autres du même genre, même en dehors de la Congrégation des Eudistes et de l'Ordre de N.-D. de Charité.

Le Saint avait aussi institué La Société du Cœur Admirable, sorte de Tiers-Ordre eudiste, n'acceptant dans ses rangs que des vierges ou des veuves, désireuses de mener dans le monde la vie religieuse. Pendant longtemps, cette pieuse Société, qui devait beaucoup se répandre au XVIII, siècle, n'eut pas d'autre Manuel que celui de la Confrérie. Le premier rédigé pour elle, fut celui d'Avranches en 1738 sous ce titre **Devoirs et pratiques de la Société du Très Saint Cœur de Marie**, in-18 de 124 p. Dans la suite plusieurs autres parurent à Caen, à Rennes, à Dol, toujours sans nom d'auteur, 1 mais par les soins cependant des Eudistes. En 1859, le chanoine SOUCHET, de Saint-Brieuc, donna une édition

du Manuel publié à Rennes en 1750 édition enrichie d'un commentaire de chaque chapitre de la règle, sous le titre **Livre des Vierges et de pieuses Veuves ou Règle de la Société des Enfants du Saint Cœur de la Mère Admirable**, in- 18 de 438 p. Il a été réédité à plusieurs reprises par le P. MASSICOT, C. J. M., et dernièrement

366

SAINT JEAN EUDES

remontent par le P. LEBRUN, C. J. M., mais sans les commentaires. Au début du siècle, une traduction espagnole a été faite à l'usage de la Société, très prospère en Colombie.

La **Revue Les Saints Coeurs de Jésus et Marie**, organe de la famille eudiste et qui a près d'un demi-siècle d'existence, a donné à maintes reprises des séries d'articles pieux, à l'usage des tertiaires notamment. Plusieurs ont été réunis en volumes: **Les Saints Coeurs de Jésus et de Marie, Règle et vie de nos coeurs d'après la doctrine du Vénérable Jean Eudes**, in- 12, Paris, 1891, par le P. DAUPHIN, C. J. M., véritable commentaire de la salutation aux Saints Coeurs de saint Jean Eudes; - **Le Cœur de Jésus d'après l'Évangile et les écrits des Saints**, in-12, Paris, 1917, par le P. LEBRUN, C. J. M., recueil de méditations pour le mois du Sacré-Cœur; - **Le Cœur de Jésus principe de toute vie chrétienne d'après le B. Jean Eudes**, in- 12, Paris, 1922, par et **Le Très Saint Cœur de Marie, son influence sur le salut et la sanctification des âmes d'après le B. Jean Eudes**, in-12, Paris, 1923, par le P. GAUDERON, C. J. M., l'un et l'autre ouvrages aussi pleins de doctrine que de piété.

À l'intention de ceux qui désirent se pénétrer de l'esprit et des vertus de saint Jean Eudes, le P. Lebrun, C. J. M., a publié **La Dévotion au Bienheureux Jean Eudes**, in-18, Paris, 1919, Manuel de méditations et de prières.

Il n'a pas encore été fait d'histoire proprement dite de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie. Mais les **Annales, les Fleurs de la Congrégation**, les vies de plusieurs Eudistes, les chroniques de la revue **Les Saints Coeurs** et de sa filiale espagnole **Los Sagrados Corazones de Jesús y María** seront des sources précieuses pour les historiens futurs.

Cette rapide nomenclature n'a pas la prétention d'être complète; elle laisse d'ailleurs de côté les **brochures** diverses, les **articles** de revues et de journaux, les **panégyriques** imprimés, les **lettres pastorales** dont quelques-unes sont de vrais monuments élevés à la gloire du Saint. Elle permet néanmoins de constater quelle grande place saint Jean Eudes occupe dans l'Église: « Quand on parle de Jean Eudes, disait

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

367

S. S. Léon XII<sup>1</sup> dans le Décret d'héroïcité des vertus, on parle d'un homme très illustre dont non seulement la sainteté de vie sert d'éclatant exemple, mais dont le zèle ardent pour le salut des âmes et spécialement l'établissement de sa Congrégation ont rendu d'éternels services à l'humanité entière. » Ces paroles reprises par S. S. Pie XI dans le récent décret de Tuto trouvent, croyons-nous, leur commentaire dans les quelques pages de bibliographie que nous venons d'écrire.

F. HULIN, C. J. M.

**The priest:  
His Dignity and Obligations**

**BY**

**SAINT JOHN EUDES**

Translated from the French by  
REVEREND W. LEO MURPHY

With an Introduction by  
THE LATE REVEREND CHARLES LEBRUN, C.J.M., S.T.D.

Foreword by  
MOST REVEREND JOHN T. McNally, D.D.

ARCHBISHOP OF HALIFAX, N. S.

NEW YORK

P. J. KENEDY & SONS

1947

## GENERAL PREFACE

ST. JOHN EUDES has been called "the wonder of his age." Missionary, founder, reformer of the clergy, he crowded into a life of seventy-nine years so many and such varied accomplishments that one marvels how a single man could achieve so much. In addition to the activities of an incessant and many-sided apostolate, he wrote a number of valuable books, which rank him among the most prolific ascetic writers of the seventeenth century.

For many years the devotional works of St. John Eudes were practically unknown.(1) Occasionally a volume was discovered in the library of some seminary or religious house. Many others preserved in manuscript form were lost in the chaos of the French Revolution(2) At the beginning of the present century the sons of St. John Eudes united in a tribute of filial piety to bring out a complete edition of the works of their spiritual father, seeking them in public and private libraries throughout the world(3) About twenty volumes were found and edited in 1905 by the late Fathers Charles Lebrun, C.J.M., and Joseph Dauphin,

(1).Before the French Revolution the works of St. John Eudes were popular in France. In 1792 the houses of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary were confiscated by the Government and its members were massacred or dispersed throughout Europe. With the suppression of the Eudists, their rich literary heritage was widely scattered and partially destroyed. It was not until the re-establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1826 that effort was made to recover the printed and manuscript works of St. John Eudes. The research was carried on until the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the "Preface Générale to the Oeuvres Complètes (Vannes, 1905), Father Charles Lebrun points out that one of the purposes of the edition was "to unearth these works buried too long in oblivion," exhumers ces ouvrages ensevelis depuis trop longtemps dans l'oubli...

(2)The following manuscripts were not found: The Christian Man, All Jesus, The Divine office, The Admirable Sacrifice of the Mass, Meditations, (2 vol.), Sermons of St. John Eudes (3 vols.), Favors obtained by the Diocese of Coutances through the Blessed Virgin, The Divine Childhood of Jesus, The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, The Admirable *Life of Mary des Vallées*, (incomplete copy found at Laval University Library, Quebec) and Correspondence of St. John Eudes.

(3). cf. *oeuvres Complètes*, P. xiv.

v -

## GENERAL PREFACE

C.J.M. The first edition in French, *Oeuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, ran into twelve octavo volumes with introductions, explanatory notes, analytic and alphabetic indexes of great value. These writings constitute a complete summa of ascetic and pastoral theology. The list is as follows:

*Volume 1 The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls.* In this work the Saint develops his spiritual teaching on the Christian life, namely, that the Christian life is simply the life of Jesus extended and continued in each one of us.

*Volume 11.* This volume contains six short treatises on subjects relating to the Christian life:

1. *A Treatise on the Respect Due to Holy Places*, which is an echo of the fiery denunciations he pronounced during his missions against profaners of the temple of God.

2. *Meditations on Humility*, a series of meditations on the profession of humility as used daily in his order of Priests, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

3. *Interior Colloquies of the Soul with God*, meditations on creation, the end of man and the grace of Baptism.

4. *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, a summary of the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Tradition on the Sacrament of Baptism.

5. *The Practice of Piety*, a brief explanation of what is necessary in order to live a Christian life.

6. *Catechism of the Mission*, an outline of the catechetical instructions given during a mission.

*Volume III.* Contains two important works on sacerdotal perfection:

1. *The Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*, an explanation of the dignity and duties of the priesthood.
2. *A Manual of Piety for Use in an Ecclesiastical Community*, in which the author explains how the means of sanctification he recommended to his priests should be practically applied in their daily lives.

*Volume IV.* Comprises significant works on the priestly ministry.

1. *The Apostolic Preacher* is one of the first treatises written on the ministry of the Word of God and is even yet one of the most practical.

## GENERAL PREFACE

V 11 -

2. *The Good Confessor* explains the qualities, and obligations of the minister of the Sacrament of Penance.

3. *Counsels for Mission Confessors* suggests practical means of assisting penitents to make their examination of conscience and excite themselves to contrition.

4. *The Manner of Serving Mass* explains the dignity and holiness of this act and what one must do to perform it devoutly and worthily.

*Volume V. The Admirable Childhood of the Most Holy Mother of God.* This book treats of the holy childhood of Mary and the practical means of honoring the mysteries and virtues of her early life.

*Volumes VI, VII, VIII* contain the entire writings of the Saint on the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The work is entitled: *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God.* It comprises twelve books covering the complete theology of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. Eleven books discuss the theory, history, and practice of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The last book deals with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is this work, together with the Offices of the Sacred Hearts, that merit for him the title of Father, Doctor and Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts.

*Volume IX. The Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*

*Volume X.* Contains *The Rules and Constitutions of the Order of Our Lady of Charity*, the *Directory* of the Order, and a collection of two hundred and forty letters.

*Volumes XI and XII* embrace the Saint's *Liturgical Works*, comprising twenty-five Offices and Masses for feasts to which he urged special devotion, the *Memorial of God's Blessings* and several other minor works.

The second French edition appeared in 1935, *Oeuvres Choies de Saint Jean Eudes*, prepared under the direction of Father Lebrun, the leading authority on Eudistic research. It comprises nine volumes: *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, *Meditations of Various Subjects*, *Regulae Vitae Christianae Sacerdotalis*, *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, *Letters and Minor Works*, *Writings on the Priesthood*, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, and *The Admirable Childhood of the Mother of God*. The format of

V111-

## GENERAL PREFACE

these volumes is compact and more convenient than the 1905 edition, which is now out of print.

The publication of the works of St. John Eudes revealed the extent and depth of their spiritual

doctrine. Cardinal Pitra, who was associated with the cause of Beatification, discovered in the writings of St. John Eudes a remarkable depth of thought and purity of doctrine. Cardinal Vives has more recently expressed his admiration:

I was acquainted with the Doctors of the Order of Saint Francis; I was acquainted with Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, the mystical writers of my own country, Spain; but I was completely ignorant of the writings of Father Eudes. As a member of the Sacred Congregation of Rites it was my duty to study his life and his works, and I am in admiration. Blessed John Eudes must be ranked with the great lights of the Church. His spiritual doctrine is profound and of wonderful exactitude. He is one of the writers who has best propounded the doctrine of the Gospel.(4).

The late Father Ange Le Doré, for fifty years Superior General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, wrote:

The works of Blessed John Eudes, although they do not bear the scientific touch of the professional theologian, are nevertheless proof of his remarkable theological, ascetic and scriptural knowledge.... He is not a Doctor after the fashion of the scholastics of the thirteenth century or of the great theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As they, he might have built up theses and composed books didactic in form; but he was before all a savior of souls. For him the science of theology found its chief field of usefulness in the practice of virtue and in the acquisition of sanctity of which it is the principle.... He was a Doctor after the manner of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus de Liguori. The science which shines in his works not only emits light; it engenders piety and sanctity.(5)

The spiritual doctrine expounded by St John Eudes follows the teaching of Cardinal *Pierre deBérulle* and Father Charles de Condren, two prominent members of the seventeenth-century French School of Spirituality. St. John Eudes applies this doctrine to the devotion to the

(4). Quoted by P. A. Bray, C.J.M., *Saint John Eudes* (Halifax, 1925), P. 116.

(5). Quoted by Bray, op. cit., p. 117.

## GENERAL PREFACE 1 X -

Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, developing and rendering it more precise and practical. He has the rare gift of expressing the most sublime truths in simple, familiar language. He also excels in condensing into a few pages a complete scheme of Christian life and perfection.

The wish was repeatedly expressed that these inspirational writings could be made available to English-speaking readers. Excellent abridged editions of certain books were published in England and in Canada, but they did not do justice to the literary value of the Saint. Consequently, the Eudist Fathers commemorating their tercentenary in 1943 resolved to publish a complete translation of the principal works of their founder. Competent translators were secured and much time and effort were expended to produce readable volumes in modern English, faithful to the spirit and style of the original.

The first English edition, *Selected Works of Saint John Eudes*, is the result. In presenting it to the public the Eudist Fathers and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, and of the Good Shepherd, wish to thank all those who contributed to the success of this comprehensive undertaking. They are especially grateful to the distinguished churchmen who have so graciously accepted to introduce these volumes to Catholic readers, because they consider that the works of St. John Eudes should be more widely known. The Saint in his apostolic work and in his writings ranks with the eminent figures who belong not to one country and to one religious order but to the universal Church. Three centuries have passed since he wrote the works now being printed in the new world, a striking illustration that he wrote for all time. He still speaks in accents that penetrate the mind and heart of the reader to enlighten, purify and sanctify so that Jesus Christ may live and reign in the Christian soul.

WILFRID E. MYATT, C.J.M.  
PATRICK J. SKINNER, C.J.M.

*Editors*

Holy Heart Seminary  
Halifax, N. S.  
Feast of St. John Eudes, 1945.



## CONTENTS

General Preface . . . . .	v
Foreword . . . . .	xvii
Introduction . . . . .	xix
Dedication . . . . .	xxv

### PART 1 A MEMORIAL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. Dignity of the Priesthood . . . . .	I
11. Qualities of a Holy Priest . . . . .	9

111. Duties of the Priestly State . . . . .	15
---	----

#### IV. The Spiritual Life of the Priest

1. Morning Exercise . . . . .	27
2. Meditation . . . . .	29
3. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass . . . . .	30
4. The Divine Office . . . . .	32
5. Reading of Sacred Scripture . . . . .	33
6. Spiritual Reading . . . . .	34
7. Study . . . . .	35
8. The Sacrament of Penance . . . . .	38
9. Evening Exercise . . . . .	40

#### V. The Apostolic Life of the Priest

1. General Dispositions for the Administration of the Sacraments . . . . .	43
2. General Dispositions for the Administration of the Sacrament of Penance . . . . .	45
3. The Priest in the Confessional . . . . .	46
4. Administering the Blessed Eucharist . . . . .	48

xi

#### xii CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
5. Visiting the Sick . . . . .	50
6. Assisting the Dying . . . . .	53
7. Consoling the Afflicted . . . . .	57
8. Preaching and Catechizing . . . . .	62

#### VI. The Annual Retreat.

1. Purity of Intention . . . . .	65
2. Dispositions . . . . .	66
3. Proper Disposal of Time . . . . .	67
4. Subjects of Meditation . . . . .	68
5. Retreat Books . . . . .	68

## **PART II**

### **THE APOSTOLIC PREACHER**

I. Excellence and Importance of the Office of Preaching . . .	73
11. Interior Dispositions for Preaching . . . . .	77
III. Edification and Example Given by Preachers . . . . .	81
IV. Books for Sermon Material . . . . .	84
V. Sermon Topics . . . . .	86
VI. Further Suggestions for Sermon Topics . . . . .	qi
VII. Sermon Plans . . . . .	94
VIII. Composition of the Sermon . . . . .	104
IX. Delivery of the Sermon . . . . .	107
X. Faults to Be Avoided in Preaching . . . . .	109
XI. Further Advice to Preachers . . . . .	112
XII. Touching the Hearts of the Faithful . . . . .	114
XIII. Teaching the Dispositions for Receiving the Word of God .	117
XIV. The Teaching of Catechism . . . . .	121

CONTENTS      xiii

## **PART III**

### **THE GOOD CONFESSOR**

CHAPTER      PAGE

I. Excellence and Importance of the Office of Confessor . . .	127
II. Zeal for the Salvation of Souls . . . . .	131
. The Salvation of Souls Is the Great Work of God . -	132
2. The Salvation of Souls Is the Great Work of the Gad Man . . . . .	133
3. The Salvation of Souls Is the Great Work of the Mother of God . . . . .	134
4. The Salvation of Souls Is the Great Work of the Church, of the Apostles and Saints . . . . .	135
5. The Salvation of Souls Is the Great Work of Priests . -	137
6. The Salvation of Souls Is the Work of Works . . .	140
7. Further Considerations . . . . .	144
III. Science of the Confessor . . . . .	147
IV. Charity of the Confessor . . . . .	149
V. Prudence of the Confessor . . . . .	151
VI. Piety of the Confessor . . . . .	154 1
VII. Fidelity to the Secrecy of Confession . . . . .	157
VIII. Seven Points to Be Observed by Confessors . . . . .	160
IX. Further Advice to Confessors . . . . .	167
X. An Effective Way to Convert Sinners . . . . .	170

## **PART IV**

### **MEDITATIONS**

on  
THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

First -Meditation: General Obligations of the Priesthood . . .	175
Second Meditation: Obligation of Priests to Seek Perfection . . .	182
xiv	CONTENTS

## CHAPTER PAGE

Third Meditation: Hatred for Sin . . . . .	185
Fourth Meditation: Renouncing the World . . . . .	188
Fifth Meditation: Self-denial . . . . .	igi
Sixth Meditation: Love of God . . . . .	195
Seventh Meditation: Obligations and Duties towards Christ . . .	198
Eighth Meditation: Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary . . . .	201
Ninth Meditation: Obligations towards the Church . . . . .	204
Tenth Meditation: Meaning of the Cassock, the Surplice and the Biretta . . . . .	208

## PART V

### MEDITATIONS

on

### TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

First Meditation: Tonsure . . . . .	213
Second Meditation: The Four Minor Orders in General . . . .	217
Third Meditation: The Order of Porter . . . . .	221
Fourth Meditation: The Orders of Lector, Exorcist and Acolyte . .	224
Fifth Meditation: The Order of Subdeaconship . . . . .	227
Sixth Meditation: The Order of Deaconship . . . . .	231
Seventh Meditation: The Priesthood . . . . .	234
Eighth Meditation: The Feast of the Priesthood . . . . .	237

## CONTENTS XV

## PART VI

### MEDITATIONS

for

### THE ANNUAL RETREAT

## CHAPTER PAGE

First Meditation: The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass . . . . .	243
Second Meditation: The Sacrament Of Penance . . . . .	245
Third Meditation: Vocal and Mental Prayer . . . . .	248
Fourth Meditation: Submission to the Will of God . . . . .	250
Fifth Meditation: Obedience . . . . .	252
Sixth Meditation: Charity . . . . .	254
Seventh Meditation: Humility . . . . .	256
Eighth Meditation: Modesty, Simplicity and Truthfulness . . . .	259
Ninth Meditation: Manner of Performing Your Actions . . . .	261
Tenth Meditation: Use That a Priest Should Make of the Faculties of His Body and Soul . . . . .	264

## PART VII

**OFFICE AND MASS  
for  
THE FEAST OF THE HOLY PRIESTHOOD**

Introduction . . . . .	269
Mass of the Feast of the Holy Priesthood . . . . .	272
Office of the Feast of the Holy Priesthood . . . . .	280

## FOREWORD

THIS LATEST WORK Of St. John Eudes to be presented to the public in the English language, The Priest, His Dignity and Obligations, will prove a valuable addition to ascetic theology, in the vernacular of most of this continent.

It is a treatise whose wording springs from a heart filled with zeal for God's house. To me, quite a number of its expressions and assertions seem extravagant and exaggerated, more so, doubtless, in their English dress than they do in the French version in which they were first set down, but we are dealing with the spiritual outpourings of a sainted soul and must take his presentation as it stands.

Surely, the glory of the priestly state can hardly seem overdrawn, until we think of the weakness and fickleness of ourselves who have dared to accept that exalted dignity. *Habemus autem thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus.* Its very sublimity fills our souls with awe and trepidation. It is *magna dignitas, mira potestas, sed excelsum et pavendum officium*, and as such we dare embrace its lofty character and its tremendous obligations only because we feel not only privileged, but almost obliged to do so, by the beneficent call of God. "Neither doth any man take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Heb. 5, 4).

To follow the counsels outlined by our saint is by no means easy to our capricious souls. Their numberless repetitions in the volume under consideration may sometimes grate upon our patience, but salutary precepts and wholesome advice must be ceaselessly urged

xviii

FOREWORD

upon us priests, as we in turn do it in the guiding of others, in season and out of season, so as to imprint their effect upon our too mutable minds.

If we seek a proof of the value of this treatise on priestly obligations. we need only to look at the results so cogently portrayed to us in the congregation founded by this glorious saint, and in the work they accomplish in the formation of the clergy of God's holy Church. What we have experienced in dealing with the priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, in their institutions in this diocese, has given ample proof of their loyal obedience to, and respect for, their superiors, both within and without their ranks; and of the eminently careful and intensive training, by word and example, of the young clerics entrusted to their system of sacerdotal formation.

For this we devoutly thank God and the unfailing protection of His sainted director of priestly perfection. Never did the world need more keenly than now the exalted example and the devoted zeal of holy and apostolic priests.

May this volume prove to countless numbers of them a precious guide and a sacred inspiration!

JOHN T. McNally

Archbishop of Halifax Halifax, Nova Scotia

May 15, 1946

## INTRODUCTION

One of the main ambitions of St. John Eudes was the sanctification of the clergy. In the early years of his career as an Oratorian missionary he began to deliver special lectures once or twice a week to the priests of the district in which the mission was being preached. With all the warmth and earnestness of his deep convictions he strove to impress upon his hearers the sublime dignity of the priestly state and the gravity of the obligations it entails. Later, in 1643, he left the French Oratory and founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary for the establishment of seminaries and for the training of young aspirants for the priesthood.

But St. John Eudes did even more. He wrote a number of excellent works on the life and functions of the priest. The best-known are *A Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*, *The Apostolic Preacher* and *The Good Confessor*. These writings cover all the duties of the priestly life. They are not pretentiously learned works but simple practical handbooks, filled with beautiful thoughts on the dignity of the priesthood and with helpful suggestions for the carrying out of its weighty obligations. These three Works have been brought together in this volume of the *Selected Works of St. John Eudes*. A brief outline of each book with its salient characteristics will be of great benefit to the reader.

### 1. A Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life

St. John Eudes began his *Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life* in 1668, but did not complete it until a few days before his death in 1680. Father Blouet de Camilly, second superior general of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, had it published at Lisieux the following year.

The *Memorial* is not a lengthy treatise on the priestly life nor is it a detailed exposition of the duties of a priest. The seventeenth century has

## INTRODUCTION

left us several books of that nature, of which the best known is Father Olier's *Treatise on Holy Orders*, which was published in 1675. St. John Eudes certainly read and appreciated the *Treatise* because his ideas on the priesthood as well as on the Christian life fully corresponded with those of the venerable founder of Saint Sulpice.

While the *Treatise* and other seventeenth-century works on the priesthood were considered excellent, they were not, in the judgment of the Saint, sufficient for the clergy of the day. Priests needed shorter and more practical books which they could always have at hand and which would sum up their duties and how best to fulfil them. St. John Eudes's *Memorial* was intended to fill this need. It was to serve as a reminder of all the qualities and obligations of the priestly life as also of the manner of performing the sacerdotal functions. In other words, it was to be a manual to help priests to correspond to their exalted vocation and to carry out its duties in a saintly manner.

It is a well-established fact that so long as a priest has only commonplace ideas of his state and duties, he does not feel the necessity of aspiring to perfection and experiences none of the holy ardors of true zeal. St. John Eudes realized this better than anyone, and so he began his *Memorial* by reminding priests of the sublimity of their calling. This is the theme of the first two chapters of his work. In both, the Saint's style is highly colored and distinctly oratorical. Very possibly they are merely extracts from conferences given by him to the clergy. At all events, they are certainly faithful echoes of his lectures and enable us to have an idea of that ardent and devotional eloquence that so strongly impressed his hearers and communicated to them something of the apostolic zeal that filled his heart. One cannot read them without being struck by the admiration and the enthusiasm with which he writes on the sublimity of the priesthood.

It would be impossible to find more striking and more accurate ideas on the subject.

The third chapter of the Memorial is a summary of the duties that devolve on the priest. This part is called the "memorial" or reminder by St. John Eudes, but that word is now given to the whole book. It would seem that this chapter is the oldest part of the volume, the nucleus of the complete work. In any case, it is superb and supplies fresh evidence of the Saint's ability to condense a whole programme of life

## INTRODUCTION

XX1-

into a few pages. The thirty-four articles to be found in it contain everything essential for the practice of priestly perfection. St. John Eudes deals with the fundamental rules of the priest's life, the principal dangers to be guarded against, the care that must be exercised over souls and the devotional exercises suited to the clergy. In these few pages one finds no exaggeration or even hyperbole, so commonly used by orators. The exactness and moderation of his teaching is matched by the precision of his style so that together they make this memorial or reminder a model of its kind.

The fourth and fifth chapters contain a series of pious exercises for the spiritual and the apostolic life of the priest. The Saint dwells on the interior dispositions necessary for achieving personal sanctity and for sanctifying souls through the ministry.

The last chapter is called the Directory of Retreats. It is very short and contains the usual method followed by retreatants in the seminaries conducted by the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. It also has brief notes on the various exercises of the retreat. The chief interest is found in the "extraordinary examens" inserted by the author, which have valuable instructions on the priestly virtues and which find a fitting place in a reminder of the priestly dignity and duties.'

## 11 The Apostolic Preacher

One of the principal functions of the sacred ministry is the preaching of the Word of God. Jesus Christ, the model of the priest, spent His public life in prayer and in preaching. The first mission that the Saviour of the World gave His Apostles was to announce the Gospel to all creatures. Moreover, the supernatural life of the soul is grounded on faith, and faith is engendered and developed by preaching. Fides ex auditu (Rom. 10, 17).

St. John Eudes belonged to the century of great French preachers. He himself was a born missionary. God had endowed him with extraordinary talents and special aptitudes for the holy ministry of preach

' These examens are usually separated from the chapter and printed as 'Meditations

for the Annual Retreat." In the present English edition they are the last series of meditations.

XX11-

## INTRODUCTION

ing. Noble and majestic of bearing, with a strong, flexible and pleasing voice, a rich and vivid imagination, and an ardent and impetuous character, he was destined in the course of his fifty-five years as a missionary to sway multitudes and to move and convert souls. To these qualities were added a burning zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, boundless compassion and sympathy for sinners and great personal sanctity which was universally recognized.

During his missions St. John Eudes invariably gave conferences to his young and inexperienced missionaries on the manner of preaching usefully. In order to conserve these rules in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and to ensure their practice after his death he decided to bring them together into a volume with the significant title, The Apostolic Preacher. Though he labored at the work for a long time, he did not

complete it until the end of his life and it was his successor, Father Blouet de Camilly, who published it in 1685.

In *The Apostolic Preacher* the Saint dwells upon the excellence and importance of preaching and elaborates some beautiful thoughts that are not usually found in books on the subject. He insists on the supernatural character of preaching and urges the preacher to raise himself above all thoughts of vanity and self-interest and to aim solely at instructing and touching his hearers. He goes into numerous details on the preparation and the composition of the sermon, gives many simple plans, adds some practical advice concerning delivery and points out the ordinary faults of preachers with countless other details that he drew from his own experience. What he desires, above all, is that the preacher be a man of prayer and that he be the first to practise what he preaches to the people.

### **III. The Good Confessor**

In 1644 St. John Eudes published a small book called *Advice to Missionary Confessors*, which he wrote for his auxiliary priests on the missions that it might guide and help them to maintain uniformity of method in the tribunal of penance. In its contents as in its title, this book recalls *Advice for Confessors* by St. Francis de Sales. St. John

#### **INTRODUCTION**

XX111-

Eudes took care, however, to add to the meekness of the Bishop of Geneva the firmness of St. Charles Borromeo, whose regulations he followed on the delaying and refusing of absolution. The Saint's booklet had a rapid success and appeared in a second edition.

But this volume was merely an essay, and the day came when St. John Eudes wished to complete it by adding the fruits of his long experience in the confessional. He quickly realized that the only way of doing this successfully was to revise the work completely. Thus he produced an entirely new book, *The Good Confessor*, which appeared in 1666. It was given a most cordial welcome by the clergy and became very popular. This explains why it was re-edited so often in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.'

*The Good Confessor* is an excellent handbook of pastoral theology, whose purpose is to teach priests how to administer the Sacrament of Penance. Gifted with a practical spirit, the Saint knew that the best means to inspire his fellow priests with a love of this office, so fruitful but often so fatiguing, was to point out first its greatness and sublimity. This he does in the opening chapters. Then he develops the necessary qualifications of the good confessor and offers some helpful advice on dealing with sinners in the confessional.

"Of all the books," says Martine, "given by Father Eudes to the public, *The Good Confessor*, brought him the most honor. He received from all sides the thanks and praises that he merited for publishing a work of such great utility." '

A little later Pierre Cousin wrote, "We might say that this little book, the first that has appeared in France since the reform of the confessional, has two advantages over most works on the same subject. The first is that the method it teaches is so easy that no one can fail to understand and to practise it faithfully. And the second is that the duties of confessors are there exposed not drily, but with a devotion that arouses that of the reader even as it instructs him."

2 Sixteen editions appeared from 1666 to 1733.

2 Martine, *Vie du P. Eudes*, Vol. II, p. 121.



"Father Pierre Cousin was appointed superior general of the Eudist Fathers in 1727. The quotation is taken from the introduction to the 1732 edition of *The Good Confessor*.

XX1V-

INTRODUCTION

## **1V. Meditations**

The present volume includes three series of meditations for the use of the clergy. The first group have as their object the chief obligations of a priest: obligation to seek perfection, hatred of sin, self-denial, love of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Church. These meditations are remarkable for the conciseness of their style as well as for the loftiness and solidity of their doctrine. With a little development they would make an excellent clergy retreat.

The other meditations fall into two distinct groups. The first deals with tonsure and holy orders, the material being extracted for the most part from the Pontifical. It was obviously the Saint's intention that they should be used by those to be ordained and possibly they were written for them. The second group, Meditations for the Annual Retreat, were formerly found in the Directory of Retreats at the end of the Memorial. They are the extraordinary examinations of which we have previously spoken.'

The Priest: His Dignity and Obligations, like all the other works of St. John Eudes, was bound up with his apostolic labors, and its only object was to ensure the success of the latter. It is not a learned work but a practical book written to meet the needs of his own Congregation and to help all priests to lead a life conformable to their sublime vocation. Written simply and clearly, without any literary object, it is permeated with the Saint's penetrating unction and delicate piety. No priest can read it seriously without deriving great benefits from it for his personal sanctification and for his priestly work for the salvation of souls.

CHARLES LEBRUN, C.J.M.

' See p. xxi.

XXV-

**DEDICATION**  
**TO**  
**THE HOLY PRIESTS OF THE**  
**CHURCH TRIUMPHANT**

O great saints, chosen from all eternity by Jesus Christ, the Saint of saints, to be clothed in an especial manner with His admirable sanctity; glorious priests selected from thousands of men by Jesus, the Supreme High Priest, to be His associates in the Divine Priesthood, prostrate at your feet with all respect and humility I salute you!

I honor you by every means in my power as my masters and spiritual fathers, as shining lights in the firmament of the Church, as true shepherds of the flock of Christ, as oracles of the Eternal Word, as prophets of His holy teaching, as chiefs in the celestial militia, as captains of the army of the Great King, as princes of His realm, as kings of His empire.

I revere you as members of the greatest and most dignified order in heaven and on earth, the Eternal Priesthood, founded and established by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

I hail you as the solid pillars supporting Mother Church, as the unshakable foundation of the house of God. I respect you as custodians of the keys of heaven, as cherubim stationed with flaming swords at the gates of paradise to prevent the unworthy and profane from entering its portals. I see in you living and perfect images of the Sovereign Priest, Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God, with whom you are one, being clothed with the very Priesthood conferred upon Him by His Eternal Father, and one with Him as all members are one with their head.

With all my heart I thank God for having elevated you to the highest dignity in his heavenly kingdom and in the family of His

XXV1-

DEDICATION

Divine Son. I rejoice that you are now crowned with glory and happiness, commensurate with the loftiness of your priestly dignity.

From my innermost soul I thank you for the heroic service you have rendered here on earth to our Divine Master and to His Holy Church, by the faithful discharge of your sacerdotal duties, and for the glory you have rendered God in time and eternity.

Who can tell the ardor of the love for Holy Mother Church which consumed you? Who can ever express in words the vigilance and zeal with which you labored in her interests? You realize now more than ever her great need in our materialistic age for priests who will follow in your footsteps, imitating your virtue and holiness. You understand how true is the saying of the Eternal Truth Himself that the harvest is great but the laborers few.

Permit me to address to you the prayer that Our Lord and Saviour recommended to all His children: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest (Matt. 9, 38). But pray that He send workers "approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2, 15), workers seeking not their own interests, but having as their only goal the glory of the Master and the salvation of the souls which He purchased with the shedding of His Precious Blood. Pray that He may send to His Church priests after His own heart, who

will walk the same road you trod while you were on earth.

O saintly priests, you know full well the importance and necessity of having holy priests in the Church of Christ. It is the most ardent longing of all true Christians who are animated with the love of God and the zeal for His Church. It is the sole desire that inflames my heart, and though I am the lowliest and most unworthy of all His priests, there is nothing that I would not undergo or suffer to further such a worthy consummation. This conviction constrained me to publish this work on the dignity and obligations of the priesthood. Those who take the trouble to use this book will find in its pages a compendium of their duties, and through its guidance they will exercise more worthily their priestly functions and be holy in all their actions.

Yet, because we labor in vain on earth unless our work be approved and blessed in heaven, deign, O holy priests of God, to accept this work and bless it, offering it in turn to the Sovereign Priest and to His

DEDICATION

XXV11-

Blessed Mother that they may smile in benediction upon it. Plead with Jesus and Mary that they may employ this book as a means of relieving the spirit of holiness and piety in priests on earth. Ask them to make all priests worthy to share your happiness in heaven, that your brothers in the Sacred Ministry may one day be associated with you in paradise to chant forever the praises of the Most Blessed Trinity, whose glory and majesty fill heaven and earth.

## Part I

### A MEMORIAL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE Part I

#### A MEMORIAL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE'

1 -

## CHAPTER 1( 2 )

### THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD( 3 )

IN THE DEDICATION of this work I prostrated myself before the holy priests of the Church Triumphant to invoke their blessing. I now address myself to you, brother priests of the Church Militant, in the words that St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, addressed to all Christians: Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis ut virtutes annuntietis ejus . us qui de tenebris vos vocavit in admirabile lumen suum. "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may declare his virtues, who bath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" ( 1 Pet. 2, 9).

You are a chosen generation, for the Saint of saints has elected you to the holy office of the priesthood. To you particularly He addresses these words: "But according to him that bath called you, who is holy,

(1). *Memorial*: There is no exact equivalent in English for the French word "Memorial." We have decided to retain the word with the sense of reminder, which it sometimes has in English. St. John Eudes says himself: 'I wish to put this book in your hands as a reminder (memorial) of all the qualities and the merits, the obligations and the duties of your profession, as also of the method of exercising in a holy manner all the priestly functions." Cf. Oeuvres Complètes du Venerable Jean Eudes, Vol. III, p. 21.

(2). The French work is divided into parts, not chapters. Chapter divisions are used in this edition.

(3) In the original edition this chapter is the second dedication.

2 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

be you also in all manner of conversation holy; because it is written: "You shall be holy, for I am holy" ( 1 Pet. 1, 15-16).

You are clothed and adorned with a kingly priesthood. You are priests and kings as Jesus Christ Himself is the Supreme Priest and King.

You are a purchased people in a very special significance. It is true that Our Blessed Redeemer purchased all mankind at the price of His Blood and that Almighty God gave Him to all nations. Nevertheless Jesus acquired you in a particular manner and so His Heavenly Father manifests a unique love for you.

After the Blessed Virgin Mary you represent our Divine Saviour's most glorious conquest. You are the most precious of all gifts that the Eternal Father has bestowed upon His Only Son. You are the first and most excellent fruit of His work, the worthiest price of His blood, His principal portion. You embody His most noble heritage from which are derived fruits for the glory of God more acceptable than from all His other possessions.

The Son of God chose you, not only that you yourselves might serve and love Him, but also that you

might make Him loved and served by others. He selected you that you might announce to the world the virtues, that is, the perfections and excellence, the mysteries and marvels of Him who "bath called you out of darkness," from the darkness of sin and hell, "into His marvellous light."

Jesus Christ, speaking of Himself, says, "I am the light of the world" (John 8, 12). He says also of priests, "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5, 14), and "to you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4, 11) and to make it known to other men. To you has been opened the treasury of wisdom and grace that you may be dispensers of these gifts.

You are persons elevated by the infinite goodness of God to the highest dignity of heaven and earth, second only to the divine motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

You are the noblest personages in God's house. You are clothed with genuine nobility for, as Christians and certainly much more as priests, you may be called in the words of St. Paul "the offspring of

### THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD

3 -

God" (Act. 17, 29). You are children of God, His first-born sons. You are of the royal blood of Jesus, a part of His genealogy; you are His brethren and members in a degree much higher than any other Christians. You are clothed with the royal priesthood, and your priesthood is one with His. Since there is but one priesthood, *unum est sacerdotium*, (4) centered in Christ and extended to all other priests, so there is but one priest, Jesus Christ. All other priests are one with Him, united to Him according to His own prayer: "The glory which thou has given me, I have given to them: that they may be olle as we also are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one . . ." (John 17, 22-23).

You are governors, judges, princes and kings of the empire of the supreme Monarch of the World. You are governors, not tenebrarum harum (Eph. 6, 12), that is, of this world, which is darkness and nothingness, but of faithful souls purchased with the Precious Blood of Christ, one drop of which is worth more than a thousand worlds.

You are judges, not of bodies but of souls, not of earthly but of heavenly things. Your judgments are not transitory; they endure forever. They are written, not on paper nor on parchment with ink, but in eternity with the adorable Blood of the Son of God. Thus the most eminent persons in the land recognize you as judges of their souls, divinely appointed by Providence. Humbly they kneel before you and accept your judgment as the very judgment of God Himself.

You are princes of God. Your principality is not terrestrial; it is immortal and imperishable. You are kings of His empire, the Church. It is to you that He says: *Ego dispono vobis sicut disposuit mihi Pater meus regnum*. "And I dispose to you. as My Father bath disposed to me, a kingdom" (Luke 22, 29). Your royalty is not temporal but eternal, a participation in the royalty of Jesus Christ.

Since Christ is Priest and King, so, too, you are priests and kings. Since you share one priesthood, so, too, you participate in one kingship with Him. Since the Eternal Father has given His Divine Son a name and a power above every name and every power (Phil. 2, 9), so He has given you, His priests, a name and a power incomparably

(4). Summach. Papa, Ep. i o ad Eonium, Arelat. Episc.

4 -

### THE PRIEST: HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

greater than all names and all Powers in this world and in the world to Come.

Did God say to any of the angels: "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech?" (PS. 109, 4). Did He ever pronounce to the Arcitangels, the Principalities or the Powers what His Son said to you: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven?" (Matt. 16, 19). To which of the Cherubim or Seraphim did He ever give the power to forgive sin, to bestow grace, to close hell and open the gates of heaven, to bring God into the hearts of men in the Blessed Sacrament? To whom in the universe did He grant the power of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, to immolate Him and give His Body and Soul to the faithful?

To which of the heavenly spirits did God ever speak the words He says to every priest, "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you?" (John 20, 21). In other words, I send you for the same purpose for which My Heavenly Father sent Me, to preach the gospel, to dispense grace, to administer the sacraments, to destroy the tyranny of Satan, to dispel the darkness of sin and to spread the divine light of grace throughout the world. I send you to establish the reign of God and to exercise on earth the very functions which I exercised, to continue My work of redemption, to lead the same life that I led and to practise the same virtues that I practised.

Thus, it is clear that you are not only the visible angels of the God of Armies; you are far greater than angels in power and authority. Hence, you must live a life more perfect in purity and sanctity than that of the angels.

It is not surprising that your power surpasses that of the angels, for, as the King of the Angels has made you participants in His kingship, so He has vested you with His own power. Consequently, you may say with Him, although in a different sense, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth and in hell;" in heaven for you have the keys to open and close the gates of the kingdom; on earth for daily you exercise among men an infinite power which is God's alone by the remis

#### THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD

5 -

sion of sins, the bestowal of grace, the formation of Christ in men's hearts and in the Blessed Eucharist; in hell for the Master has give& you the power to crush and destroy the dragons of hell and to drive demons from the bodies and souls of the faithful.

Furthermore, you have power over the Sovereign Lord Himself in heaven and on earth. Do you not envision Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of angels and men, Who was subject to His Mother and to St.' Joseph on earth, erat subditus illis (Luke 2, 51), actually subjected to the power of His priests? Does He not obey their commands and their words? Does He not hear their voice when they summon Him to come into their hands at the consecration of the bread and wine in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? Have they not power over His Mystical Body, which is the Church, over His Holy Spirit, over His grace and His mysteries? Is it not through priests and their ministry that the Holy Spirit is imparted to the faithful, that the treasures of grace are distributed and that the secrets of the eternal mysteries are made manifest? For that very reason Sacred Scripture attributed to them the function of "dispensers of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4, 1).

Above all else, how wonderful is the power of priests over the very Body and Blood of the Saviour! That power not only gives them the right to bring Our Lord down upon the altar whenever they wish or to transport Him from one place to another; it also extends to the point of sacrificing Him every day, and of annihilating Him so far as it is possible to annihilate Him, because sacrifice means the destruction of the object sacrificed. Whoever possesses sacrificial power likewise must have power to destroy what he sacrifices. This is indeed the greatest and most absolute power God Himself can exercise over His creatures, to destroy and annihilate them for His glory.

Thus, God has honored the sovereign Priest, His Divine Son, and all those whom He has called to this holy state of the priesthood. He who can make creatures more perfect, angels more beautiful and worlds far

greater and lovelier, cannot institute a priesthood more worthy and more admirable than the Christian priesthood. The sacerdotal dignity and power are so exalted that even Our Lord Himself cannot make priests capable of exercising functions more marvelous than yours

6 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

when you form Christ in the Holy Eucharist, when you offer Him in sacrifice, or give Him to the faithful in Holy Communion or when you forgive sins in the Sacrament of Penance.

What more shall I say? You are the first officers in the court of the great Monarch of the universe. You are the chief ministers of His state, the treasurers of His mercy, His faithful stewards. Into your hands He has committed His riches, His entire glory, the treasures of His grace, the keys of His kingdom, the sacraments of His religion, the sanctity of His divine mysteries, the virtue of His word, His Mystical Body, His very flesh and His Precious Blood.

You are the most noble part of the Mystical Body of Christ. You are the eyes, the mouth, the tongue, the heart of the Church, in other words, of Jesus Christ Himself.

You are His eyes for through you the Good Shepherd watches over His flock. Through you He enlightens and guides His sheep. Through you He weeps over the transgressions of those who fall by the wayside, or become prey of the wolves. Through you He weeps over the death of His dear Lazarus, that is, of the souls of those who are dead through sin.

You are His mouth and His tongue. Through you He speaks to His people, continuing to preach the gospel that He Himself preached during His public life.

You are His heart. Through you He imparts true life, the life of grace on earth and the life of glory in heaven to all the members of His Mystical Body. What marvels, what favors, what greatness in the sacerdotal dignity! Yet there is still more!

You are the associates of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, in most sublime and mysterious intimacy. I hear the great Apostle Paul announce to all Christians that they have been called by God to be members of the society of His Divine Son. *Vocati estis in societatem Filii ejus Jesu Christi*. "You are called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i, 9). With truth I say that priests are called unto the fellowship of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost. *Vocati estis in societatem Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti*.

God the Father associates you with Himself in the highest of all

## THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD

7 -

functions, the generation of His Divine Son. He embraces you in His divine paternity, making you fathers of that very Son since yours is the power to form and generate Him in the souls of the faithful. He has chosen you to be fathers of His people, real fathers in word and action. you bear within you the living image of the divine paternity. "O Priest," cries St. Augustine, "thou art the vicar and father of Christ»"

God the Son associates you with Himself in His noble perfections and His divine operations. He makes you participants in His role as mediator between God and man, in the dignity of judge of the universe, in His name and office as Saviour of the world. He gives you power to offer with Him to His Eternal Father the sacrifice of Redemption which He renews daily on the altars of the world, the most sublime action that He ever performed and ever will perform.

God, the Holy Ghost associates you with Him in His divine actions. Why did the Holy Spirit come into the world? Was it not to dispel the darkness of ignorance and sin? Was it not to enlighten men's minds with a celestial light, to fire their hearts with divine love, to reconcile sinners to God, to destroy sin, to communicate grace, to sanctify souls, and to establish the Church? Was it not to apply to mankind the fruits of the passion and death of the Redeemer, to destroy the old man and bring to life within us Jesus Christ Our Lord?

Is not your daily duty to concern yourselves with all these miraculous functions? Are you not sent by God to bring Christ into all hearts? Is it not true that all the offices of the priesthood are designed for the sole purpose of forming and causing God to live in the souls of His people?

Truly then, you have an intimate alliance with the Three Eternal Persons of the Blessed Trinity. You are their associates and their Coadjutors. You are cooperators with the Most High in all His works. *Dei adjutores, cooperatores veritatis* (1 Cor. 3, 9). You are co-laborers with the Almighty, sanctifiers of souls, mediators between God and man, judges of nations, saviours of the world. The Divine Redeemer has appointed you here on earth to serve in His place, to continue and complete His own work, the redemption of the universe.

In Sacred Scripture, Almighty God has given you the name of

8-

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

saviour, for of priests He says, by the mouth of the Prophet Abdias (Abdias 13, 21), *Ascendent salvatores in montem Sion*. Clement of Alexandria attributes to priests the role of redeemers.(5)

It may even be said of you that you are other Christs, living and walking among men for you bear the exalted name of the Son of God, the name of Jesus and Saviour. You represent His authority and His divine perfections. You act in His name, are employed in His service, continuing to live on earth the very life He led here below.

You are visible gods in this world, children of God, fathers of God. In his work, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, St. Dionysius invests you with these three attributes: You are gods because you take the place of God in this world and are clothed with His qualities, His prerogatives and powers. You are children of gods because you are the children of your bishops who in turn are gods in yet a higher degree than you. You are fathers of gods, because you are fathers of Christians who likewise are gods, though in a lower degree than you. *Ego dixi dii estis* (Ps. 81, 6). "A priest," says St. Gregory Nazianzen, "is a god who produces gods." *Deus deos efficiens*. (6)

O incomparable excellence! O incomprehensible dignity of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, shared with all His priests! How indebted we should be to Him who has raised us to so elevated a state, and has showered upon us such extraordinary gifts! O noble vocation! What a grace, what a privilege, what an inestimable blessing to have been called to an order so divine and so exalted!

(5). Clem. Al. in Oseam.

(6). Orat. Apolog.

9 -

## CHAPTER 11

### QUALITIES OF A HOLY PRIEST

THE MOST EVIDENT MARK of God's anger and the most terrible castigation He can inflict upon the world are manifested when He permits His people to fall into the hands of clerics' who are priests more in name than



in deed, priests who practice the cruelty of ravening wolves rather than the charity and affection of devoted shepherds. Instead of nourishing those committed to their care, they rend and devour them brutally. Instead of leading their people to God, they drag Christian souls into hell in their train. Instead of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world, they are its innocuous poison and its murky darkness.

St. Gregory the Great says that priests and pastors will stand condemned before God as the murderers of any souls lost through neglect or silence. *Tot occidimus, quot ad mortem ire tepidi et tacentes videmus*(1). Elsewhere St. Gregory asserts that nothing more angers God than to see those whom He set aside for the correction of others, give bad example by a wicked and depraved life.' Instead of preventing offenses against His Majesty, such priests become themselves the first to persecute Him, they lose their zeal for the salvation of souls and think only of following their own inclinations. Their affections go no farther than earthly things, they eagerly bask in the empty praises of men, using their sacred ministry to serve their ambitions, they abandon the things of God to devote themselves to the things of the world, and in their saintly calling of holiness, they spend their time in profane and worldly pursuits.

When God permits such things, it is a very positive proof that He is thoroughly angry with His people, and is visiting His most dreadful

(1). Homil. 12 super Ezech.

(2). Homil. 27 in Evang.

10 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

anger upon them. That is why He cries unceasingly to Christians, "Return, O ye revolting children . . . and I will give you pastors according to my own heart" (Jer. 3, 14-15). Thus, irregularities in the lives of priests constitute a scourge visited upon the people in consequence of sin.

On the other hand, the greatest effect of God's mercy, the most precious grace He bestows upon mankind, is to send worthy priests, men after His own heart, seeking only His glory and the salvation of souls. The greatest blessing that God bestows upon a church, the most signal manifestation of divine grace, is to have a saintly shepherd, be he bishop or priest. This is indeed the grace of graces and the most priceless of all gifts for it includes within itself every other blessing and grace. What is a priest after God's heart? He is an inestimable treasure containing an immensity of good things.

The holy priest is one of the treasures of the Great King, having in his keeping the infinite abundance of God's mercy to enrich worthy souls. He is an inexhaustible fountain of living water, open and accessible to all those who long to come to drink the waters of salvation.

He is a tree of life planted by God in the paradise of the Church, bearing on its branches at all times fruits of everlasting life, freeing from sin and hell, giving grace and eternal bliss to those who will but eat. Those fruits are the words, instructions, exhortations, prayers, intercession and example of the life and work of the holy priest.

He is an ever burning and shining light set in the candelabra of Mother Church, burning before God and shining before men: burning in his own love for God, shining by his charity for his fellow man; burning with the perfection of his inner life, shining by the perfection of his exterior deportment; burning in fervent prayer for his people, shining by his preaching of the word of God.

The priest is a sun cheering the world by his presence and bearing. He brings heavenly blessings into every heart. He dispels the ignorance and darkness of error and radiates on every side bright beams of celestial light. He extinguishes sin and gives life and grace to the multitudes. He imparts new life to the weak, inflames the lukewarm, fires more ardently those who are aglow with the sacred flame of divine love.

He is an angel purifying, illuminating and perfecting the souls that God has entrusted to him. He is a seraph sent by God to teach men the science of salvation which is concerned only with knowing and loving Almighty God and His Divine Son, Jesus Christ.

The priest is an archangel and a prince of the heavenly militia, waging constant war against the devil who strives to drag countless souls into the depths of hell.

He is the real father of the children of God, with a heart filled with love which is truly paternal. That love urges him to work unceasingly to nourish his flock with the bread and the sacred word and of the sacraments, to clothe the faithful with Christ and the Holy Ghost, to enrich them with celestial blessings and to secure for them every possible assistance in the salvation of their souls.

Above all else, the priest is the father, the advocate, the protector and defender of the poor, widows, orphans and strangers. He is the refuge of the afflicted, of the desolate and the discouraged. He is happy to visit and console the sorrowful, to bring them what assistance he can, taking upon himself their burdens and defending them against their oppressors.

He is a captain in the mighty army of God, always ready to battle for the glory of God and the defense of Holy Mother Church. He is ever prepared to lay siege to the world, the flesh and the devil. For him the conquest of kingdoms means only the salvation of souls for each soul is a kingdom more precious than all the empires of the world.

The priest is a prince of the realm of God, one of the kings of Christ's empire, the Church. He is appointed to rule by the maxims and laws of the gospel as many kings and queens as there are Christians committed to his care. His duty is to make them worthy to possess in eternity the very kingdom of the Sovereign Monarch of the world.

The priest is an evangelist and an apostle whose chief work is to preach publicly and privately, by word and example, the Gospel of Jesus Christ; to continue and perpetuate the functions that the apostles were commissioned to perform, and to practise the virtues that they practised.

He is the sacred bridegroom of the divine spouse, the Church of Christ. He is so consumed with love that his thoughts are concerned

only with seeking means to adorn and embellish the Church in the eyes of men, and to render her yet more worthy of the eternal love of the heavenly and immortal Bridegroom.

The priest is a mediator between God and man, causing the Eternal Father to be known, loved, adored and served, as well as feared, by men. His office is to make known the will of God to men, urging them to be faithful to their every duty. His concern is to be devoted unceasingly to "the things that appertain to God" (Heb. 5, 1).

The priest is one of the chief parts of the Mystical Body of Christ because he occupies the principal parts of that Body, namely, the head, the eyes, the mouth, the tongue and the heart. He is the head with the Chief Shepherd, sharing the right to rule and govern in His place. He is the eyes watching over the other members to enlighten and guide them, and to weep over them when they sin. The priest is the mouth and the tongue to speak the language of heaven, to utter on all occasions the words of eternity. He is the heart circulating the blood stream of Christ's Precious Blood to quicken and vivify the other members, that their

works and functions may be ennobled and perfected.

A holy priest is a saviour and another Christ, taking the Master's place on earth, representing Him, clothed with His authority, acting in His name, adorned with His qualifications, exercising His judgment on earth in the tribunal of penance. He is consecrated to exercise the highest functions Christ ever performed on earth, to continue the work of salvation. In imitation of His Redeemer he gives himself, mind, heart, affections, strength, time, all for God. He is ever ready to sacrifice his very blood and even life itself to procure the salvation of souls, particularly those of his own flock.

He is a god, living and walking on earth; a god by grace and by participation, clothed with the perfections and attributes of God, namely, His divine authority, power, justice, mercy, charity, benignity, purity and holiness. He is a god delegated to carry on God's noblest works, the sacerdotal and pastoral duties, as great St. Dionysius says: *Omnium divinorum divinissimum est cooperari Deo in salutem animarum*. "The most divine of all divine things is to cooperate with God in the salvation of souls." (3) (3). *De Coelesti Hierarchia*, cap. 5.

#### QUALITIES OF A HOLY PRIEST

13 -

St. Gregory Nazianzen asserts that the priest is a "God who makes gods," *Deus deos efficiens*, (4) that is, Christians who are given the name of gods in Sacred Scripture.

He is a shepherd bearing within himself the living image of the goodness and the vigilance of the Good Shepherd, a guardian who never deserts his flock lest the wolves devour it. He is a shepherd who knows his sheep, their needs, their maladies, their infirmities, that he may cure them. He is a shepherd who nourishes them by word and example.

What more shall I say? "Who speaks of the priesthood," says St. Dionysius, "speaks of an order which contains within itself all that is most sacred and most holy." (5) "Who speaks of the priesthood," avers St. Ignatius Martyr, "speaks of the fullness of the blessings of God." (6) "Who speaks of a priest," adds St. Dionysius, "speaks of a man who is divine." (7)

Whoever refers to a priest adorned with virtue and holiness becoming the dignity of his calling, bespeaks the greatest degree of sanctity found in Holy Church, a sanctity which is the source and wellspring of grace and love, for the priesthood is the fountain of all holiness.

Such a priest is a man called to the sacerdotal dignity not by men, not by the will of flesh and blood, not by his parents or by the spirit of ambition, not by avarice or human motives, but by vocation from God.

Such a priest is a man endowed with the marks and perfections outlined in the first Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, and in the third Chapter of his First Epistle to Timothy: "a man without crime, as the steward of God; not proud, not subject to anger, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, gentle, sober, just, holy, continent: of good behaviour, chaste, given to hospitality, a teacher; one that ruleth well his own house having his children in subjection. . . . But if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (Tit. 1, 7-8); (1 Tim. 12-5).

Such a priest employs his revenue and income not in vanities nor sinful excesses nor to enrich his relatives or his own estate, but to en

(4). Oral. Apolog. (6). *Episc. 10 ad Smyrna*.

(7). *De Eccl. Hierarch. cap. 1, 3.* (7) *Loc. cit.*

14 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

hance the glory of God. He adorns altars, clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, refreshes the thirsty, frees

prisoners, assists religious institutions, builds churches and hospitals, and carries out good works of every description.

Such a priest is seen frequently in the hospitals, prisons and the homes of the poor. He consoles, instructs and assists the people in their spiritual and corporal necessities. He applies himself diligently to the consideration of his duties; he studies the needs of his flock in order to exercise the utmost efficiency in supplying their wants. He ferrets out any disorders which may exist among his charges in order to eradicate them; he gives himself unselfishly to the advancement of the glory of God and the salvation of those souls under his direction.

The saintly priest employs his mind and heart, thoughts, affections, words and actions, his time, his life, all that he has, to destroy the tyranny of Satan and sin, and to establish the reign of Christ in the hearts of those whom God has entrusted to him.

The worthy priest is an angel of purity in mind and body, a cherub of light and knowledge, a seraph of love and charity, an apostle of zeal in work and sanctity, a little god on earth in power and authority, in patience and benignity. He is the living image of Christ in this world, of Christ watching, praying, preaching, catechizing, working, weeping, going from town to town, from village to village, suffering, agonizing, sacrificing Himself and dying for the souls created to His image and likeness.

He is the light of those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He is the destroyer of error, schisms and heresies, the converter of sinners, the sanctifier of the just, the strength of the weak, the consolation of the afflicted, the treasure of the poor. He is the confusion of hell, the glory of heaven, the terror of demons, the joy of angels, the ruin of Satan's kingdom, the establishment of Christ's empire, the ornament of the Church, the crown of the Supreme Shepherd.

In a word, the holy priest embodies a world of grace and benediction for the entire Church, but especially for that portion which God has called him to govern and guide.

15 -

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **DUTIES OF THE PRIESTLY STATE**

FROM ALL that has been written in the foregoing chapters, it is obvious that the priest is favored with far more graces than any other human being except the Blessed Virgin Mary. It follows, then, that no one on earth is held to a greater perfection and sanctity of life than the priest, especially if he is charged with the care of souls.

Thus, it is most important and necessary for you to consider often and seriously before God the dignity and excellence of your vocation, the obligation and duties which it involves and the manner in which you discharge them.

Consequently, it is profitable for you to have a summary of these duties, to read and reread, that thus you may engrave your responsibilities on your heart, and give expression to them in your life and conduct.

The compendium that I have drawn up with this intention in mind, formulates the principal sacerdotal duties under thirty-four headings, in honor and commemoration of the thirty-four years<sup>(1)</sup> of the life on earth of Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, who is the model of all priests. If you seek to follow

a rule filled with love, sweetness and perfection you must do as follows:

(1). The exact duration of Christ's public life is uncertain. St. John Eudes follows the opinion of St. Jerome that the ministry of Jesus lasted three years and a half. Assuming as do many authoritative writers that Our Lord began His public life at the age of thirty, St. John Eudes concludes that the entire life of the Savior extended over a period of thirty three years and six months. Our Lord therefore died in His thirty-fourth year. This accounts for the fact that St. John Eudes asks us to honor the thirty-four years of our Lord's life on earth-For the chronology and duration of Christ's life, see Filion, *Vie de N.S. Jesus Christ* (Paris, 1925), vol. II, p. 11 and The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. VIII, «Jesus,» P. 379.

## 16 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

1 Establish in your heart a firm resolution to live inwardly and outwardly in such a way that your life may be above reproach, following the words of St. Paul to Timothy which apply to priests as well as bishops, "It behoveth therefore a bishop to be blameless" (1 Tim. 3, 2). Make of your life a living gospel, a continual sermon, a perfect rule of life and morals for those whom you govern.

2 Make a lofty and generous profession to conduct your life always according to the maxims of faith and of the gospel, being assiduous in reading and studying them. Christ brought His divine maxims down from heaven and taught them to His apostles for this very purpose. Why else did He inspire the writings of Sacred Scripture except that they be followed? Who will follow them if not the priests who should learn these truths and preach them to the people? How shall they learn and preach these truths if they do not take the trouble to read the exhortations of Our Lord Jesus Christ, where they are to be found, especially in chapters five, six and seven of St. Matthew?

3 Be not concerned with the world. Rather renounce its maxims, its spirit and everything associated with it. True Christians are not of this world, even as the Master Himself is not, according to His own words: "Because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world" (John 17, 14). If the Holy Ghost forbids the faithful to be concerned with the things of this world, even commanding them to hate them, how much more so do His words apply to priests? "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2, 15).

4 Engrave on your heart the words of St. Paul and follow them faithfully: "Be not conformed to this world" (ROM. 12, 2). Renounce as much as lies in your power everything worldly in dress or habits. It surely demeans the priesthood when you who are supposed to be the

## DUTIES OF THE PRIESTLY STATE

17 -

salt of the earth, that is, the wise men of the world, follow the fashions of the day and the inane spirit of the times, manifested in thoughtlessness and perpetual changes. *Stultus ut luna mutatur* (Ecclus. 27, 12).

5 Avoid all familiarity with the laity, especially worldlings and women, except in charity and necessity. Even then, your aim should be to avoid being alone with them. At all times, whether your conversation be with women or other people of the world ' speak the language of the Heavenly Father, conversing chiefly of the things of God and eternal salvation: if any man speak, let him speak, as the words of God" (1 Pet. 4, 11). "For we are the good odour of Christ unto God; providing good things, not only in the sight of God but also in the sight of all men, that he, who is on the contrary part may be afraid, having no evil to say of us" (2 Cor. 2, 15; Rom. 12, 17; Tit. 2, 8).

6 Always dress in your clerical attire which is the ornament and glory of the priest. Be mindful that you should avoid anything which suggests foppishness or vanity. Likewise, you should be careful to be neat and tidy so that your appearance suggests order and cleanliness. Your h-caring at all times should denote humility, simplicity and modesty.

7 Deny to avarice any part in your life, and shut the door of your heart firmly against any inroad. Engrave upon it these words of the Holy Ghost, "Let your manners be without covetousness, contented with such things as you have. For He hath said, I will not leave thee: neither will I forsake thee" (Heb. 13, 5). "For they that will become rich fall into temptation and into the snare of the devil and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evils: which some coveting have erred from the faith and have entangled themselves in many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, fly these things: and pursue justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, mildness" (1 Tim. 6, 9-11).

## 18 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

You should always remember that, when you embraced the clerical state, you made your profession in these words, *Dominus pars haereditatis meae*, meaning that you would seek no other portion, no other heritage than Jesus Christ Himself. Consequently, He is the only treasure to fill your heart, and you should seek no other treasures on earth. The Fathers of the Church tell us that the priest who enriches himself or his relatives at the expense of the Church will be condemned by God as guilty of theft and sacrilege. As St. Bernard puts it: *Furtum est, rapina, sacrilegium.* (2).

8 Hold in horror the spirit of the Pharisees, that is, the spirit of ambition and vanity which loves the point of honor, which preaches but does not practise, which seeks only the praise and tribute of man, and which is concerned only with appearances and the plaudits of humans. That spirit dares to ignore the frightful anathemas hurled by the Saviour Himself against the haughty Pharisees: "Woe to you when men shall bless you: for according to these things did their fathers do to the false prophets" (Luke 6, 26). To avoid such a tendency, consider well and practise the words of Sacred Scripture: "The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things: and thou shalt find grace before God" (Ecclus. 3, 20). And Christ Himself counsels us thus, "Go sit down in the lowest place" (Luke 14, 10). "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11, 29).

9 Fear the sentence pronounced against the unworthy servant: "And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness" (Matt. 25, 30). Have a wholesome dread lest this verdict be hurled against you. To safeguard particularly against this, avoid idleness, the mother of all vices. Regulate and occupy your time with prayer and study, and in the exercise of devotion, charity or other useful works. Remember that no group of men on earth is more obliged to make profitable use of time than priests for they are charged with the most important duties on earth—the glory of God and the salvation of souls.  
Epist. ad Falconem.

## DUTIES OF THE PRIESTLY STATE

19 -

10 Learn to hate intemperance in eating and drinking. Avoid every occasion in which sinful excesses may be committed. This vice is low and bestial and most definitely contrary to the sanctity and dignity of the priest, who should be an angel among men.

11 Abhor impurity. Avoid with the most scrupulous exactitude the places, persons or things which might constitute the slightest peril or suggest even the smallest shadow of that abominable vice. What could be more necessary and becoming to the life of the priest consecrated to God, the priest whose life is spent in the church near the altar, whose time is spent performing angelic functions amidst divine mysteries, what is more necessary and becoming than purity of mind and body? What can be more terrible than an impure priest? He is a monster, a Judas, an antichrist.

12 Consider the words of St. Paul: if any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5, 8). Lest, therefore, you be

condemned by God as apostates, learn to rule and govern your household that it may be a shining example of virtue, modesty, charity and piety for all Christian families to behold and imitate.

13 Keep a constant eye on the needs of your flock, anticipating their every want. Be mindful that the slightest negligence on your part renders you culpable in the eyes of God for He will demand a rigorous account of all the souls committed to your care. I will require his blood at thy hand," says Sacred Scripture in Ezechiel (3, 18). Likewise, the Master will brand you as the murderers of those who perish because of your sloth, as witness the terrible words of St. Gregory: "*Tot occidimus quot ad mortem ire tepidi et tacentes videmus.*"  
(3). Homil. 17.

## 20 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

14 Eradicate those evils for which you can find a remedy. Seek to destroy as far as is possible, scandal, disorders and sin by prayer, example and preaching. Thus, you shall fulfil the words of St. Paul: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4, 2). Banish blasphemies, swearing, injury and injustice, the oppression of the poor, the pomps of Satan. Crush the implements of the devil, immoral dancing, obscene plays, lascivious books and shows, immodest dress and lewd fashions. Abolish blasphemy, lying, fraud and every such type of sin. Above all else, Preach and wage incessant war against drunkenness, the source of so much evil.

15 Be the protector and defender, the consoler, the father and the refuge of the poor, widows and orphans. Be the strength of those who are helpless and oppressed. Be assiduous in catechizing and preaching the gospel. Visit prisoners and the afflicted, encouraging them to turn their trials to their spiritual advancement.

16 Cultivate a very special charity for the sick and visit them frequently. Administer the sacraments and try to be with them at the hour of death. Be exact in your devotion to the poor as well as to the rich, to the humble as well as to the great.

17 Strive your utmost to instruct those under your care in their Christian obligations. In this respect be faithful in preaching and exhorting, not only in the pulpit and in public, but even in private, in the home, on the street, everywhere, in imitation of the first Christian priests. "And every day they ceased not in the temple, and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus" (Acts 5, 42). Let it be said of you as of St. Paul, I am clear from the blood of all men. For I have not spared to declare unto you all the counsel of God. . . . For three

## DUTIES OF THE PRIESTLY STATE

21 -

years I ceased not, with tears to admonish every one of you night and day" (Acts 20, 26-31).

18 Watch over the school, being especially careful in the selection of teachers. Frequently visit the class rooms to teach catechism, and to hear the children say their morning and night prayers. Encourage them also in the practice of the utmost respect for the House of God.

19 Try to adjust differences which may arise between various members of your flock and strive to establish the reign of peacefulness and Christian charity among those committed to your charge by God.

20 Cultivate an ardent love for the Church which God has given to you as a spouse to Whom you must surrender your whole heart. Carefully protect her interests; seek unflaggingly to advance her mission; labor unceasingly for her growth and sanctification; be unailing in your zeal for the salvation of souls, burning into your very heart the words of St. Dionysius, *Omnium divinatorum divinissimum est cooperari*

Deo in salutem animarum .(4)

21 Let your chief glory and happiness consist in seeking to carry out holily and reverently the noble duties of the priestly life, especially the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the recitation of the Divine Office, the administration of the sacraments, preaching and instructing. Above all else, endeavor to form the saintly habit of doing everything not simply by routine, not in a slovenly, careless manner, but with devotion and exactitude worthy of God, as St. Paul counsels, *digne Deo* (Col. 1, 10), that is, worthy of His eternal majesty and infinite sanctity. To attain this goal, observe the dispositions and practices which will be suggested later on this point.

(4). *De Coelesti Hierarchia*, cap. 3.

## 22 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

22 Be most devoted to hearing confessions, regarding this function as one of the chief duties of the priest and as a most necessary most powerful and most effective means of cooperating with God in the salvation of souls.

23 Take great care not to violate the command of our Divine Master, namely: "Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine" (Matt. 7, 6). Let no unworthy person, no public sinner approach the holy table; withhold absolution from those unworthy of it, particularly those who persist in living in the proximate occasion of sin or constitute themselves such occasions for others; those, too, who live at enmity with their fellow men, refusing all attempts at reconciliation; those who remain constantly in the state of mortal sin without purpose or desire of amendment.

Be solicitous for the sanctity of the Sacrament of Matrimony, being particularly careful that none shall enter that holy state unless they are free from all canonical impediments and are thoroughly familiar with the obligations of marriage as well as its rights.

Regarding the Sacrament of Baptism, likewise be on guard against permitting unworthy godparents to assume the duties of sponsors, for these spiritual fathers and mothers cannot discharge the duties of their high office unless they are properly instructed and fitted for the task.

24 Be diligent in your care of the church, the cemetery and all places set aside for the service of God. Let all appointments reflect the sanctity that must characterize a consecrated environment. Everything should be neat and clean and in good order, especially the objects inside the Sanctuary. There the Great King should be served and honored with a dignity and excellence befitting His exalted position; there above all else the sacraments should be administered with the most exacting care; there the Divine Office should be recited with gravity and devotion, and every ceremony carried out with grace and dignity. The

## DUTIES OF THE PRIESTLY STATE

23 -

House of God should be a place where the worshipper conducts himself with modesty, respect and appreciation~ of the Real Presence.

Be insistent in your zeal for the observance of Sunday and Holy Days. Discourage their profanation by unseemly conduct or unbecoming amusements. Above all else, fulminate against such sinful practices as drunkenness and debauchery.

25 Cherish an ardent devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and her holy spouse, St. Joseph, and endeavor to implant it also in the lives of those under your charge. Likewise impress upon your congregation the necessity of honoring the patron saints of the diocese and of the parish. Have a special devotion to all holy Pontiffs, Priests and Levites. Let it be felt that the observance of their feast days is actually the celebration of the feasts of our own brothers and fathers: *Filii sanctorum sumus* (Tob. 2, 18).



26 Have a most profound devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, for it is the unspeakable treasure of the priest, who should have in his own heart a burning zeal towards so holy a possession. It should be his one and constant desire to honor the Blessed Sacrament and to make it honored by others and to see, that the abiding place of the Lord is clean, honorable and edifying. The priest should be unfailing in his efforts to teach the faithful to act reverently in the presence of Christ in the Tabernacle; he should spare no pains to encourage them to assist frequently and devoutly at Holy Mass.

27 Never spare yourself when it is a question of establishing the reign of the Master in the Holy Family of Christ, that is, in the intimate circle of priests and clerics consecrated to His service. Let the most important duty of your life be to implant virtue, piety and sanctity in the minds and souls of the chosen ones of God.

#### 24 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

28 Read carefully the thirty-fourth Chapter of the Prophet Ezechiel, the tenth Chapter of St. John's Gospel, the sixth Chapter of the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians and his Epistles to Timothy and Titus. In these texts you shall hear the voice of God speaking to priests, outlining their duties, which are summarized in the following words which you should engrave upon your hearts: In all things show thyself an example of good words, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity. The sound word that cannot be blamed: that he who is on the contrary part may be afraid, having no evil to say of us" (Titus, 2, 7-8). "Be thou an example of the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity ... Attend unto reading: to exhortation and to doctrine. Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood. Meditate upon these things: be wholly in these things: that thy profiting may be manifest to all. Take heed to thyself and to doctrine: be earnest in them. For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4, 12-16).

29 Weigh deeply and ponder the following words:

1. "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4, 3). "But according to him that hath called you, who is holy, be you also in all manner of conversation holy: because it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1, 15-16).

2. "Did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2, 49).

3. "For all seek the things that are their own: not the things that are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2, 21).

4. "He is . . . the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth: and the sheep hear his voice. And he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out" (John 10, 2-3).

5. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint, but willingly, according to God: not for filthy lucre's sake but voluntarily" (1 Pet. 5, 2).

6. "I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10, 15).

#### DUTIES OF THE PRIESTLY STATE

25 -

30 Realizing your incompetence, cultivate a true love of prayer, having recourse to it at all hours and on every occasion. Never attempt anything till you have first prayed, being mindful that only thus may you hope to draw down upon yourself divine light and grace. You should constantly implore the aid of Our Lord, the Sovereign Priest, of His Blessed Mother, and of the angels and the saints.

3 1 Keep constantly before your eyes the life of the Great High Priest and Supreme Shepherd of souls, the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the mother of all Christians, but particularly of the priests and doctors of Holy Church. Study their actions and their virtues, and the excellence of all holy persons, making them the model of your life, the rule you should follow, according to which you shall be judged hereafter.

3 2 Be assiduous in spiritual reading, setting aside at least a quarter of an hour daily for this purpose. Let your reading be done attentively and let it be unhurried.

3 3 Take the time at least once a month to read these rules, or at least a portion of them, with great attention, in the presence of God. Examine yourself to see how you have transgressed. Ask God's pardon for your faults. Make a firm resolution to be more faithful in the future. As a means of finding strength, invoke the Divine mercy and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and the saints, particularly your heavenly patron.

3 4 Finally, make an eight-day or a ten-day retreat every year in imitation of Our Saviour, who spent forty days in the desert before beginning His public life, and even during His journeys through Galilee often retired into the mountains alone to pray. Imitate also the Apostles

## 2 6 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

and disciples who spent ten days in prayer shut away from the world, preparing themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost, Who was to animate their entire being for the great work of the salvation of souls.

Let your retreat be made in a seminary or in some secluded place where your soul may be alone in its communings with its Maker. Let every moment of that precious period be given to exercises of devotion and virtue, so that the words of the Holy Spirit may be fulfilled, as spoken by St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself and to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4, 16). Take heed especially "to thyself," that is, apply yourself wholly to the considerations of the obligations of your state in life. Consider your lapses, humbling yourself before God, penitently resolving to amend your life, to fortify yourself against temptations, invoking for this purpose the light and help of heaven.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE PRIEST (1)

#### I. MORNING EXERCISE

ON AWAKENING in the morning, pronounce fervently the holy names of Jesus and Mary. Make the sign of the cross with great devotion, saying the words with the intention of adoring the Most Blessed Trinity and of consecrating yourself to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Renew the profession of faith made at baptism, saying with all your heart the words, Abrenuntio tibi, Satana, including therein sin, the world and the devil; and then add, Adhaereo tibi, Christe.

If you wish to make a longer renewal of your baptismal profession of faith, you may say the following prayer:

"O Jesus, for love of Thee I renounce sin, the evil spirit, the world, myself, all my inclinations and whatever is of the old man. I give myself entirely to Thee and consecrate to Thee my heart in honor of Thy Most Sacred Heart; my body With all its members in honor of Thy Sacred Body; my soul with all its faculties; my whole life in honor of Thy life; all my thoughts, actions, works and sufferings in honor of and in thanksgiving for all Thy thoughts, words, actions, works and sufferings.

"O Jesus, take complete possession of me so that I may be entirely consecrated to Thee and may be sacrificed with Thee for the honor and glory of the Eternal Father.

"O Mother of Jesus, to thee I give myself; give me in turn to thy Divine Son.

(1) In this translation we have separated into two chapters the part dealing with the dispositions to exercise the priestly functions in a holy manner.

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

"Angels of God, saints of God, I give myself to you. Give me, I beseech you, to God for ever."

On arising, recall the infinite love with which Our Lord came forth from the bosom of His Heavenly Father to enter into this valley of tears and darkness. At the moment of His Incarnation He left behind the infinite glory and happiness of heaven to embrace the cross and its humiliating sufferings. In union with that great love of Jesus, arise saying: I will rise. . . . and seek Him whom my soul loveth" (Cant. 3, 2). As you say the words, "whom my soul loveth," have the desire to pronounce them as far as possible with all the love that is offered to Jesus Christ both in heaven and on earth.

While you are dressing, recite vocal prayers, such as the hymn, Veni Creator, or one of the psalms or recall some passages of Sacred Scripture. Fill your mind with holy thoughts, for example, the consideration of the fact that God has subjected you to the necessity of being decently clothed to protect your body; recall also that there are many who are more worthy than you in His sight and who dwell in poverty. Then raise your soul to God and say:

"O my Saviour, I acknowledge that I have deserved because of my sins the frightful punishment of being hurled unclothed into hell fire. I bless Thee with all my heart for having given me these garments. I give myself to Thee in this action of dressing which I now perform, with all the sentiments that animated Thee when Thou didst clothe Thyself with our humanity. O Dear Jesus, rid me of the old man, clothe me with the new, make me live the words of St. Paul: 'Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience, and charity' (COL. 3, 12).

When you are fully dressed, kneel and adore the Blessed Trinity.. Offer thanks for having been preserved during the hours of sleep; consecrate the day to God's glory, saying three times: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost."

Adore Jesus Christ, as the God-Man, thanking Him and consecrating yourself to His glory, saying at the same time, "We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee, because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world. Thou didst suffer for us; O Lord Jesus, have mercy on us."

## THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE PRIEST

29 -

Invoke the assistance of the Blessed Virgin in the recitation of the Hail Mary.

Salute your guardian angel with this prayer: "O my holy Guardian Angel, I honor thee by every means at my disposal; I thank thee for all the favors which have come to me through thy special intercession; I offer myself to thee that thou mayst offer me to God and beseech Him to keep me from sin and grant me the grace of always doing His holy will!"

Salute all the other angels and saints of heaven in this way: "All hail, ye angels and saints of the heavenly courts. Deign to intercede for our salvation and for the salvation of all mankind."

## 2. MEDITATION

Before offering up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, devote at least half an hour to meditation or mental prayer, a habit as vitally necessary to the soul of every Christian and of every priest as bread is to the body.

### Acts Before Meditation

Prepare yourself for this holy exercise by the following acts:

Contemplate with the eyes of faith the infinite majesty and the immensity of God, Who is omnipresent and fills all creation, and Who is more in you than you are in yourself, according to the words of St. Augustine, *Intimo meo intimior*. Adore Him with profound humility. Realize how unworthy you are even to appear before Him, even to think of Him or have Him think of you or to suffer you in His presence.

Assure your Divine Creator that you are desirous of performing this act solely for His glory. Renounce yourself, your mind and your own self-esteem, giving yourself completely to Christ Our Lord. Enter into the holy dispositions which animated His continual prayer before His Heavenly Father. Unite yourself to those prayers constantly offered to God, not only by the saints in heaven, but likewise by all holy souls here below. Unite your prayers to those of the Blessed Virgin, the angels and the saints to whom you have special devotion. Beseech them to make you share in their fervor.

30 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Give your mind and heart to the Master. Beg Him to take full possession, and guide them in prayer according to His holy will, in thought and affection pleasing to Him.

### Acts After Meditation

You should conclude this exercise by thanking God for all the graces He has bestowed upon you, asking pardon for any carelessness you have manifested, imploring our Saviour to supply any defects and to offer in your place a continual prayer before His Heavenly Father.

Then make a summary of the principal thoughts and inspirations given you by God so that you may think of them during the day. In order to refresh your memory, select a text of Scripture or some

aspiration to recall the subject of your meditation. Repeat this ejaculatory prayer frequently during the day.

Beware of relying only on your own thoughts and resolutions. Rely wholly upon the infinite mercy of God, placing in His hands what He has bestowed upon you in prayer, that He may grant you the grace of putting your resolutions into practice.

Beg the Blessed Virgin Mary, your guardian angel, your patron saint and all the angels and saints in heaven to continue your prayer before the Almighty.

Foresee those faults into which you usually fall and the occasions of sin which are the most dangerous for you. Be vigilant in the observance of the virtues you are especially required to practise, asking God for the grace to avoid pitfalls and to have the strength to be loyal to duty. Keep constantly before your mind the obligations of your state in life, what good you can accomplish this day, what evil you must avoid, what benefits you can reap for the honor and glory of God and the salvation of souls.

### **3..THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS**

#### **Preparation**

Before celebrating Holy Mass. spend some time in recollection, considering the infinite importance of what you are about to do. The Mass

#### **THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE PRIEST**

31 -

is certainly the loftiest, the holiest and the most divine act ever accomplished in heaven and on earth. You should then endeavor to arouse within yourself lively sentiments of devotion and preparation that you may perform this noble action in the most worthy manner possible.

Humble yourself before God, recognizing your own incompetence and unworthiness, except through His mercy and favor.

Thank Him for the infinite goodness He displays towards you in permitting you to offer the Holy Sacrifice.

Protest to Him that you seek only His glory. Purify your soul by true contrition of sin, or even, if necessary, by the reception of the Sacrament of Penance.

Surrender yourself completely to the Eternal Father, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. Pray that they may destroy within you whatever is displeasing to them and may adorn your soul with graces and virtues necessary for the offering of Holy Mass. Give yourself entirely to Jesus that you may enter with Him into His holy dispositions and intentions as He sacrificed Himself on Calvary and again sacrifices Himself daily on the altar. Offer yourself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to all the holy priests and all the angels and saints in heaven that they may plead with God on your behalf, and make you share in their holy dispositions as they offer Jesus in perpetual sacrifice to His Eternal Father in heaven.

Offer Holy Mass for the following five reasons: 1. In honor of all that God is in His divine essence, in His divine perfections, in the Three Eternal Persons, in His Sacred Humanity and in all the mysteries; in His Blessed Mother, in the Church Triumphant, Militant and Suffering, in the visible and invisible world. 2. In thanksgiving for all the favors heaped upon His Son, Jesus Christ, upon His holy Mother, upon His Mystical Body, which is the Church, upon all creatures, even upon the demons in hell. 3. In satisfaction and reparation for any dishonor rendered Almighty God by the sins committed by sinners of the whole world, and particularly by yourself or your friends. 4. To obtain from God all the spiritual and temporal graces

necessary to all creatures, especially to the Church, to its pastors and priests, to yourself and to all those for whom you are obliged to pray.

## 3 2 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

5. For the fulfilment of all the providential designs of God for you, for the Church and for the whole world.

### Thanksgiving After Mass

After Mass prostrate yourself body and soul before our Lord truly present within you, adoring, thanking, loving and revering Him, and asking His pardon for all your ingratitude and offenses.

Consider that while He is within you, He performs the same function that He exercises in heaven, namely, He adores, praises, thanks and loves His Eternal Father, and sacrifices Himself to His greater honor and glory. Surrender yourself to Christ that you may be united with Him in His adoration, His love, His praise and His sacrifice, that therein you may glorify the ever Blessed Trinity, immolating yourself with Jesus, your Head and Master.

Even as Jesus Christ gives Himself all in all, with infinite love, so in union with the same love give yourself entirely to Him, imploring Him to possess you completely and thus destroy in you anything that is displeasing to Him. Ask Him to establish the reign of His glory and of His love in your heart and in your life.

## 4. THE DIVINE OFFICE

### Preparation

Look upon this function as one of the greatest and most important in the life of a priest. Think of it as an action truly saintly, wholly angelic, completely divine. Through it you become one with the angels, with the saints, with the Blessed Virgin, with Christ our Lord, and with the Three Divine Persons of the ever Blessed Trinity, united in continual glorification and praise of one another. Consequently, let your resolution be to perform this duty well, with all respect and external modesty, and with the most perfect interior devotion.

Humiliate yourself before God, realizing that you are unworthy to undertake so holy a function and unable of yourself alone to discharge it becomingly. Try to make an act of contrition that your soul may be purified from every stain of sin. Offer to God your tribute of praise

## THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE PRIEST

3 3 -

and Prayer, mindful of the words of Sacred Scripture: "Praise is not Seemly in the mouth of a sinner" (Ecclus. 15, 9).

Unite yourself to our Lord, reciting in unison with His praises your own poor efforts, joining in all that He offers or will ever offer to His Father in heaven and on earth. Thus, you will become associated with all those saintly souls on earth as well as those of the Church Triumphant and the Church Suffering. Endeavor to unite your soul with the holy dispositions of love, humility and devotion with which they offer their prayers to God. -

Beg the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and saints to perform this holy action with you and to make you share in the devotion with which they pray perpetually in heaven.

## Acts After the Divine Office

At the end of the divine office thank God for all the graces He has imparted to you through the recitation of the breviary. Ask His pardon for any faults you may have committed during its reading. Beg Him to atone for your transgressions in this particular matter, reciting the following prayer:

*O clementissime Jesu, gratias ago tibi ex toto corde meo. Propitius esto mihi vilissimo peccatori. Ego hanc actionem offero divino Cordi tuo emendandam atque perficiendam, ad laudem et gloriam Sanctissimi Nominis tui et beatissimae Matris tuae, ad salutem animae meae totiusque Ecclesiae tuae. Amen..*

## 5. READING OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

Following the completion of the exercises suggested above, kneel and read with great devotion and attention a chapter of the New Testament with the following dispositions:

Adore Our Lord in this manner: "O Jesus, I adore Thee as the Eternal Word of the Father and as the Source of all holy words contained in this book. I adore Thee in all Thy providential designs for Thy Church and for myself in particular in pronouncing these blessed words and in inspiring Thy sacred writers."

Thank Our Lord for having given you so precious a treasure, so,

### 34 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

holy a relic of Himself as His Divine Word, and for all the graces and light communicated to the Church through the instrumentality of Sacred Scripture.

Make a fervent act of humility, realizing how unworthy you are to read or even to touch the holy books, asking God's pardon for any negligence you may have shown or any improper use you may have made of them in the past. You should revere Sacred Scripture as the very heart of God containing all the secrets and the principles of the life of His children, according to St. Augustine's interpretation of Psalm 21, 15: Factum est cor meum tanquam cera liquescens in medio ventris mei.(2)

Recall the incident in the Gospel of St. Luke (4, 16) when Our Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth took up the book of the Scriptures and, opening it publicly, read therefrom. Surrexit legere. In memory of this episode of Our Saviour's life, give yourself to Him to share the admirable dispositions and intentions with which He read the Holy Book. Unite yourself also with all the great saints of the Church who read with such devotion the works of Scripture and sanctified themselves greatly by their inspired reading.

Give yourself completely to the Divine Spirit who dictated the Sacred Writings. Pray that He may engrave them on your heart, and make your soul and body living gospels and books in which is inscribed the exterior and interior life of Jesus Himself.

After your reading of Sacred Scripture, thank God for the light given us through His inspired Word. Give yourself anew to Him and beseech Him to imprint upon your heart the truths you have just read so that you may express them in your life. Memorize a few passages for meditation during the day.

## 6. SPIRITUAL READING

Spend some time daily in pious reading that you may be instructed in spiritual things according to the words of St. Paul: Attende lectioni (1 Tim. 4, 13). The Following of Christ and the lives of the saints, especially the lives of holy bishops and priests, are recommended.

At the beginning of the reading period, elevate your mind to God,  
(2). Enarr. 11 Ps. 21.

## THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF ME PRIEST

35 -

assuring Him that you undertake this exercise solely for His glory and begging Him to grant you the light and grace necessary to do it well.

While reading, let your mind be lifted constantly on high. Make various acts of faith, hope, charity, confidence, humility and hatred of sin.

In reading the life of a saint, bless God for the glory which accrued to His divine majesty through the life and works of the particular saint in question. Rejoice with the saint for the many favors which he received from Almighty God and the happiness he now possesses in heaven. Be humbled in realizing how remote you are from the holiness the saint practised. Cultivate a great desire to imitate his virtues, Praying for his intercession on your behalf that you may obtain that grace.

At the end of the spiritual reading, thank God for the light which He just gave you, as you perused this work of devotion. Then, pray that the fruits which have come to you may be used to His greater honor and glory.

## 7. STUDY

Adore God as the beginning and end of all science and learning, seeking nothing more than His glory, for Sacred Scripture says: "The Lord is a God of all knowledge and to Him are thoughts prepared" (1 Kings, 2, 3).

Avoid idle curiosity, and study only the subjects that are necessary for your state in life. Banish vanity, protesting to God that you wish to study and to learn not for any vain glory, not for worldly honor or praise, but simply that you may be enabled better to edify your neighbor and to glorify God by teaching men to save their souls. "Glorify ye the Lord in instruction" (Is. 24, 15). St. Bernard speaking on this subject says: *Alii sciunt ut sciant, et est curiositas: alii sciunt ul sciantur, et est vanitas: alii sciunt ut aedificent, et est charitas.* (3)

Humiliate yourself, recalling that of yourself you are nothing, as St Paul says, «Not that we are sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God». (2 Cor. 3, 5). (3). Sermo. 36 sap. Cant.

36 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Remember that you are unworthy that God should give you any further enlightenment because you have already abused what knowledge He has imparted to you, and you have turned your back upon Him through sin to follow the prince of hell; therefore, you certainly have merited to know only eternal darkness.

Adore Christ as the Eternal Wisdom given to us by Almighty God to be our teacher and guide, our light and director. "I am the light of the world" (John 8, 12).

Give yourself to Jesus Christ to be taught by Him according to these words, "And they shall all be taught of God" (John 6, 45), or again "Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord: and shalt teach him out of thy law" (PS. 93, 12). Beg Him to grant you His divine light that you may be guided and directed



in your studies; that you may be participators in that divine Spirit with which He made use of the knowledge given Him by His Eternal Father. Finally, throw yourself completely at His feet and beseech Him to be your director and sanctifier in your study, and ask Him for holy dispositions which prompted the words of St. Paul, "For I judged not myself to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor.2,2).

Pray to God unceasingly for deliverance from the three harmful effects often produced by learning.

The first is vanity, pride and arrogance. "Knowledge puffeth up," says Sacred Scripture (1 Cor. 8, 1). Consequently, you should constantly beg of God great humility and modesty of spirit that you may always remember that it is charity, not knowledge, which renders you acceptable to your Maker. Knowledge without piety leads to hell. The serpent used knowledge to tempt man to his downfall: *Eritis scientes* ~Gen.3, 5). Thirst for learning was to a great extent the cause of original sin and of all the other crimes that resulted from it. The necessity of study should make you remember that you are rebellious subjects of the Omniscient Creator. If our first parents had not sinned, you would have been endowed with all necessary knowledge without work and study. Consequently, the very fact that you must study to learn should remind you that the human race is still doing penance for the sin of Adam and Eve, who were condemned to earn their bread in the

#### THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE PRIEST

37 -

sweat of their brow. The word "bread" in this condemnation applies to knowledge, the bread of the mind, as well as to the material bread, which nourishes the body.

Thus, you should undertake study with the proper realization that it is part of your penance, and sanctify it in all humility, remembering that, when you become conceited about science learned the hard way, you are ridiculous. You are little better than the branded criminal who boasts of the prison stripes he wears. Finally, do not forget that the wisest man who ever lived recognized only too well that all knowledge, all science and learning are but vanity. For the creations of man, his arts and science will pass away. "Knowledge shall be destroyed" (1 Cor. 13, 8).

The second effect customarily produced by learning is that it kills devotion. "The letter killeth" (2 Cor. 3, 6). It makes man lukewarm and lazy in spiritual exercises and in works of charity and zeal. Consequently, you should not become too deeply absorbed in study, lest it cool your ardor for the service of God. During study periods, you should frequently detach yourself from the actual task before you, and lift up your soul to God, in order to fill your mind and heart with thoughts and affections of piety and devotion.

The third effect is the danger of becoming self-opinionated, or conceited, causing a tendency to belittle others, their views or expressions of opinion. From these faults there develops contention, against which St Paul warns, «Contend not in words, for it is to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers» (2.Tim.14). "Fulfil ye my joy, that you be of one mind, having the same charity . . . let nothing be done through contention, neither by vain glory" (Phil. 2, 2-3). These arguments often offend against charity, creating bitterness which rankles and dispels charity which is indeed the worst loss one could sustain. For St. Paul says: If I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothings' (1 Cor. 13,2).

It is obvious, therefore, that you should not sacrifice the slightest degree of charity even if in doing so you should become famous for learning. Likewise, your opinions are better sacrificed, for their reten

38 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

tion may become the cause of wounding the feelings of others. The prime obligation of the Christian is to love his neighbor as himself, and not to seek to get the better of him, but rather to master himself and to cultivate mutual understanding.

#### Prayer Before Study

*Mitte, Domine, sapientiam de caelis sanctis tuis et a sedemagnitudinis tuae, ut mecum sit et mecum laboret, ut sciam quid acceptum sit apud te. Sensum autem tuum quis sciet, nisi tu dederis sapientiam et miseris Spiritum sanctum tuum de altissimis? Da mihi intellectum, et scrutabor legem tuam. Da mihi, Domine, sedium tuarum assistricem sapientiam, et noli me reprobare a pueris tuis; quoniam servus tuus sum ego, homo infirmus, et minor ad intellectum iudicii et legum. \*Da mihi intellectum ... \* Gloria Patri ... \* Da mihi intellectum ...*

### 8. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

#### Preparation for Confession

Adore Jesus Christ in His spirit of penance. He was charged with the burden of your sins, and He undertook to make satisfaction to Divine Justice. Consequently, He practised a most rigorous penance.

Surrender yourself to Him to enter into the true dispositions of penance. Beg Him to make you worthy participators in the divine light which illuminates all your faults and failings, that you, too, may see them. Beseech your loving Saviour to help you to know and share His humiliation and contrition and His intense hatred for sin. Likewise, let it be your constant aim to study His love for His Heavenly Father, a love which constrained Him to choose His Father in preference to Himself, so that, being charged with your transgressions, He might bear them Himself and satisfy the divine wrath.

Examine your conscience seriously. Judge and condemn yourself without mercy, that God may judge you with justice and mercy.

Cry out to God and beg through the merits of His wounds and sufferings, by His Precious Blood and Death, that you may understand

#### THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE PRIEST

39 -

the real spirit of penance. Likewise invoke the assistance of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, that you may detach yourself from sinful habits, from the world and from yourself, and give yourself completely to Our Lord.

Make frequent acts of contrition. Formulate resolutions to avoid sin and the occasions of sin and to follow Christ in accordance with your baptismal promises.

Approach the tribunal of penance as if you were about to face judgment. Think of the priest as taking the place of Jesus Christ Himself. Confess your sins as if you were speaking to the Master in person and as if you were about to die. Receive with humility and thankfulness the instruction given by your confessor. Accept and discharge as soon as possible the penance imposed upon you, uniting it with that penance undergone by Jesus when, scourged and crowned with thorns, He died on the cross to save your soul.

#### Thanksgiving After Confession

After confession, thank our Saviour for the grace of pardon you have received, realizing that the smallest transgression is a greater evil than the worst temporal injury or misfortune. Remember that the pardon extended to you by God is a greater favor than if He had cured you of the most grievous physical illness. Thus, it is well after confession to say the Gloria Patri several times, in special thanksgiving to the

Blessed Trinity. Also recite the Qui natus est de virgine as a gesture of gratitude towards God the Son, and an Ave to thank the Blessed Mother through whom all graces flow to us.

Say your penance with the most perfect dispositions of Christ as He completed the divine task of redemption. Offer it up in union with the penances of all holy men and women on earth.

Give yourself anew to Our Lord with a fervent desire to keep the resolutions you have taken, placing your complete confidence in the mercy and goodness of Christ Himself and begging Him to be more faithful in the future.

Recommend yourself again and again to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the angels and saints.

40 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

### 9. EVENING EXERCISE

Adore God as the beginning and the source of every good and thank Him for all the benefits which have come to you especially today. Thank Him, too, on behalf of the countless creatures who never think of giving thanks to Him for His infinite graces.

Adore Christ as your sovereign judge, and offer yourself in submission~ to His holy will. Bless Him in that judgment which one day He will pronounce upon you. Beg Him to infuse into your heart the celestial light you need to see your sins and transgressions.

Examine your conscience carefully; endeavor to discern every thought, word or deed by which you may have displeased God, especially in matters concerning the good resolutions taken at meditation in the morning.

Ask God for a true spirit of penance, and of humility, similar to His own. Beseech Our Blessed Saviour to make you hate sin as He does, to have the courage to confess your offenses and receive absolution after having made genuine acts of contrition and amendment.

Offer to the Eternal Father the life, virtues, Passion and Death of His Only-Begotten Son, with all the merits of His Holy Mother and of the Universal Church in expiation for your offenses.

Pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to St. Joseph and St. Gabriel, to all the angels and saints, begging them to obtain His forgiveness for you, and the grace of true conversion.

Offer to God the night's rest you are about to take, in union with the repose of Our Lord and His Blessed Virgin during their life on earth.

Unite yourself with the praise which will be offered to the Blessed Trinity this night, on earth and in heaven, and for all eternity. Lovingly protest to the Creator that you wish every breath and every heartbeat of your sleeping hours to be so many acts of praise for His divine majesty.

Try to fall asleep with the dispositions and in the state in which you would like to be at the hour of death. Give yourself to Our Lord that you may enter into the dispositions with which He, His Blessed Mother and the saints awaited the hour of death.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE PRIEST

41 -

Ask the blessing of Christ and of His Holy Mother. Say with great devotion: *Benedictum sit Cor*

*amantissimum et dulcissimum nomen Domini nostri Christi et gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae Matris ejus, in aeternum et ultra. Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria.*

While undressing, pray God that He may put away from you the old man and clothe you with the new, saying the words of the Psalmist, "Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man: rescue me from the unjust man" (Ps. 139, 2). Make use of other ejaculations or meditate upon a text of Sacred Scripture.

Before getting into bed, bless yourself with holy water; make the sign of the cross with it upon your bed and renew your baptismal promise. *Abrenuntio tibi, Satana. Adhaereo tibi, Christe.*

Before falling asleep, listen to the voice of the Holy Ghost which says, "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Ecclus. 7, 40).

Repeat Christ's last words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23, 46). Try to say these blessed words as if they were your last. Give yourself to the Lord wholly that you may enter into the dispositions with which He and all the saints used these very words.

Try to fall asleep with these thoughts in your mind, and with the sweet names of Jesus and Mary upon your lips.

If you awake during the night, make use of some ejaculatory prayer such as, "Enlighten my eyes that I never sleep in death: lest at any time my enemy say: I have prevailed against him" (PS. 12, 4-5). Or say these words, "For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me" (PS. 22, 4).

Bless and thank God for watching over you while you sleep. "Behold he shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel" (PS. 120, 4). I will fix my eyes upon thee" (PS. 31, 8).

Realize, too, that, while you have been resting so peacefully, there are many poor souls in misery; there are countless others in agony, in prison, in peril upon land and sea. Recommend all these persons to the mercy of God.

Think also of those countless souls which suffer torments in purgatory. Go down in spirit into hell where countless souls suffer eternal

42-

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

torments. Humiliate yourself with the thought that by your sins you, too, have merited to be their companion, and that only the goodness of God has saved you from this fate.

Adore the Trinity, with the angels and saints and all the heavenly court. Say the Gloria Patri. Beg Mary's intercession. Recite an Ave Maria. Repeat *Avete omnes angeli et omnes sancti et sanctae Dei: benedicti sitis in aeternum et intercedere dignemini pro nostra omniumque salute.* Ask Jesus and Mary to bless you with the words: *Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Vi~go Maria.*

## CHAPTER V

### THE APOSTOLIC LIFE OF THE PRIEST

#### 1. GENERAL DISPOSITIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

CULTIVATE a high esteem and respect for all the sacraments, looking upon them as the most efficacious means of God's infinite power, wisdom and goodness. Realize that the Heavenly Father employs them continually to give birth to Christ in the souls of His people. Realize also that through the sacraments He sanctifies the holy and restores to life the sinner whose soul is dead. Thus, St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, says: "Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts" (1 Peter 3, 15). Moreover, the Saviour uses the sacraments to multiply the numbers of His subjects on earth, to extend His Kingdom and consummate His love in each individual soul.

Think of the sacraments as the fountains of the Saviour in whose waters Christians find grace and strength to attain eternal salvation.

Know that the sacraments are the divine instruments of the Holy Spirit through which are applied to souls the fruits of the Life and Death of Jesus, supplying what is needed to complete the Passion of Our Lord, namely its application to those for whom it was offered.

Treat the sacraments as treasures of God's house which contains infinite riches hidden from the wise and prudent of this world, but manifested to the lowly and humble. Revere them as sacred vessels in which the Church preserves the Precious Blood, the Holy Spirit and the divine grace of her Spouse for the nourishment and sanctification of her children.

Seek to instil in the hearts and minds of Christians these sentiments of esteem and reverence for the sacraments.

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Treat them with the utmost veneration, keeping particularly neat and clean all things used for their administration. When a sacrament is given, show the utmost respect, gravity, modesty and devotion.

Instruct the faithful fully regarding the sacraments. Point out that their origin depends on the goodness and mercy of God, and that their merits come from the Passion and Death of our Saviour. Explain their significance and their effects. Let it be understood that through the sacraments are accomplished the sanctification of the Church, the destruction of sin and the establishment of the reign of God on earth.

Impress upon your congregation that the sacraments are so noble and so lofty in themselves, that they should be shown the utmost reverence. Consequently, they should be received only with complete purity of body and soul. From them should be drawn fruits for spiritual advancement. All things that might profane them should be avoided. Worldliness and dangerous amusements should, therefore, be eradicated from one's life, particularly at the time of the reception of the Sacrament of Marriage. Certainly there are many who, entering into that holy state and receiving that sacrament, act as if they wished to disavow their baptismal promises and to contract marriage like pagans rather than Christians. Priests, therefore, must be on guard to preserve the sanctity of so great a sacrament as Matrimony: *Sacramentum magnum in Christo et in Ecclesia* (Eph. 5, 32).

Besides these general dispositions, teach your parishioners the meaning, the effects and the dispositions for each individual sacrament. Above all else, be sure that they understand Baptism and its obligations. Unfortunately in our day, many Catholics have forgotten the meaning of the solemn promises made at the time of the reception of that first and all-important sacrament.

When you are about to administer Baptism or any other sacrament, adore Our Lord Jesus Christ as the author who Instituted that particular sacrament. Thank Him for all the glory He has brought to His Eternal Father and for all the blessings granted to the Church through the sacrament. Ask Him to forgive all the sins committed against Him through its unworthy reception. Prostrate yourself humbly before God, realizing that being a sinner you are unworthy to administer this sacrament.

#### THE APOSTOLIC LIFE OF THE PRIEST

45 -

Give yourself wholly to our Lord to formulate within yourself the holy dispositions with which He was filled as He instituted the sacrament you are about to administer, so that you may capture the spirit of worthiness He would have you bring to the treatment of His sacraments and all holy things. Unite yourself also to the whole heavenly company of those saints who, like yourself, were entrusted with the administration of Christ's sacraments.

Offer to Our Lord, to His Blessed Mother, to the guardian angels and patron saints, the souls of those to whom you are about to give the sacraments, praying that they may receive them worthily and be preserved in grace through their merit.

After you have administered the sacrament, thank God for His goodness in permitting you to be His minister and pray that the recipients may persevere in His divine grace.

### **2. GENERAL DISPOSITION. FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE**

Consider the grandeur and the importance of the action you are about to perform. You are to take the place of Christ, representing Him, acting in His name, clothed with His authority, continuing His office as Saviour, exercising His power as judge, pronouncing judgments in His sacred name. Hence, the Holy Spirit cries: "Take heed what you do: for you exercise not the judgment of men, but of the Lord: and whatsoever you judge, it shall redound to you" (2 Par. 19, 6). Moreover, by this action you blot out sin, spread the grace of God and pour it into the hearts of the faithful. You apply to them the merits of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. This function is, therefore, so great and holy that it must be exercised with the utmost care.

Adore all the divine plans of Our Lord embodied in this holy sacrament and thank Him for the mercy He displays through it. Humiliate yourself at the remembrance of your unworthiness and the realization that you cannot perform so holy a function unless you are aided by God's grace and help. Purify your mind, your heart and your soul, protesting that you desire only the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Give yourself completely to Christ as Supreme judge and Saviour

46 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

that you may enter fully into the holy dispositions with which He Himself exercises these sacred offices, praying for the light and graces necessary to discharge your responsibilities according to His holy will.

Invoke upon yourself and upon the souls to whom you will administer the sacrament the powerful assistance of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, especially the patron saint of the church in which you are receiving your penitents.

### 3. THE PRIEST IN THE CONFESSIONAL

Try to observe the spirit of piety and concentration of mind upon God and His works. Lift up your heart to Him especially as you begin to hear each individual confession, meditating on various pious thoughts connected with the liturgical season or feast day to be observed.

For example, the first confession you hear on entering the confessional should be sanctified by elevating your heart to the Eternal Father, offering Him what you are about to do in union with the great love which prompted Him to give His Only-Begotten Son to all mankind, but especially to the person whose confession you are about to hear. In union with that great love, you shall give your heart, your soul and your mind, as well as your time, to the soul before you, to cooperate in his salvation by every means at your disposal.

As you hear the second confession, give yourself to the Son of God to share the holy dispositions of love and charity which prompted him to shed His Precious Blood for the soul of the penitent entering the confessional. In union with our Saviour's love, you shall not spare yourself in giving your penitent whatever instructions you can to save his soul.

The third confession will impel you to give yourself to the infinite love of the Holy Ghost for all souls, but particularly for that of your penitent.

At the fourth, offer yourself to the Heavenly Father in honor of the Incarnation of His Divine Son and in union with the infinite love whereby God effected this mystery for souls. The realization of His great love will serve as an impelling motive to help you to accept with patience and meekness whatever crosses you may have to bear, what

THE APOSTOLIC LIFE OF THE PRIEST

47 -

ever pains and hardships you may endure in your work of saving souls, and particularly this soul now before you.

At the fifth, let your soul be filled with the memory of Our Lord's Birth, His Circumcision, His Presentation in the Temple and the other mysteries of His life on earth.

Offer yourself likewise to the Blessed Virgin and pray thus:

"O my God, I offer Thee this confession I am about to hear in honor of and in union with the great charity the Blessed Virgin Mary cherishes for the soul before me. O Mother of Fair Love, make me share in thy charity. Virgin most merciful, show thy great mercy towards this sinner and to thy humble servant."

It is useful to have a crucifix in the confessional to show the hardened sinner when occasion demands. It is an invaluable help in leading the sinner to understand Christ's unbounded love for every soul, and likewise it serves as a most potent means of reminding yourself of the zeal you should have for souls.

Besides the above mentioned dispositions, the confessor should have three other qualities on entering the tribunal of penance:

1. He should be clothed with mercy and compassion that like his Divine Master he may have pity on those who come to him.

2. Cognizant of his own nothingness and sinfulness, he should humble himself profoundly with the realization of the fact that but for God's grace he, too, would be guilty of all the sins that are committed

throughout the world. So, he should see in the penitent at his feet an image and reflection of himself as he would surely be if it were not for Christ's infinite mercy. The priest, like every man, has within himself the roots of sin and is saved from falling only because God became man for us and saved us by His grace. Therefore, he should say with St. Augustine: Domine, videam te in omnibus bonis, videam me in omnibus malis.

3. The priest should be adorned with justice that he may render to God His just due and to the penitent that which is appropriate, He should be fortified with zeal, inflamed with hatred against sin and fired with the determination to help the penitent to use the means to avoid sin.

On leaving the confessional; thank God for the favor of having

#### 48 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

heard the confessions you have listened to, and for the graces imparted to yourself and to your penitents.

Ask Our Lord's pardon on behalf of yourself and your penitents for the sins committed by each in the past, begging Him to act as mediator in satisfying the divine anger.

Offer to God all the souls that have had recourse to you in the sacred tribunal, beseeching the Master to turn their hearts and minds from sinful ways to the knowledge of Himself and the love of His holy grace so that they may seek to die rather than offend Him.

Offer them to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Gabriel and all the saints, especially the guardian angels and patron saints of the penitents.

Do not be satisfied merely to pray for these souls at this time, but all through life cultivate a special place in your heart for your penitents, remembering them constantly at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

### 4. ADMINISTERING THE BLESSED EUCHARIST

In addition to the general dispositions pertaining to the administration of all the sacraments, the Holy Ghost will inspire you with particular devotion and lofty sentiments concerning the Blessed Eucharist.

Enumerated here are certain dispositions suggested as being efficacious in your distribution of the Bread of Life to God's chosen ones.

To the first person you should give Holy Communion in honor of and in union with the infinite love of the Eternal Father in giving us His Divine Son.

The second communicant will personify the immense love of God the Son giving Himself to us as our spiritual food and drink.

The third communicant will represent the incomprehensible love of the Holy Spirit, forming the Flesh of the Son of Man within the womb of Mary Immaculate that we might be nourished thereby.

The fourth will symbolize the unutterable love which prompted the divine humanity of the Son of God to give Himself to us from the first moment of the Incarnation, continuing to give Himself daily to us in this Sacrament.

The fifth will recall the ardent love with which the Blessed Virgin



Mary gave us Jesus, her beloved Son, at the moment of His birth, and still gives Him to us in Holy Communion.

To the sixth communicant, you shall give Christ's Body and Blood in union with the great devotion, the purity and the sanctity with which the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, John, James and the others administered this Holy Sacrament.

As the seventh communicant receives Our Lord from your hands, you shall unite your soul with the blessed dispositions of all the saintly pontiffs, priests and deacons of Holy Church who, like yourself, administered this Sacrament during their lifetime.

Finally, you should unite yourself to the love of the Eternal Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

You may also follow another method in administering the Blessed Eucharist. In giving the Precious Body and Blood to the first communicant at the altar railing, you may offer to Jesus the infinite love of the Eternal Father in satisfaction for the sins committed by the person before you, for any defects in his reception of the Blessed Eucharist, and for a more perfect preparation for the coming of Christ into his heart may be more perfect.

In giving Holy Communion to the second communicant, you may offer God His infinite love for His own All-perfect Self.

As you approach the third recipient, you may offer up to Jesus the all-consuming love of the Holy Ghost.

The fourth person will be a signal to offer Christ the love and holy dispositions with which the Blessed Mother received Him at the moment of the Incarnation and many times after His Ascension.

St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, St. Michael, the Seraphim and the Cherubim and all the orders of angels in heaven will join you as you offer their love when the fifth soul receives the Body and Blood of the Saviour.

The Patriarchs, the holy Prophets, St. John the Baptist, and all the saints of the Old Testament will walk beside you and offer their love to Jesus as you continue your priestly ministration at the holy table.

Then you shall offer up the devotion and holy dispositions with which Our Lord was received in Holy Communion by the Apostles, by the Martyrs, by saintly pontiffs and priests, confessors and virgins, as

## 50 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

well as by the holy souls now in heaven, who received with so much love and piety when they were on earth.

### 5. VISITING THE SICK

Offer this priestly function to our Lord Jesus Christ, in honor of and in union with His abiding love for His children. Give yourself to Him that you may enter into that sublime spirit of love wherewith He bore in His Sacred Heart all our infirmities, our maladies and our afflictions. "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases," says St. Matthew (8, 17). Join yourself in spirit to the sentiments which filled the Heart of Christ as He visited the sick and the infirm. Join also with the saints in doing this act with the

same holy dispositions and intentions with which they did this same act.

Greet the sick with charity, remembering that they are members of the Body of Christ and your brothers. Show them compassion and sympathy. Speak to them with discretion, cordiality and gentleness.

Try to make them understand the two causes of all mankind's afflictions.

The first is the Providence of God and His holy will, disposing and ordaining all things, for the best, if we will but accept them in the proper spirit, which we can do with the assistance of His holy grace.

The second cause of suffering is sin. In this regard, three things should be done in time of sickness. 1. We should humble ourselves in the presence of the offenses by which we have merited hell and the tribulations of this life. 2. We should give ourselves with confidence to the will of God. 3. We should suffer with patience for the love of our Saviour, who endured all for us, and offer ourselves and our sufferings in union with Him.

Having gently reminded the sufferer of these truths, teach him to put them into practice, thus:

"Try, my child, to follow my advice. Do you not wish really to humble yourself before your Maker? Do you not realize that even though you had never committed a single sin, God could send you sufferings and ills just the Same and you would have absolutely no cause to complain?

#### THE APOSTOLIC LIFE OF THE PRIEST

51 -

"Will you try to adore His divine will for sending this sickness and give yourself completely to Him, even blessing and thanking Him for this affliction?

"Surely, you are willing to suffer for Him, who suffered so much for you? Will you not try to offer to Him the pains you are undergoing in return for all the torments He endured for you, so that He may reward you in heaven?

"Will you not offer to the Blessed Virgin Mary all your sufferings, asking her to offer them in turn to her Son, supplying any defects, substituting them for the duties you would be performing if you had your health and strength? Will you not likewise lay your heart and will before her?

"Will you not offer yourself to your Guardian Angel, and to all the angels and saints for this same purpose?"

Endeavor to incite in the soul of the sick man the proper dispositions for the Sacrament of Penance, and, if necessary, recall to his mind the conditions necessary for a proper reception of this sacrament. Help him to make a worthy preparation, if necessary, questioning him regarding his past confessions, his relations with his neighbors; whether or not he has always been careful to make restitution, and if he be found wanting in these respects, urge upon him their necessity. Make careful inquiries regarding the occasions of sin with which he may have to contend, suggesting means of avoiding them. If he has fallen into the sad plight of living in continual mortal sin, seek to point out to him the hideousness of his state and encourage him to make a firm purpose of amendment, suggesting means to assist him.

Help him in his preparation for Holy Communion. After he has received the Body and Blood of Christ, encourage him to try in the future always to render to God a full meed of willing service. In this respect, recall to his mind that as a creature he is obliged to give to God complete adoration, praise, thanksgiving, love and penance. Likewise, he must stand ready to sacrifice himself, his life, his will and inclinations and everything the world offers for the glory of the Creator.

Teach the sick person, if necessary, how to elevate his soul to God,

5 2 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

to His Divine Son, to His Blessed Mother and to the saints through acts of faith, hope and charity, patience, humility and submission. Also instil in his heart a lively sense of contrition.

Open to his soul the significance of devout aspirations and recommend their frequent use. Suggest the following as most helpful:

"O my God, to Thee I give my heart and my soul."

"May Thy holy will be done."

"O Heavenly Father, not my will but Thine be done."

"O my God, I realize that by my sins I have deserved thousands of chastisements. Here cut, here burn, but spare me in eternity."

"O Jesus, I give myself gladly to Thee, and sacrifice my all for Thy sake."

"O Jesus, draw me to Thyself in Thy divine sacrifice that I may offer all with Thee for the glory of Thy Father."

"O Jesus, I wish to suffer for love of Thee, everything Thou mayest ask and in the degree that Thou mayest require of me."

"O good Jesus, I give myself to Thee that I may enter into those holy dispositions that marked Thy great suffering."

"O Jesus, be Thou my Saviour."

"O Jesus, be my strength and my patience."

"O my Saviour, render to the Eternal Father on my behalf a full measure of all that is required of me. I give Thee my will in all its entirety for this intention."

"O dear Jesus, I offer Thee all my sufferings which are so insignificant when compared to Thine. Unite them with the truly intense sufferings Thou didst endure for me. Bless and sanctify them; offer them with Thine own to the Heavenly Father."

"O Mother of God, be my mother, unworthy though I am. Unite my sufferings with thine. Offer them to thy Beloved Son. In my name do for me what I am unable to do; sanctify for me this sickness which I am undergoing."

"O my angel guardian, O St. Joseph, O all ye angels and saints, pray for me, help me, love and praise God for me, and in my stead offer up all that I owe to God."

When the sick person's illness is accompanied by great suffering and pain, suggest different episodes in Our Lord's Sacred Passion, that

these may be honored at different times, in the following manner: "My child, try to consecrate this day or night, this morning or afternoon, this very hour to Our Lord in honor of the first mystery of the Passion, His Agony in the Garden. With the eyes of faith endeavor to know the depth of the sufferings He endured for you at that awful time. Thus, you will find strength to suffer with Him. Thus, too, you will be able to consecrate the day or night, the morning or evening, in honor of those sufferings He knew as Judas betrayed Him.

"Unite your own misery to that which He experienced as He was led as a criminal before Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod, or was subjected to unspeakable ignominies during His Sacred Passion. In this manner, hour by hour, day by day, from place to place, from mystery to mystery, from suffering to suffering, uniting your comparatively small pains with His overwhelming burden, forgetting your own in thinking of His, thanking Him for the privilege of sharing His agony, you will know perfect imitation of and conformity to His Divine Passion.'.

Urge the sick person to adopt the suggestions outlined above, not all at once, of course, but by degrees, using great discretion and care not to tire the patient, letting the tone of your voice reflect your sincere desire to assist him in bearing the sufferings of life.

Intersperse your recommendations with prayer, kneeling at his bedside, reciting with the family or friends who may be present such prayers as the Litany of the Passion, of the Holy Name, or of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The "Hail, Holy Queen" or a decade of the beads may also be said with much profit.

Enjoin upon the patient obedience to the doctor's orders and conformity with the instructions of the nurses, offering up this tribute in honor of the obedience of the Master, and accepting medicine or treatments in the spirit of humble surrender with which Jesus Christ drank the gall on Calvary.

## 6. ASSISTING THE DYING

Try to induce the dying person to give himself entirely to God, abandoning himself completely to His holy will. With great patience and gentleness prepare him to be ready to offer his life willingly to our

## 54 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Lord who sacrificed for us His whole life, one moment of which is worth infinitely more than the lives of all men and angels.

Tactfully direct his thoughts to the realization of the fact that this life is transitory and a vale of tears, and that real happiness will be found only in heaven. There all our pains will be turned into joy, all our troubles will disappear and we shall know at last that this world is but a prison and place of banishment whence we escape through the portals, opened by death. Point out again and again that heaven is our true home. There reside our Father and Mother, Jesus and Mary; there are our brothers and sisters, the angels and saints; there await us the blessed company of the elect.

Let the patient be filled with the understanding of the fact that by our sins we have deserved to die a thousand deaths, and, in consequence, he should be reconciled to accept whatever death Christ may send, wherever and whenever it may come.

Even if Eve had never lost our original innocence and we were not children of Adam, we would still be the property of God our Sovereign Lord, who could do with us what He would. Thus, we should understand the meaning of complete submission to Him in all things, and the offering of our life to Him.

Even though we were not subject to death at all, nevertheless, in imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Life, who willingly suffered death for us, and His Blessed Mother, the Mother of life, who likewise died, we should willingly accept death as a tribute of our devotion and love to them.

When the sick man's mind has become reconciled to the will of God concerning death, suggest to him the duties of a Catholic about to close his eyes on this world and face God. These duties are: 1. To thank the Blessed Trinity with Christ and the Church for all the favors received from their infinite goodness. 2. To ask pardon for all the sins committed during life and to offer one's death in union with that of Christ. 3. To adore, praise, glorify and love God, admitting that we are in this world only for that purpose, and that we should terminate our life in the fulfilment of the end for which we were created. 4. To beseech Jesus Christ to accomplish these things in our name, and likewise ask the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and all the

#### THE APOSTOLIC LIFE OF THE PRIEST

55 -

saints. 5. To adore, honor and praise our Saviour, asking His pardon and forgiveness, praying to the Blessed Mother and all the angels and saints also to offer in our place our tribute and praise.

Outline to the sick man the duties of a Catholic towards the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, his Guardian Angel and all the angels of heaven, and the saints of the celestial court, especially those he should honor particularly, exhorting him to thank them, ask their pardon, offer them the loving Heart of Jesus in satisfaction, and invoke their prayers and assistance especially at the hour of death.

Recall the Catholic's duties towards his fellow man. He should ask pardon of those whom he has offended or disedified, and forgive those who have offended him, saying with Our Blessed Lord: "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23, 34). If the sick person be a father or mother, a master or mistress, or a superior of a religious community, let him enjoin upon his subjects or children a wholesome fear of God and give them his blessing. Rather, let him ask God to bless them for it is not the place of a sinner to bless, but to pray God to bestow His benediction.

Remind the sick person to dispose of his worldly goods in a spirit of Christian charity, not forgetting the poor, the Church and spiritual works. Especially, counsel him to make his will with all the necessary legal formalities so that his children and heirs may be spared the bitterness of litigation.

Dispose him to receive Holy Viaticum, forming his intention in union with that of the Blessed Virgin and the saints communicating for the last time.

Try to have him gain what indulgences he can, especially those applicable at the hour of death. To assist him in doing so, excite in him a great desire in this respect. Urge him to affirm that he desires only the glory of God; help him to acquire a true spirit of penitence, making acts of contrition and determination of amendment, after he has gone to confession. Place on his person blessed and indulgenced medals. Have him repeat again and again, Jesus, Mary, Jesus, Mary, always remembering that he should have the intention of pronouncing these holy names in union with the pure love which is and will always be evoked in heaven at the mere mention of these gracious names.

56 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Early in his sickness dispose him to receive Extreme Unction, with the intention for which Christ instituted that sacrament, namely, to efface sin and destroy its effects, and to perfect in the Christian soul God's love and grace. Let him dwell upon the fact that this last of the sacraments is meant to strengthen the soul against the final onslaughts of the devil, and to help him to die a truly Christian death. Likewise,

remind him that Extreme Unction can restore health if it be God's holy will to do so.

Help the patient achieve the proper dispositions for the reception of this Extreme Unction, of which the first is really to desire that the designs of Christ in its institution may be fulfilled. The second is to adore Him who instituted this consoling sacrament, thanking Him for all the glory our loving Saviour has rendered His Eternal Father, and all the graces communicated through its instrumentality to the souls of the faithful.

The third disposition is humbly to confess one's sins again. The fourth is to offer to God the Father all the honor His Son has brought Him through this efficacious means, in atonement for the dishonor heaped upon Him by its improper use by sinners. The fifth disposition is for the sick soul to unite himself to all the holy dispositions of the saints when they received Extreme Unction. The sixth is to give himself to Christ that He may prepare the soul to receive the sacrament worthily. The seventh is to pray to the Blessed Mother, the angels and saints to supply any defects within him and to take his place in the presence of God, interceding for him that he may receive all necessary graces and dispositions.

Help the sick person to renew his baptismal promises. For this purpose: 1. Encourage him to thank God for having been privileged to receive Baptism. 2. Urge him to ask God's pardon for any misuse of baptismal grace, offering in satisfaction the life and death of His Divine Son, with all the merits of Mary our Mother and of the saints. 3. Say with him these words, I renounce thee, O Satan; I renounce all your works and pomps; to Thee I cling, O Jesus, my Lord, my God, my King. I wish for Thee and nothing more. Be thou King of my heart now and forevermore."

THE APOSTOLIC LIFE OF THE PRIEST

57 -

## 7. CONSOLING THE AFFLICTED

Remember always that the Son of God has said that whatever is done to the least of His little ones is done to Him. Be assured that consolation offered to those who are afflicted is given likewise to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother for whosoever consoles the Son certainly consoles the Mother. Consequently, when God gives you the opportunity to assuage the misery of some troubled soul, He surely bestows a very special grace. Your approach to this duty therefore, should be serious, mindful that you should do unto others as you would have them do to you.

Thus, you should cast the eye of your faith upon that great love with which our Saviour came into this world to console the afflicted, remembering the inspired words: "He hath sent me ... to comfort all those that mourn" (Isa. 61, 1-2). Regard your neighbor who is in trouble as a child of God and as your brother, extending to him that charity which consumed the Merciful Heart of Jesus. Approaching him with great kindness and understanding, talk to him with compassion. Then endeavor to impress upon his mind the seven following truths, which are truths of faith founded upon divine infallibility. ,

1. Providence guides and governs the world. "But thy providence, O Father, governeth it" (Wisd. 14, 3). Nothing on earth happens by chance but by the divine will or by God's permission. Whether He permits or wills a thing to happen to us, it is always for our good, if we on our part make use of it. Consequently, we should accept whatever comes to us as having been sent by the hand of God and emanating from the loving Heart of our Creator.

2. God is our true Father, loving us far beyond the degree of our love for ourselves. He is a Father having only thoughts of love and peace, not of affliction and harshness. I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of affliction, to give you an end and patience (Jer. 29, 11). He loves us with such devotion and takes such infinite care of us that He has assured us that even the hairs of our head are numbered. If then He has such regard for the simplest details of life, what must be

His devotion in the important matters, such as our reputation, our health or life? He is in

58 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

deed a Father who is so powerful and wise and good that He knows how to take care of those who love and serve Him. We must always live in the fear of God, fulfilling the words of Sacred Scripture, "No evils shall happen to him that feareth the Lord" (Ecclus. 33, 1). "To them that love God, all things work together unto good" (Rom. 8, 28).

3. God bestows a signal grace upon us when, instead of treating us with the severity of an exacting judge, He accords us the kindness of a merciful father, punishing us not by the harshness due to an enemy, but with the paternal chastisement suitable to children. He often makes us suffer temporal punishment in expiation for our sins, thus ensuring for us the eternal rewards we have merited in heaven. The sufferings He sends us in this world should be looked upon as being permitted here below so that we may not have to undergo torments in purgatory, where their severity would be multiplied a thousand fold. Consequently, we have every reason to thank God for adversity as the least of the punishments He could visit upon us, as the most merciful means He could employ to chastise us for sins. We should be like the prisoner at the bar who thanks his judge for a commuted sentence.

4. One of the greatest favors Our Lord can grant us is to send an affliction which enables us to share His cross. Thus, we learn to drink His chalice of bitterness; we come to know the meaning of the cross which He chose as His instrument for the destruction of sin, the source of every evil. Through affliction He brings us closer to His Sorrowful Mother. Those who are dear to God have known the most suffering. "All that have pleased God, passed through many tribulations" (Judith 8, 23). "Because thou wast acceptable to God," said the Archangel Raphael to Tobias, "it was necessary that temptation should prove thee" (Tob. 12, 13).

5. Sacred Scripture proclaims the cross as the glory, the treasure, the supreme good of the Christian on earth. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ," cries St. Paul (Gal. 6, 14). And again in his Epistle to the Romans he says, "We glory also in tribulations" (Rom. 5, 3). St. James reminds us to "count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations" (James 1, 2).

Truly, it may be said that, when a great affliction comes upon us, we actually receive a treasure of priceless value. If we bear the cross pa

THE APOSTOLIC LIFE OF THE PRIEST

59 -

tiently, it will pay unlimited dividends. The greatest consolations in this world, even the spiritual and divine consolations, are merely little flowers which bloom and die. A great affliction is like a golden treasure, solid and enduring. It may be compared even to a precious stone of inestimable value, or to a fertile field which, being carefully cultivated, will enrich its possessor with an infinity of spiritual and heavenly returns.

6. Nothing purifies the soul like suffering. Nothing embellishes it more, nothing renders it so pleasing to God. True Christian nobility which makes us like unto our Crucified King, is acquired only through suffering and affliction.

7. Finally, we must turn afflictions to holy advantage. First of all, he who bears them in a true Christian spirit renders supreme homage to God because the Son of Man, who came on earth to honor His Father and repay the ravages of sin, chose the cross and suffering as the most efficacious means at His disposal. Secondly, he acquires treasures of grace on earth and glory for eternity. On the other hand, the Christian who does not accept afflictions willingly deprives God of the glory He otherwise would have

received, and inflicts on himself such a loss that if he could estimate its worth, he would be inconsolable.

Having outlined these principles to the person whom you wish to comfort, you must teach him how to derive real profit from adversity and recommend the following practices:

1. He should make an act of faith in all these truths because no true Christian can doubt them.

2. He should make his peace with God by a good confession. Remind him that a person who suffers while in the state of mortal sin loses all the merit he would otherwise gain. He becomes like the impenitent thief; he is miserable in the sight of God and man alike. He is miserable in this world and will be infinitely more miserable in the next, if he does not repent.

3. He must humiliate himself before God because of his sins, the cause of all his sufferings, realizing that he is worthy of hell and the eternal wrath of his Maker. He must strive to realize also that, even if God should send him the most awful afflictions and if all the forces of earth should rise up to crush him, he could not rightly complain,

#### 60 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

because a single mortal sin merits the most dreadful punishment, the everlasting torments of hell, one moment of which surpasses the most ghastly torture life can inflict. Consequently, the sufferer on earth should accept gladly whatever affliction comes to him in requital for his offenses; he should remember the words of Sacred Scripture, "Thou art just, O Lord: and thy judgment is right" (Ps. 118, 137). "For we have sinned, and committed iniquity, departing from thee . . . and we have not hearkened to thy commandments . . . Everything that thou hast done to us, thou hast done in true judgment (Daniel 3, 29-31). Humility inclines the heart of God towards His erring creatures. "Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation" (1 Pet. 5, 6).

4. The afflicted person should adore the holy will of God, making an act of submission, resignation and self-annihilation in all things, seeking only that the Kingdom of God be established in his own and in all hearts. Make him repeat the words of Christ in Gethsemani: "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22, 42). Recall also St. Gertrude's prayer: "O Lord, I beg Thee and desire with all my heart that Thy adorable will be done in me and in all creatures."

5. Let him bless and thank God in affliction. "I will bless the Lord at all times" (Ps. 33, 2). Certainly, this should apply in time of suffering more than at any other time for it has been truly said that affliction is a proof of God's goodness. Should not he who owes a great debt and is forgiven by his creditor, make some gesture of his gratitude? How much does the sinner owe, who is indebted for the remission of eternal punishment and who is made to undergo temporal sufferings instead of these torments of hell which he has so justly deserved!

6. He ought to adore our crucified Lord covered with wounds from head to foot, called so aptly by the Prophet Isaiah, "A man of sorrows" (Isa. 53, 3). He ought to surrender himself to the boundless love that nailed his Redeemer to the cross, and in union with it accept with perfect love and resignation every cross sent to him.

7. If Divine Providence should employ certain individuals to become the cause of suffering, the person who is harassed or hurt should not seek vengeance nor let his heart be filled with bitterness towards them. He should rather exert towards them great charity and forgiveness, in



imitation of the Master who said, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23, 34).

8. If suffering be caused by the tragic illness or death of someone dear and cherished, the person thus afflicted should remember that Christ gave His own life for us, a life so precious that one moment of it was worth more than an infinite number of lives of men and angels. Consequently, in the hour of sorrow, let each one give himself to Jesus in union with the incomprehensible sacrifice made on Calvary, offering to Our Lord the life of our friends and even our own, in satisfaction for his offenses and in return for Our Lord's offering of His own life for us.

9. Though it is permitted and expected that a person should use every legitimate means to recover and restore his health, he must never make the mistake of placing all his faith in human expedients. Rather let him have supreme confidence in God and in prayer. As evidence of Our Lord's pleasure in the trust we show in Him, the sick person ought to ponder these words spoken to St. Gertrude by the Saviour: "When a soul torn by pain or affliction places himself firmly under my protection, that soul so touches my Heart, that to it the words of Sacred Scripture are applied: 'One is my dove, my perfect one is but one. ... the chosen of her that bore her' (Cant. 6, 8). It so transfixes my Heart that, if I were to know I could not succor the soul in its misery, my own Heart would suffer (were that possible), and its sufferings would be so great that not even the infinite delights of heaven could assuage its misery. The glance of my dove which transfixes my Heart like an arrow of love is the firm and unshakable confidence that I can and will assist it in all things. And so strong is that confidence in its impelling force that I could not disregard it" (Legatus Divinae Pietatis lib. 3. C. 7).

10. The afflicted person ought to picture the innumerable army of the saints and martyrs in heaven, who while they were on earth knew so many sufferings. He must remember that they, too, were once human beings like himself, beset with all human weaknesses. He should find encouragement in their example, and beg them to make him participate in their patience and their love for God.

11. He ought to think of all the thousands of people on earth who

62 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

suffer in every conceivable way without the consolations he has or the spiritual helps and graces. This thought should urge him to bless God and to bear patiently the trials of life.

12. He must have recourse to the Mother of God, the true consolation of the afflicted, whose heart is filled with compassionate mercy especially for those who suffer. "O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mother," cries the Church. Never has the Blessed Virgin Mary been found wanting by those who have confidence in her. Her Divine Son gave her power in heaven and on earth over His creatures. She was given to us as our refuge, our help and our consolation in all our necessities.

In the recommendation of these acts of virtue remember three things:

1. Do not suggest their use all at once, but encourage the sick person to employ these spiritual helps on different occasions.

2. You should assist the patient to put them into practice, especially if he is unable to do so himself. Make the following suggestion: "Tell Almighty God that you renounce your own will and wholly accept His."

3. Kneel and pray with the patient from time to time. The prayers, "We fly to thy patronage," "Remember, O most Blessed Virgin" and others to Our Lady will be very helpful and consoling.

## 8. PREACHING AND CATECHIZING

Before undertaking the duty of preaching and catechizing, adore God as He is manifested in the mystery, the saint or the virtue which is to be the topic of the sermon or instruction. Thus, if you are to speak on a mystery of Our Lord's or Our Lady's life, or if you are to preach about a saint, you should adore God in the mystery or in the saint. When preaching on a virtue, you should adore Our Lord Jesus Christ in His perfect observance and practice of it while He walked on earth with men. When speaking against any vice, you should adore God in His great hatred for that particular sin.

Realizing your nothingness, prostrate yourself before God, begging His forgiveness for any negligence which may have crept into your preaching or catechizing.

#### THE APOSTOLIC LIFE OF THE PRIEST

63 -

Renounce all vanity or pride, making a renewed protestation of your undivided desire to please God alone.

Adore Jesus Christ as the light of the world, the sovereign Preacher, and beseech Him to infuse into your heart His inspiration, that your preaching may in some small measure reflect His divine teaching.

Pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to your Guardian Angel and the Saints, particularly those whose lives mirror the virtues you are explaining. Beg the holy preachers who are now in heaven to assist you in the worthy preparation of your subject matter.

Let no unsuitable or unbecoming topics enter into your sermons or instructions. "My speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the Spirit and power?" (1 Cor. 2, 4). Confine yourself to the necessary truths of the Gospel, the examples of Sacred Scripture and the works of the Fathers of the Church. Let it never be said of you that you preach your own thoughts, but rather the word of God.

When you have studied your subject and prepared your instruction thoroughly, thank God and place your knowledge in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of His Blessed Mother.

Pattern yourself on the great Preacher Himself of whom it was written that He was "mighty in work and word before God and all the people" (Luke 24, 19), and that He "began to do and to teach" (Act. 1, 1). Implement the words of St. Paul: "Carefully study to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2, 15). Endeavour to realize in yourself the words of Sacred Scripture, "As from God, before God, in Christ we speak" (2 Cor. 2, 17), that is, endeavor to draw your thoughts from God and to make Him your only desire and end, preaching in His name and solely for His honor and glory.

Before delivering a sermon or teaching a class in Christian doctrine, kneel down and pray humbly to Him in whose name you are about to speak.

Adore Christ the great Preacher and Teacher in the holy dispositions which He brought to this noble function. Try to cultivate similar dispositions, asking Him to make you participators with Him in this divine work, avoiding any suggestion of vanity.

64-

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Humble yourself at the Master's feet, protesting your unworthiness, begging Him to take up His abode within you, so that He will speak through your lips and mouth, since He alone is worthy of so lofty a task.

Give yourself to the Eternal Father, pleading with him to eradicate in you anything which is not of Himself, and to establish Christ within your heart.

Invoke the Holy Ghost, praying Him to take full possession of you, with His guidance and direction, that He may open wide the hearts of those to whom you are going to preach.

Offer yourself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to your Angel Guardian and all the angels, as well as to the patron saints and protectors of those you are to address. Beseech them to obtain from God the grace required for your task, that it may be Christ Himself who will speak through you. Let it be your fervent prayer that He may open and dispose the hearts and minds of your hearers to a worthy reception of the divine Word.

After the sermon or catechetical instruction, thank Our Lord for the glory He has rendered the Eternal Father; for all the effects He has produced and the grace He has given mankind through His own preaching as well as by the mouths of His prophets, teachers and doctors through whom He truly spoke. Thank Him especially for the grace He has brought you through your own preaching and catechizing.

Ask pardon for the faults you may have committed while discharging this duty. Invoke the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and saints, for this same purpose.

Do not make your sermon the topic of conversation after it has been delivered, lest in seeking to hear complimentary remarks, vanity may rob you of whatever merit you have gained. Fear, too, that, after you have taught and instructed others, it might well be said of you, "Lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (1 Cor. 9, 27). Remember the rebuke of St. Paul to the Jews of his day: "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest not thyself (Rom. 2, 21).

65 -

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **THE ANNUAL RETREAT**

NOTHING is more useful or necessary to a Christian, and especially to a priest, than the annual retreat. It represents the most powerful and efficacious means for the purification and sanctification of the soul. So, too, it is of paramount importance for our advancement in grace and our preparation for a happy death.

For your annual retreat to be well made, five things are required: 1. Purity of intention; 2. Dispositions; 3. Proper disposal of time; 4. Subjects of meditation; 5. Retreat books.

#### **I. PURITY OF INTENTION**

You should make the retreat for three principal reasons:

1. To please God and in memory of the sublime seclusion and retreats Our Blessed Lord observed, as well as those of His Holy Mother who was always united with Him. He observed a long retreat in the stable at Bethlehem, in Egypt and later at Nazareth. For forty days He lived in the silence of the desert; and now He hides Himself in the bosom of the Eternal Father as well as in the Blessed Sacrament. You should choose one of these periods of Christ's retreats to honor Him during your own annual retreat.

2. Offer the retreat as an atonement for the innumerable sins and offenses committed in the past.

3. Make it with the intention of disposing yourself for the worthy reception of new light and graces for the future.

## 2. DISPOSITIONS

To make your retreat with required dispositions, you should make seven preliminary acts.

First, humble yourself because of your great unworthiness. Secondly, enter into the spirit of true solitude, with utter renunciation of all worldly ties. Relinquish your study or any other kind of work. Do not leave the place of retreat unless it be absolutely necessary. Keep rigid silence except during recreation periods. Give yourself wholeheartedly to Our Blessed Lord with those sentiments which animated His own Sacred Heart, and the hearts of Mary and Joseph and of all the saints who practised mortification in solitude.

Thirdly, be faithful to every exercise of the retreat. Fourthly, make use of each moment of your time as if this retreat were to be your last and were given to you as a final opportunity of making reparation for all your unworthiness and sins. In every act of your retreat, or at least in the principal acts, have this thought in mind, "I wish to perform this particular act so well, with God's grace, that I may fully atone for my past sins, and I desire to perform it in the same manner that I would if this were my last day on earth, and if I knew this would be the last opportunity I should ever have of performing it."

Fifthly, follow the guidance of the retreat master and be docile to his injunctions. Sixthly, make a complete renunciation of your own desires, will and self-love, abandoning yourself entirely to the will of God. Let Him guide and direct you during the days you will spend in this holy duty. Seek no human consolation. Trust alone in God.

Seventhly, invoke the assistance of the Blessed Virgin Mary together with the prayers of St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, your Guardian Angel and all the angels and saints of heaven. On the day before you go to make your retreat, spend at least an hour in prayer, preferably in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

THE ANNUAL RETREAT

67 -

## 3. PROPER DISPOSAL OF TIME

### A. Morning

Arise promptly at the sound of the bell, pronouncing the blessed names of Jesus and Mary. Make the sign of the cross and renew your baptismal promises in these words, *Abrenuntio tibi Satana; adhaereo tibi, Domine Jesu*. Then, say with great devotion: I will rise, and ... I will seek him whom my soul loveth" (Cant. 3, 2).

While dressing, recite some vocal prayers or recall passages from Sacred Scripture or from the previous day's spiritual reading or concentrate on the meditation which you are about to make.

Then, kneeling beside your bed, honor and salute the Blessed Trinity by reciting the *Gloria Patri*. Adore Christ Our Lord, saying, *Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus. . tibi, quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum. Qui passus es pro nobis, Domine Jesu, miserere nobis*. Recite the *Ave Maria* to salute the Blessed Virgin Mary. Invoke your Guardian Angel saying, *Ave, Sancte Angele, qui custos es mei: benedictus sis in aeternum, et intercedere digneris pro mea omniumque salute*.

Address all the angels and saints in heaven thus: *Avete, omnes Angeli, et omnes Sancti et Sanctae Dei: benedicti sitis in aeternum, et intercedere dignemini pro nostra omniumque salute*. Ask Jesus and Mary to

give you their blessing: *Benedictum sit Cor amantissimum et dulcissimum nomen Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et gloriosissimae Virginis Matris ejus, in aeternum et ultra. Nos cum Prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria. Amen.* At the Angelus bell, recite the words of that beautiful prayer; then, begin the meditation period.

If the retreat is to be made in common, the schedule will be followed as set forth by the director. But, if the exercise is to be private, it might be well at this point to recite the *Little Hours*. Then you may say Mass if it is convenient at this time. After Mass, a period of profound thanksgiving is a prime requisite.

After breakfast you should spend a half hour reading the New Testament. The rest of the morning should be devoted to the exercises

## 68 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

as prescribed for a retreat in common, or if it be in private the beads and litany should be recited, followed by a period of spiritual reading and a thorough examination of conscience.

### B. Afternoon

After noonday meal, some time will be assigned for recreation in which all the retreatants will participate. During the remainder of the afternoon, there will be various exercises, lectures, spiritual reading, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, recitation of the Divine Office and the rosary, until dinner or supper time.

### C. Evening

The evening meal will be followed by recreation in silence, preparation of the points for next day's meditation and a sermon. The day will be brought to a close by night prayers and the reading of the points of meditation.

Sometime during the retreat, the retreatant will prepare his soul carefully and devoutly for the most important exercise of the retreat, namely, Confession.

## 4. SUBJECTS OF MEDITATION

Ordinarily these will be outlined by the Retreat Master.(1) They should be adopted wholeheartedly, with the fullest spirit of cooperation and with the help of God's grace and guidance. Before meditation, the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* should be said.

## 5. RETREAT Books

The only books you need for the retreat are the Bible, the Breviary, the *Following of Christ*, and the *Lives of the Saints*. There are, however, numerous excellent spiritual writings which might be read most profitably at your own discretion or upon the advice of the Retreat Master.

(1). See Part VI, for a series of excellent retreat meditations.

## THE ANNUAL RETREAT

69 -

When it is a question of reading the Scripture, the parts which might be chosen with most profit are the Four Gospels, especially chapters five, six and seven of St. Matthew, and chapters eleven to seventeen of St. John. Then the Epistles of St. Paul and the other apostles may also be read with great benefit.

**Part 11****THE APOSTOLIC PREACHER( 1 )****Part II****THE APOSTOLIC PREACHER'****CHAPTER I****EXCELLENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF  
THE OFFICE OF PREACHING**

THE PREACHER should keep constantly before him the realization of the importance and sublimity of his noble work, not as a matter of conceit or complacency, but rather as a humbling reminder of his unworthiness and incompetence. Consequently, it should be his constant aim to neglect nothing which can be of assistance in qualifying himself for his task.

Before undertaking to preach, the preacher should always remember the truly great excellence of his work, as well as its lofty origin and divine purpose.

He should never forget that his office is higher than that of the Prophets of the Old Law, for the teachers of the Old Testament taught only the letter and not the spirit, while the exponent of the Gospel of Christ breathes the very spirit of God if his hearers will open their minds and their hearts. "Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit. For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth" (2 Cor. 3, 6). The Apostle St. Paul also refers to the ministry of preaching as ministratio spiritus (Ibid. 3, 8). In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that "while Peter was yet speaking (1). Two chapters in the original French edition have been omitted in the English version and short chapters dealing with similar material have been combined into one chapter.

74 - **THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word" (Acts 10, 44).

The work of preaching is a labor shared with the great saints of the New Law, namely the apostles and disciples of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The preacher should bear in mind that the office of preaching is so lofty in character and so pleasing to God that Our Blessed Lord promised that He would reward and love those who received His ministers, as though they had received Him personally. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me" (Matt. 10, 40). On the other hand, on judgment Day God will condemn and punish those who refused to give ear to the exponents of His doctrine, in a manner more terrible than that experienced by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha: "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment" (Ibid. 15).

By preaching and exhortation were idolatry and the tyranny of Satan destroyed. Through this instrumentality, the Church was established in spite of the powers of hell.

Preaching is giving God's children the bread of life to nourish them in this vale of tears and to perfect in them the divine life they received at baptism. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6, 69).

Preachers of the Gospel of Christ are incarnate angels of the Lord, messengers of heaven, seraphim of the Church, heralds of the Blessed Trinity. Consequently, the priest always begins his discourse with the words: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Priests are the veritable mouthpieces of the Eternal Father, the ambassadors of the Son of God. "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us" (2Cor. 5, 20). They are active cooperators with God in the salvation of souls.

As precursors of the Lord, they exercise an office similar to that of St. John the Baptist, preparing the ways of the Lord. They are spiritual parents of Christ, forming Him in the lives and souls of their flock. They are saviours of the world. "And saviours shall come up into mount Sion," says Sacred Scripture (Abdias 21).

The mouth of the preacher is the mouth of Jesus Christ who came

## THE OFFICE OF PREACHING

75 -

on earth to speak to men, to instruct and guide them. Through His ministers He wishes to continue till the end of time the divine work He founded. "Christ speaketh in me", (2 Cor. 13, 3). The tongue of the preacher is the instrument and the voice of the Holy Ghost used to announce to mankind the eternal verities spoken by the tongue of Christ Himself.

Preaching is truly making God speak, who having of old spoken by His prophets, and in the New Law through His Divine Son, now wishes to speak to His children through the living members of that same Son.

Preaching had its origin in the bosom of God Himself, from which emanated the Word Divine, Christ, the First Preacher. Thence flowed, too, all those eternal truths still proclaimed on earth.

The end and purpose of this heavenly office is to form Christ in the hearts of the faithful that He may reign there; to dispel the darkness of hell and illumine the light of heaven in men's souls; to destroy sin and open the floodgates of grace; to destroy the tyranny of Satan on earth and reestablish the Kingdom of God. Preaching aims to reconcile men with their Maker, transforming them into His children, deifying them as it were, according to the words of Sacred Scripture: "He called them gods, to whom the word of God was spoken" (John 10, 35). In a word, it means perfecting here below that great work Christ came to effect for He says to all preachers, "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you" (John 20, 21).

So noble and great is this holy duty that it should be carried out with the greatest exactitude, inspired by the holiest of dispositions and intentions. Preachers should unite themselves to the prophets, the apostles and all the saints in heaven in order to learn to imitate them and practise their virtues.

Likewise, as God's heralds and ambassadors, preachers should be clothed with His qualities, possessed with a burning love, fired with the all-consuming zeal of the Holy Spirit. The lips of the preacher, being consecrated to the Gospel, should never utter anything save the words of God. If any

man speak, let him speak, as the words of God" (1 Peter 4, 11).

Preaching emanated from the bosom of God and through it He

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

speaks to mankind. Its only purpose is to establish His reign in men's hearts, and to lift them to the very

throne of the Father that they may abide eternally with Him. Preachers, therefore, should always speak in a manner worthy of God's infinite majesty, making Him truly speak through them. They should study and practise what St. Paul says, "As from God, before God, in Christ we speak." *Sicut ex Deo, coram Deo et in Christo loquimur* (2 Cor. 2, 17).

*Sicut ex Deo* means that the preacher should not depend upon his own thoughts or ideas, but his matter should be founded on Scripture, theology, prayer and the reading of devotional works. *Coram Deo* means that the preacher should have no other aim, no other thought or object in mind than God, His glory and the salvation of souls. For these things represent the sole purpose for which Christ established His Church and the office of preaching.

*In Christo loquimur* means that he should make a complete renunciation of self and become one with Christ absorbing those dispositions and intentions which animated the Saviour when He preached here on earth.

Finally, be assured that to undertake and carry out the office of preaching, according to the directions outlined, is more praiseworthy in God's sight than the most profound contemplation. Nothing pleases Him more than the salvation of souls, which is accomplished more efficiently by preaching than by contemplation. St. Bernard expresses this thought very strikingly in a beautiful metaphor: *Noli nimis insistere osculo contemplationis, quia meliora sunt ubera praedicationis.* (2)  
(2). In Cantic. sermo 9, no. 8.



## CHAPTER 2

### INTERIOR DISPOSITIONS FOR PREACHING

WHOSOEVER would preach the word of God in an apostolic spirit should endeavor to acquire the interior dispositions that filled the Divine Preacher and the apostles when they preached the Gospel to the world.

He should so live that he would rather die a thousand deaths than ever be guilty of a deliberate sin, no matter what its nature. Moreover, before daring to speak in the name of the Saviour, he should purify himself from every blemish either by going to confession or by making an act of contrition. He should dwell in constant fear that the words of the Psalmist might be applied to him: "To the sinner God hath said: Why dost thou declare my justices, and take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hast hated discipline; and hast cast my words behind thee" (PS. 49, 16-17).

Banish every shadow of self-love, pride, ambition or vanity. Have no other thought than to please God and to save souls. Satan was damned because he envied God's glory<sup>(1)</sup> and sought to become like unto Him. "How many great preachers have been lost eternally," exclaims St. Francis Xavier, "because they were consumed with vanity and self-esteem." (2)

(1). "Beware of vanity, you who go to preach missions or speak in public . . . Seek only the glory of God, for which end alone you should strive to work and labor. Yes, let His glory and the salvation of souls be your only aim. Otherwise, you will be preaching yourselves, not Jesus Christ. And what can be said of one who preaches solely that he may be applauded, praised and acclaimed? What is he doing but committing a sacrilege? Yes, a sacrilege. To use the word of God and divine things to enhance his own reputation and acquire honor for himself, is surely a sacrilege. O God, grant that no member of this little company may fall into such a terrible sin. Believe me, we shall never be able to do the work of God unless we have profound humility and learn to despise ourselves." Saint Vincent de Paul, quoted by the Abbé Maynard in *Vie de Saint Vincent de Paul*, VOL. 2, P. 393.

(2). Epist., lib. 4, cp. 16.

### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Avoid negligence and the seeking of easy ways, instead of embracing wholeheartedly the hard work entailed in preaching. Study with care and diligence. Prepare your sermon or instruction well in advance. Never go into the pulpit without being thoroughly familiar with the subject for otherwise you are merely tempting God.

Do not rest your entire dependence upon your own feeble efforts. Rather depend on grace and the bounty of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Before beginning even to outline a sermon, kneel down and beg God's help. Seek light and strength before the Blessed Sacrament, adoring there the incomprehensible love which prompted God to send His Only-begotten Son into the world to instruct and teach mankind. Adore the infinite goodness and the charity which moved the Holy Ghost to speak through Jesus, His apostles and saints.

Thank the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost for all these favors, and ask pardon for any misuse made of your talents, ability or opportunities. Be humbled before the divine majesty of God and mindful of your own insignificance.

Renounce self-love and self-esteem. Avoid vanity and pride under any guise. Surrender yourself to the love of the Father, the wisdom of the Son and the charity of the Holy Ghost. Beg them to put in your mind inspiring thoughts so that your sermon may produce abundant fruit in the soul of your listeners.

Adore Christ as the beginning and end of all everlasting verities. Unite your intentions to those

which animated the God-man, thanking His bounty for all His manifestations of truth to mankind, and for the great privilege of being associated with Him in the holy work of preaching. Beg divine forgiveness for being unworthy of the great trust bestowed upon you.

Cultivate humility, learning to plumb the depth of your own nothingness, realizing that the preacher speaks only through the goodness of our Saviour, in His name and for His cause. Affirm vigorously that even if you did possess the ability of making the most eloquent human orations, you, nevertheless, would refrain from this display of learning and would choose to proclaim instead the undying truths of the Gospel.

Salute Mary Immaculate, Mother of the Eternal Light and Truth. Thank her and offer her your will, praying in return only for the great

#### INTERIOR DISPOSITIONS FOR PREACHING

79 -

privilege of being able to continue doing the evangelical work of her Divine Son with merit and fruit. Salute your Angel Guardian and all the saints and protectors of the diocese and the parish where you are to preach. Invoke their prayers and assistance.

While studying, frequently elevate your heart to God. Before going into the pulpit, recall briefly the foregoing injunctions and then consider the importance of the action you are about to perform. Unite yourself with the holy dispositions which filled the mind and heart of Jesus as He preached to His disciples. Make an act of utter renunciation of self. Ask Our Lord to remove from your heart all that is not of Him, so that He alone will speak through your mouth since it is He alone who should speak the words of salvation. Tell Him that you are willing to accept any humiliation, nervousness or confusion which you may suffer while you are preaching. Offer to the Father your memory; to the Son your understanding; to the Holy Ghost your will.

Offer to God the hearts of your hearers, praying earnestly that they may be well disposed. Offer them to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and the saints. Then, kneel humbly and say: Veni, Domine Jesu, veni, veni. "Come, Lord Jesus, come into my heart. Annihilate my own being that Thou alone mayest preach Thy divine word. Come into the hearts of all here present and dispose them to receive and practise whatsoever Thou dost desire them to do."

Standing before the congregation, raise your eyes to heaven and ask God to help you to seek His glory alone and to implore the saints to pray for you before the heavenly throne.

Make the Sign of the Cross with great devotion. Let its meaning penetrate the heart, mindful of St. Paul's words: "God ... hath spoken to us by his son" (Heb. 1; 1-2). Try to enter into the sentiments of love which prompted the Eternal Father to give us His Blessed Son. Pray to the Holy Spirit, that His zeal and piety may abound in you as it did in the holy apostles and doctors of the Church.

During the sermon proper, a great spirit of recollection and piety should be maintained. Remember that, in speaking to sinners, you really speak to men like yourself encompassed with every temptation and sin. Do not show impatience at interruptions caused by the congregation. Never display displeasure. Do not scold harshly or rant. Use

80 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

kindly words. Speak modestly, not boastfully. Let authority and humility be intermingled.

After the sermon, thank the Blessed Trinity, Our Lord and His holy Mother, the angels and saints, saying: *Gloria Patri, Gloria tibi Domine, Ave Maria, Avete omnes Angeli et omnes Sancti et Sanctae Dei, benedicti sitis in aeternum, et intercedere dignemini pro nostra omniumque salute.*

Likewise, ask pardon for any shortcomings and close your heart and ears against vanity or flattery. If your sermon has not measured up to standard or has been somewhat of a disappointment, offer this trial in a spirit of real faith.

Do not tolerate praise. When well-wishers congratulate or compliment you, humble yourself inwardly and direct to God all honor and glory: *Soli Deo honor et gloria* (1, Tim. 1, 17). Remember, too, that people who praise you to your face may despise you in their hearts, and that while you may enjoy the approval of a few, perhaps the great majority are indifferent to you, if not actually hostile. Yet, though you are openly acclaimed by all, you should still shun as poison the praises of men for flattery and adulation can kill Christ in your heart: "Woe to you when men shall bless you: for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6, 26).

When you are corrected, accept these admonitions in a spirit of humility and submission.

Learn to practise the sublime truths that you preach and apply them to yourself in actuality, lest it be said of you: "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest not thyself" (Rom. 2, 21). Remember that the truths that you have expounded will be so many verdicts and condemnations against you at the hour of death unless you have tried to live up to them.

You must be mindful of these things, and in so doing you will be strengthened and fortified with a most potent weapon to protect you against conceit and false estimation of self. St. Prosper says: *Bene loqui et male vivere, quid aliud est nisi se sua voce damnare?* (3)  
(3). Praelat. in Job. cap. 7.

## CHAPTER III

### EDIFICATION AND EXAMPLE TO BE GIVEN BY PREACHERS

PREACHING the Gospel is simply a continuation of the divine mission of Christ. Preachers, therefore, should imitate the great Master whom they represent. "Jesus began to do and to teach" (Acts 1, 1). "He was mighty in work and word before God and all the people" (Luke 24, 19).

Consequently, preachers should be living examples of devotion and virtue, especially humility, obedience and charity. Likewise, they should avoid as a plague anything that savors of vanity and ambition, and they should never show any signs of seeking the pulpits of large churches. They should be willing to go to the poorest parishes and the smallest, as well as to the wealthiest and most isolated churches in order to walk in the footsteps of the Divine Master who said: "He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4, 18), and one of the proofs of the divinity of His mission was: "The poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11, 5).

Preachers, should always be careful not to put themselves forward, but should rather give place to other preachers, speaking of these latter always with esteem and affection. Each one should excuse and defend his confreres charitably whenever they are unjustly blamed, and guard at all times against jealousy. Nor should they excuse themselves from preaching when the congregation is very small, remembering always that even one soul created to the image and likeness of God and redeemed by Christ's Precious Blood is well worth the labor and effort of all the theologians, the preachers and even of all men and angels. Indeed, the salvation of a soul is of infinite value, as Christ Himself

## 82 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

demonstrated when He took special care to instruct the poor Samaritan woman at the well, thus proving that He would gladly have come into the world if there had been only one soul to instruct and save.

Likewise, if your audience is not so attentive as it should be, you must not show displeasure, which would be a proof of vanity.

Nothing should be said in a sermon simply for effect or self-glorification, to show one's erudition or wisdom, nor should any personal touch be permitted to enter into the theme. The words of the Apostle St. Paul should be kept always in mind: "We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord" (2 Cor. 4, 5).

Make your life conform to your preaching, and let your actions speak as loudly as your words, so that like St. John the Baptist you may be *lucerna ardens et lucens*, "a burning and a shining light" (John 5, 35), burning before God, shining before men; burning in prayer, shining in action; burning from Within, shining from without; burning in words, shining in deeds.

Be particularly devoted to the virtues of temperance, frugality and abstinence. Give a true example of abstemiousness when visiting in another parish, so that this spirit of mortification may be a silent lesson to those about you. In visiting, too, you should be careful to give every evidence of sobriety.

Avoid familiarity with seculars, especially women, lest suspicions be engendered in the minds of others. *Ut non vituperetur ministerium nostrum* (2 Cor. 6, 3).

Your whole deportment should place you beyond the faintest or least suspicion of avarice or greed and show clearly your detachment from temporal things and your devotion only to the eternal. Consequently, you should ask no recompense for your services, but you should receive thankfully whatever

the charity of the people will offer out of the goodness of their hearts.

Never discuss the faults and shortcomings of other priests or religious. Show a great respect for parish priests and never undertake any activity without their sanction. Incite the faithful to love and respect them.

Try to be kind and accessible to all. Be ever ready to do good to every person without exception, in imitation of the charity of the Master,

#### EDIFICATION AND EXAMPLE

83 -

"who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10, 38). Be especially kind to the poor, pressed them rather than the rich, in their homes, in prison and in hospitals. Have a tender solicitude for the afflicted, consoling them and urging them to turn their sufferings to spiritual advantage.

Endeavor to reunite families and members of broken homes, being always careful not to take sides, showing to both factions that your only interest is the promotion of God's glory and the salvation of souls.

Let your conversation be modest, gentle and edifying, taking advantage of every opportunity to speak of things eternal. Bear the good odor of Christ everywhere, but especially in consecrated places where your Christian conduct should be an inspiration. This will apply especially to the church, where by silence and piety you will show the faithful the great respect due to the house of God.

Finally, you should be in imitation to St. John the Baptist, vox clamantis (Matt. 3, 3), that is, you should act and live in such manner that everything about you will be a continual proof that you are a man of God. Let the world see in your actions, your walk, your person, your gestures, your attire, your daily habits, the reflection of your interior life, which will prove beyond doubt that you are a priest, not only at the altar and in the pulpit, but in every place and in every thing you do and think and say. Thus, you will always preach piety, modesty, humility, simplicity and all the other virtues.

## CHAPTER IV (\*)

### BOOKS FOR SERMON MATERIAL

THE FIRST and most important book for preachers is Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Book of Wisdom, of Job, and of the Prophets are especially recommended.

Some time should be devoted each day to the reading of Sacred Scripture and it is suggested that this be done kneeling, in imitation of St. Charles Borromeo. Parts of Scripture should be memorized, certainly the most impressive passages. Spiritual commentators, too, should be read with care, especially Cornelius a Lapide and Barradas.(1)

Next in importance after Holy Scripture come the writings of the Fathers of the Church, foremost among them St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory the Great and St. Bernard. The *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas is, of course, an indispensable reference book for any preacher of Catholic doctrine. '

There are also the works of Louis of Granada, a Spanish Dominican, renowned for his virtue and erudition. St. Charles Borromeo made extensive use of the writings of this learned man, using them as his sole manual of theology. Certainly Granada's *Guide of Sinners* should be studied and read with special care.

There are also Father Saint jure's *Knowledge and Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, William Peraldus's *De Vitiis et Virtutibus*(2) and the *Catechism* of St. Peter Canisius.

(\*). This chapter has been considerably curtailed by the omission of several works no longer available and by the elimination of long footnotes included in the original French edition, *Oeuvres Complètes*, VOL. IV, P. 29 ff.

(1) Barradas, a Portuguese Jesuit (1542-1615), published *Commentaria in concordiam et historiam Evangeliorum*, in four volumes.

(2). William Peraldus, a French Dominican, died in 1260.

### BOOKS FOR SERMON MATERIAL

85 -

The Lives of the Saints must be the handbooks of any preacher who wants to perform his duty with success and devotion. Other good books in the preacher's mother tongue must be read attentively and studied in order to perfect his style and to acquire clarity and fluency of speech.

Frivolous and worldly books should not be used nor should the mind of the priest be sullied with the contents of such useless works. Such volumes are often part of Satan's library, completely opposed to the maxims of the Gospel.

## CHAPTER V

### SERMON TOPICS

PREACHERS should remember that it is their duty to preach the word of God. They would be criminally guilty if they should distribute ordinary bread instead of the Sacred Host; so also they cannot be excused if their sermons are merely worldly dissertations instead of well digested discourses on the eternal verities.

Consequently, preachers must be on guard lest they preach their own thoughts rather than those of Sacred Scripture and tradition, lest they expound a human doctrine rather than the deep truths of Christ, so amply explored in the writings of the Fathers of the Church.

Likewise, preachers, especially the young and inexperienced, should beware of falling into the error of thinking that they must seek unusual topics, use new unconventional expressions and propound extraordinary ideas. By so doing, they make a great mistake because the common subjects are always the most useful and most appealing, not only because they convince listeners, but because God imparts a blessing and a particular efficacy to the words of those who preach the Catholic doctrine with simplicity and humility.

Subtle questions, which are better suited to gratify curiosity than to edify and touch hearts, should be omitted. The preacher should confine himself to a simple and lucid exposition of the Gospel and reject anything superfluous, useless or of little merit so that he will speak only thoughts that will help men to know and honor God and spur them on to work out their eternal salvation.

The principal sermon topics are the following:

#### SERMON TOPICS

87 -

The Epistles and Gospels read at Holy Mass, or any part of Sacred Scripture.

The perfections, mysteries, works and gifts of God.

The Ten Commandments of God and the Six Commandments of the Church.

The Life, Excellence and Mysteries of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Sacraments, Ceremonies and Liturgy of the Church.

The life and virtues of the Saints.

Sin and the particular vices.

Evil customs which are the causes of numberless sins, such as bad books, pictures, dancing, plays, fashions and harmful games.

Christian virtues, such as faith, hope, charity, humility and patience.

Good works, such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving, the corporal and the spiritual works of mercy.

The duties and obligations of one's state in life, whether one be rich or poor, a workman or an employer, a father or mother, married or single, master or servant.

The four last ends of man and purgatory.

These and similar topics are always most suitable for the preacher who is eager to preach the word of God with success.

In all his sermons and instructions the preacher should endeavor to make Almighty God better known in His mysteries, His works and His benefits. He must also strive to make divine goodness better loved and appreciated by the faithful. Likewise, he should exhort them to greater love for their Creator, make them sorry for sin and determined to amend their lives. He should urge them to fear God's justice and His punishment, to hope in His promises, to have confidence in His goodness, His grace and His help. So he should encourage his hearers to offer to God their entire being and their all. He should strive constantly to make the Saviour better known and loved by all men, inducing them to follow Him as true disciples of the great Leader. Into their hearts, too, he should infuse a profound and tender love and respect for the ever Blessed Mother.

## 88 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

The preacher should also make his people understand that they, as well as priests and religious, are called upon to live holily and follow in the footsteps of the saints. For this purpose, he should be assiduous in his efforts to make them love the Church and everything associated with it. This means that they should be taught reverence and veneration for consecrated places such as churches, chapels and cemeteries. Likewise, they should insist upon the sanctification of Sundays and holy days of obligation.

The importance of Baptism and its obligations should be impressed upon the faithful. The dignity and sanctity of Confirmation and the other sacraments should be thoroughly explained, their origin and purpose, their institution and the proper dispositions with which they should be received. Likewise, their efficacy should be made clear and their frequent reception urged, especially the Sacraments of Penance and of Holy Eucharist.

Marriage, being one of the most important events in the life of most Christians, should be held up to highest esteem and its sacramental character made thoroughly clear. Its far-reaching effects in time and eternity should be the topic of many sermons by the preacher who is devoted to his task.

Young people considering wedlock should be reminded of their duties, particularly that of consulting their parents. They should be encouraged to pray to Our Lord, to His Blessed Mother and to St. Joseph to guide them in the choice of a suitable partner, who will be a help and not a hindrance in the performance of their Christian and Catholic duties. Their preparation for this Sacrament of Matrimony should be such as to guarantee the graces and blessings of God. Like the young Tobias, they should resort to prayer and be firm in continence, and on their wedding day stand, in God's presence, purified by Confession and Holy Communion.

Enjoin upon parishioners and all Catholics a wholesome respect for Holy Matrimony and especially seek to banish from marriage celebrations any unseemly and unbecoming conduct. Fulminate against the pagan customs which sometimes accompany these wedding feasts, when sinful excesses of eating and drinking are committed and sinful

## SERMON TOPICS

89 -

dancing indulged. Also, urge parents to prevent as far as possible prolonged courtships which often lead to



evil.

Let married persons learn that wedlock does not permit them to use the holy state as a cloak for sinful practices and immoral license. Let them remember, too, that their duties as parents are most serious; that their obligation of bringing up their children and educating them is binding before God.

Teach them to offer their children to Our Lord at the hour of birth, and to have them baptized as early as possible. Then, when the children come to the age of reason, the parents should instruct them faithfully in their Christian duties, watching over them at all times, helping them to decide their state in life when the moment comes for that important decision.

Preachers should point out the hideousness of sin in general and of particular vices, causing evil to be shunned and detested. They should urge the faithful to cultivate a great respect and love for our Holy Father, the Pope, the Bishops of the Church and for all priests. Likewise, too, preachers should remind Catholics of their duties towards the civil law and their obligations to obey its mandates. Those who are in high places of authority should be exhorted to remember the sacred trust they hold. They should be encouraged to govern with justice and wisdom, treating those under their jurisdiction with kindness and consideration. Their example should be a shining light for their subordinates.

The rich should be reminded that the things on earth are merely passing; therefore, they should not attach too much importance to them, seeking rather to lay up treasures for eternity. The poor should be helped to bear their lot with Submission, remembering that theirs was the lot of Jesus, of His Blessed Mother and of the great majority of the saints. The Master who possessed all riches became poor for us.

Teach masters and servants, employers and employees to have mutual respect, using every means at their disposal for the betterment of their spiritual condition. Guide mothers and fathers in their imitation of the Eternal Father, the perfect example of love, kindness, patience and zeal. Give the child Jesus as a model to the children, pointing out His loving obedience and devotion to Mary and Joseph.

90 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Finally, there are four topics which can never be preached too often:

1. Veneration of holy places and of holy days of obligation.
2. Frequent use of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.
3. Charity towards God and one's fellow men and reconciliation with one's enemies.
4. Restitution.

## CHAPTER VI

### FURTHER SUGGESTIONS ON SERMON TOPICS

IN ADDITION to the topics suggested in the preceding chapter, the following rules should be observed by those who are called to the divine ministry of preaching.

They should have a sufficient knowledge of the doctrines they preach, though it is not necessary for them to be outstanding theologians. They should be careful not to discuss or preach any subject with which they are insufficiently familiar. "A preacher knows enough," says St. Francis de Sales, "when he does not pretend to know more than he really does." (1)

Too many quotations from Scripture or from the Fathers of the Church should be avoided; likewise, lengthy scriptural texts which merely confuse the listener. Let quotations be short and to the point. Interpret the Scriptures faithfully according to the teachings of the Catholic Church, the Fathers and the Doctors of the Church. If there is diversity of opinion on any point, do not include this in your sermon because the pulpit is not the proper place for theological disputation.

Examples from the lives of the saints make excellent sermon material, for the deeds of the saints represent the Gospel in action. Short stories drawn from nature can be most helpful, for the world brought into being by the Creator's fiat proclaims the greatness of the word of God. This world of nature was St. Anthony's great book, from which he preached the glories and perfections of the Maker. Similes and other comparisons also can be very helpful if they are appropriate. Logical reasoning is an excellent adjunct. This can be found in abundance in the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas. Profane (1). Letter to the Archbishop of Bourges.

### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

authors should be quoted sparingly if at all. So-called miracles and visions should never be mentioned unless officially accepted and ratified by the Church.

The truly humble preacher will not seek his own glory, nor will he hesitate to preach on subjects that have been treated time and time again by other preachers of the day.

A preacher should not indulge in idle descriptions and irrelevant details. If he is discussing the sacrifice of Abraham, for instance, it is useless to waste time describing Isaac's comeliness, Abraham's sword or the topography of the place of sacrifice. Similarly he should not introduce imaginary conversations between people involved in a Biblical narrative unless these be well-founded and to the point. It would be far-fetched, for instance, to describe Isaac weeping at the altar and plaintively imploring his father's compassion, or to picture Abraham arguing with himself in the act of doing God's will.

If ideas come suddenly to the preacher while he is preaching, ideas which he has not studied and digested beforehand, he must be wary of giving utterance to them. It is possible that the devil may be seeking to delude him through vanity and lead him into the trap of making statements that he may regret. If spontaneous thought suggests well-founded principles and truths which he had not included in his preparation but which are obviously apt, he should by all means make use of them.

When addressing an ordinary congregation, it is useless to discuss contemplation or other stages of exalted perfection which they seldom attain. On the contrary, such topics may serve only to discourage souls for, finding themselves so far from the suggested goal, they are tempted to cease to lead an ordinary Christian life.

A preacher, therefore, should select topics that the ordinary Christians can understand and practise; he should give utterance to principles and maxims that can be followed; he should make virtue loved and vice detested. He must always avoid extremes, saying neither too much nor too little. He must neither be too strict nor too lenient. He must never indulge in prophecies concerning the coming of the Anti Christ. He should not promulgate new indulgences unless they have been authorized by the Ordinary.

#### FURTHER SUGGESTIONS ON SERMON TOPICS

93 -

He should at all times encourage the faithful to pray for our Holy Father the Pope, for the Bishops and Priests, for the civil rulers and for all fellow Christians and Catholics.

Nothing provides a better ending for a sermon than a good story, provided it is not too long and has a definite bearing on the subject matter of the discourse. Biblical stories are excellent. A preacher who would draw the greatest fruit from his labors would be well advised to make frequent use of such stories.

The preacher should avoid making the sermon too long, lest he tire his congregation and render God's word fruitless.

## CHAPTER VII

### SERMON PLANS

#### 1 The Mysteries of Religion

THERE ARE various ways of treating the mysteries of religion:

##### A. FIRST PLAN

i. Point out the effects of the power, wisdom, love, charity, justice and mercy of God towards men as made evident in the mystery under consideration.

2. Outline the duties owed to God because of this particular mystery, namely, adoration, praise, love, thanksgiving, reparation and satisfaction for offenses and the oblation of self to Him.

3. Explain the light and motives to be derived from this mystery, to lead man in the ways of God.

##### B. SECOND PLAN

1. Relate the Scriptural account of the mystery.

2. Show the reasons why this particular mystery should be honored, setting forth its dignity and excellence. Recall the glory given to God through its instrumentality together with its fruits and spiritual advantages.

3. Suggest the means to honor the mystery in their interior and exterior life.

##### C. THIRD PLAN

1. Show the external aspects of the mystery as made evident in the persons concerned, the words said and the virtues practised in connection with it.

### SERMON PLANS

95 -

2. Explain the interior spirit of the mystery, that is, the interior virtues of the persons associated with it, their thoughts and affections.

3. Stress the fruits to be drawn for the instruction and edification of the congregation.

##### D. FOURTH PLAN

Choose two or three particular circumstances connected with the mystery and build your sermon around them.

##### E. FIFTH PLAN

Take one or more virtues which shine forth from the mystery of which you are to speak, or single out some Christian truth founded on it. Make this the topic of a sound thoughtful discourse,

##### F. SIXTH PLAN

In each mystery consider three aspects and make them the points of your sermon. Who? Why? How? Take, for example, the Nativity of Our Lord. Answer three questions. Who was born? Why was He born? How was He born? Then show how the Son of God came to save mankind and a poor, naked baby in a stable, was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## **II. The Gospels and the Epistles**

### **A. FIRST PLAN**

Paraphrase and explain the particular passage of Scripture, point by point. At the conclusion of each point, draw a particular application. This is not, however, as useful as the other plans suggested, because little time can be given to any part of the discourse.

### **B. SECOND PLAN**

Concentrate on two or three necessary or important topics. This is a better plan than the preceding one.

96 - THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

### **C. THIRD PLAN**

Choose one point alone and develop it fully, drawing from it some particular truth or some practical application to certain virtues or vices. This plan is strongly recommended.

## **111. The Sacrifice of the Mass**

There is such a wealth of material for use when preaching on this sublime mystery that many sermons may be delivered on this topic without repetition. I shall merely suggest the following plan:

1. Show what the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is.
2. Point out the obligations owed Our Lord for having given this sublime proof of His love for the Church. Impress upon the faithful the great love, veneration, devotion and respect they should have for the Mass, wherein Christ immolates Himself anew daily for mankind.
3. Insist on the interior and exterior dispositions the Catholic should have when assisting at this august sacrifice.

## **IV. The Commandments of God and of the Church**

1. Having explained what is enjoined by each particular commandment, merit under discussion, point out what it forbids, and give the reasons why one should conform to its dictates.
2. Make known the various sins committed against the commandment in question by word, thought and action. When treating of the Sixth Commandment, however, use great discretion and care.
3. Give the means whereby one may obey the Commandment and show how sins against it may be avoided.

## **V. The Blessed Virgin Mary**

Since the Blessed Mother is in herself a veritable wellspring of virtue, grace and holiness, many plans could be given for sermons about our Lady. One very useful plan is included herewith, containing two points.

1. Show the reasons why she should be honored and served, dwelling upon her shining excellence in relation to God and to us.

### **SERMON PLANS**

97 -

2. Teach the people how to honor and love her with devotion worthy of their most admirable Mother.

## **V1. The Saints**

In a sermon for the feast day of a saint, or on any occasion when a saint is honored, the following plans are suggested.

### **A. FIRST PLAN**

1. Show how the saint lived in relation to God.

2. Point out how he fulfilled his duties to himself.

3. Portray his dealings with his fellow men.

This plan might be based on St. Paul's words: *Sobrie et juste et pie vivamus* (Titus 2, 12). *Sobrie* towards himself; *Juste* towards his neighbor; *pie* towards God.

### **B. SECOND PLAN**

i. Recount the remarkable periods and events of the saint's life: his childhood; his youth; middle age; old age, if he grew to advanced years; his death and the events following it.

2. Draw a salutary lesson from each period; the first for the children, the second for the young men and women, and the third for the older members of the congregation.

### **C. THIRD PLAN**

Show how the saint overcame the three vices enumerated by St. John: "For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2, 16). These vices are avarice, lust and pride. ,

### **D. FOURTH PLAN**

1. Demonstrate why we should honor each particular saint, and what fruit should be gathered from his virtues.

2. Give practical suggestions as to how the saint should be honored on his Feast Day by devotion, good works, prayer and, above all, by imitation of his virtues.<sup>98</sup>

**THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

#### E. FIFTH PLAN

- i. Explain the graces that God bestowed upon the saint.
2. Mention the holy and practical use the saint made of these graces, and counsel imitation.
3. Select two or three particular virtues for emulation.

#### F. SIXTH PLAN

Take one virtue only and develop it, for example, by selecting a personal or intimate detail about his life.

#### G. SEVENTH PLAN

1. Give reasons why we should try to practise this virtue which the saint practised in so perfect a manner.
2. Give the marks by which this chosen virtue may be distinguished and the means by which it may be acquired. Then show how the saint made use of these particular means.

All the plans outlined are excellent and can be used to great advantage. Do not make comparisons between one saint and another. Render to each the respect, praise and honor due him for his particular merits.

### **V11. Controversial Matters**

Public controversies with ministers of other creeds are often useless and must be avoided if at all possible. Usually these controversies are not actuated with the intention of learning about the Catholic Faith, but rather are used as an excuse for publicity.

Do not discuss controversial matters except in communities where Catholics come into contact with non- Catholics, or when heretics and lukewarm Catholics are present in the congregation.

If these topics must be discussed, use discretion and charity, avoiding any semblance of giving offense to anyone.

Explore thoroughly the subject to be explained. Point out the truth, then give the errors concerning it, explaining why they are errors. Answer the common objections usually advanced in support of these heresies. Leave no doubt in the minds of the faithful.

Use one of the following plans.

#### SERMON PLANS

99 -

#### A. FIRST PLAN

Show the truth of the Catholic religion as proved by Scripture, the Councils of the Church and the writings of the Fathers. falsity of the objections brought against Catholic doctrine by the enemies of the Church, using the very texts they quote to confound them.

For example, if it be a question of our using the Bible in the vernacular, explain the belief and teaching of the Church in this matter.

It is said that we deprive the faithful of the Word of God, which is the soul's daily bread. We may answer this falsehood by stating that while, indeed, the Scripture is our soul's daily bread, Mother Church proportions it to our needs. just as parents do not give the whole loaf to their children, or the knife with which to cut it lest they injure themselves, so it is the duty of the Church, of the priest or the preacher, to distribute the spiritual bread of the Word of God to his people in portions suited to their requirements.

It is said that the Word of God is the light of the world. Well indeed do we admit this truth. But, we do not place a lighted candle in a child's hands, lest he burn himself.

## B. SECOND PLAN

Establish the unswerving certainty of the Catholic doctrine. Then, dovetail with it the mysteries being discussed, for example, how Our Lord is present in the Blessed Sacrament, or how the saints hear our prayers.

## C. THIRD PLAN

Let the discourse be an explanation of Scriptural passages often questioned by those outside the Church, proving from these same passages the truth of the Catholic position..

## VIII. The Maxims of the Christian Life

Sermons on these truths are most practical, since they concern the principles of religion, the virtues, vices and last ends of man. It might be well at this point to enumerate some of these Christian maxims.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11, 6).

100 -

### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16, 24).

"Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent" (Ecclus. 21, 2).

"So likewise every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14, 33).

"Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world" (1 John 2, 15).

"He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked" (Ibid. 6).

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5, 3).

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land" (Ibid. 4).

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Ibid. 5).

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Ibid. 7).



"Many are called, but few chosen" (Ibid. 20, A).

"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction . . . narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life" (Ibid. 7, 13-114).

"Every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14, 1').

"They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. 6, g).

"No evils shall happen to him that feareth the Lord (Ecclus. 33, 1).

«To them that love God all things work together unto good (Rom. 8, 28).

Preaching on these and other Christian principles, you should: 1. Explain the words and their meaning; 2. Show why they should be followed, quoting examples from the life of Our Lord or of the saints; 3. Give practical suggestions for a rule of life founded upon these inspiring maxims.

## SERMON PLANS

101 -

### 1X. Virtues

Here is a practical plan:

1. Give reasons and motives why we should love the virtue which forms the topic of the sermon.
2. Explain the virtue, pointing out the qualities whereby it may be known.

3. Show how virtue is acquired and how easy it is to practise when the proper means are used. Give examples of the lives of other persons who have succeeded in doing so. Chief among these should be the example of Our Lord, of His Blessed Mother and of the saints whose virtues exalted them to such high places in heaven.

### X. Sin and Vice

1. Demonstrate the hideousness of sin in general; then particularize about various vices.

2. Arouse a great hatred of anything which is sinful and urge a real determination to eradicate anything which is displeasing to God in the lives of your hearers. Reasons suggested for this are: a) the injury and dishonor caused God; b) the hatred of God for sin as demonstrated by the terrible chastisements He has heaped upon malefactors, even hurling the fallen angels into hell; c) the punishments to be expected in time and eternity.

3. Suggest means to destroy evil in the soul and to avoid its occasions. For example, Christians should remember their own unworthiness and impotence to avoid evil; make a determined resolution to do all in their power to cooperate with God's grace, throwing themselves on His mercy and invoking His constant assistance; avoid occasions and everything that may lead to sin; pray always; make a good examination of conscience in the morning to foresee what pitfalls may await them and in the evening to review their transgressions; assist at daily Mass and pay frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament; cultivate a lively devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially by saying the Rosary every day; read good books; listen attentively to the sermons; fast and practise mortification; give alms to the poor; go to

confession and receive Holy Communion frequently.

102 -

THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

### **X1 The Four Last Ends and Purgatory**

DEATH

#### **A. FIRST PLAN**

Show the difference between the death of the just man and the death of the unrepentant sinner.

#### **B. SECOND PLAN**

1. Show the motives and reasons which should impel us to pray for a happy death.
2. Give the signs of a happy death.
3. Point out the means of dying a Christian death.

#### **C. THIRD PLAN**

Preach on the preparation for death. To prepare for death one must:

1. Purify one's soul by a good confession and communion, making a firm purpose . of amendment.
2. Try to die to sin, the world and oneself.
3. Submit to the will of God.
4. Give oneself completely to Our Lord.
5. Fall asleep nightly in the same state that one would like to be at the hour of death.
6. Set aside a little time each year to make a preparation for death.(1)

JUDGMENT

#### **A. FIRST PLAN**

Paint for your hearers a picture of the awe-inspiring scene of the general judgment, and what will take place. Outline the various signs that will precede it, the qualities of the Judge, His coming, the resurrection of the dead, the separation of the good and evil, the opening and reading of the Book of Life, the account of each one's stewardship which must be made and the terrible sentence that may be pronounced.

(1). There is an excellent exercise for the preparation for death in St. John Eudes's work on Christian perfection, *The Kingdom of Jesus* (New York, 1946), P. 312- 344.

SERMON PLANS 103 -

#### **B. SECOND PLAN**

Give an instruction on each of these points and the lessons to be learned from them.

#### **C. THIRD PLAN**

Suggest various means whereby the dreadful consequences of the last judgment may be avoided.

#### HELL

1. Describe the pains of hell, particularly as they will affect the senses.
2. Show how eternal torment may be avoided.

#### HEAVEN

1. Describe the infinite good and happiness God has prepared for those who love Him.
2. Point out the means whereby we may reach heaven.

#### PURGATORY

1. Show that purgatory is founded on the justice and mercy of God.
2. Stress the reasons why we should have pity on the souls in purgatory, helping them by our prayers so that they may reach heaven and glorify the Eternal Father.
3. Explain the means of helping the holy souls.

## CHAPTER VIII(\*)

### COMPOSITION OF THE SERMON

IF THE PREACHER has studied the subject thoroughly, the words will come easily. At all costs, he must endeavor to be clear and simple, avoiding learned words and abstruse expressions that may not be understood.

The truly devoted priest, who is actuated only by the desire of preaching in the simplicity and spirit of Our Lord and His Apostles, sicut ex Deo, coram Deo, in Christo (2 Cor. 2, 17), will sedulously follow St. Paul's admonition to Timothy: "Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6, 20).

The preacher should never use vulgarisms and improprieties; on the contrary, his language should be correct and precise. The discourse should never be over the heads of the people. Rather the sermon should be such that it will appeal to the hearts of the faithful, persuading and touching them in its simplicity. St. Paul refers to those who are fastidious about the choice of words, while sacrificing the sermon itself, as "adulterating the word of God" (2 COR. 2, 17). The Fathers of the Church and the saints avoided that type of discourse as more appropriate to worldlings and profane orators. Their aim was to preach Jesus Christ Crucified. In the words of St. Francis de Sales, non sectamur lenocinia rhetorum, sed veritates piscatorum.<sup>1</sup>

The following rules will be helpful for the composition of the sermon:

(\*). In this chapter we have transposed and combined chapters 21 and 22 of the French edition, Oeuvres Complètes, Vol. IV, p. 65 ff.

(1). Letter to the Archbishop of Bourges.

### COMPOSITION OF THE SERMON

105 -

1. Choose with great care the subject to be treated, selecting a topic that will be useful and well-suited to the congregation.

2. Have in mind the aim of the particular sermon which is, of course, to make God loved, honored or feared, or to destroy some vice and establish a particular virtue in its place. So dispose the sermon material that your discourse will make your purpose clear and rightly dispose the congregation to the results you have in mind.

3. Study the subject matter in prayerful meditation.

4. Make a clear plan and follow it carefully. There is nothing which can be of greater assistance to a preacher than a well-thought-out and well-divided discourse, which the faithful can follow easily. It is well to state clearly the subject to be discussed and to enunciate the method which is to be used in treating it.

For example, if you choose humility for your subject, you will state that it is your intention to implant in the hearts of the faithful a great love for this virtue and an ardent desire of practising it. "It is my intention to make you love and embrace humility. Consequently, I shall suggest to you three points which will be helpful: a. What is humility? What are its marks and how do we recognize it? b. What are the motives which should induce us to practise it? c. What means should be used to acquire humility?"

5. Let the discourse be full of sound doctrine, short scriptural texts, natural comparisons and short

anecdotes.

6. Do not quote too many passages of Scripture, or give too many expository reasons, for it is better to elucidate a few than to confuse the faithful with a bewildering number of illustrations.

7. Have the subject logically organized for what belongs to one part of the sermon may lose its value if introduced where it will be irrelevant.

8. Place striking passages from Sacred Scripture or comparisons at the end of the sermon. Reserve speculative or general motives for the beginning.

9. Do not pass from point to point without the proper transition or connective. Let there be smoothness and coherence in the composition, so that the whole discourse will hold the attention of the faithful.

106-

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

10. Avoid monotony in diction and structure. Use variety in words and expressions.

11. Make the introduction to the sermon fairly short, delving at once into the main body of the subject.

12. Draw a moral lesson from each point. Let the conclusion be striking and moving.

13. This conclusion may be a summary or recapitulation. A text from Scripture makes a very effective ending; a prayer or aspiration may also be very apt.

14. Having very carefully thought out the plan of the sermon, you should write it down. Some speakers write merely the principal points or headings. Some write the entire sermon and memorize it. Others again make a skeleton outline, memorizing some portions, and relying on the various headings which they develop as they go along. There is another method which is particularly good. It consists in composing, ordering and possessing in the mind every part of the discourse, namely, exordium, division, various points, proofs, texts, stories and conclusion. After having studied, meditated upon and considered these points, one could even preach without writing a word, and the subject would be so imprinted upon the mind that the sermon could be used at any time in the future.

## CHAPTER IX(\*)

### DELIVERY OF THE SERMON

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL thoughts and the most carefully written discourse if poorly delivered may represent a waste of time, whereas a very ordinary sermon if delivered with fluency, sincerity and warmth may produce the most efficacious results. These qualities contribute in no small measure to the preacher's success.

Pronunciation and correct use of language constitute a most important part of the office of preaching. No priest can afford to be negligent in these matters,

One of the most efficacious means at the disposal of the preacher is to play on the listeners' hearts, affections and emotions by the use of the human voice. He should spare no trouble to learn to modulate and inflect his voice properly, suiting it to the subject, now speaking softly, now forcefully, as occasion demands, with affection when speaking of virtue and with animation when preaching on sin. Never let the sermon become sing-song nor monotonous, sounding like a school-boy reciting a lesson by rote. Let the words flow naturally and simply, without affectation or studied attempts at oratory.

The preacher should be careful not to speak too slowly for fear of boring the faithful, but, on the other hand, he must not speak too fast as if he were trying to rush through the sermon. Otherwise, the whole discourse will have failed in its purpose.

On going into the pulpit, he should pitch his voice according to the size of the church, speaking neither too loudly nor too softly but so as to be heard by all.

(\*). This chapter includes the most practical suggestions as found in the French edition, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. IV, P. 71 11.

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

In order to speak with fluency and feeling, the speaker must carefully learn the sermon, especially the beginning of each successive topic; otherwise he will stumble or grope for words and will not hold the attention of his hearers.

Though inflections of the voice must be made as the sermon progresses, the speaker should never drop it so low as not to be heard nor reach such a pitch as to end in a scream.

When using such terms as *O my God, O Mother of God* and longer aspirations, let the warmth by the preacher's tone bespeak the fire of love in his heart.

Inexperienced preachers should give great attention to the matter of gestures and train themselves not to give the appearance of being wooden or stilted. On the other hand, the opposite extreme of affectation must be avoided. All gestures should be simple and natural as those used in ordinary conversation.

Do not use the same gestures throughout the sermon. Do not beat on the pulpit or play with a book that may happen to be there. Do not drop your head so low that the words are lost on your breast. Do not roll your eyes continually or raise them to heaven, but look at the congregation in general and at no individual in particular. Do not wave your arms or cross them on your bosom. Do not preach with your arms folded or with one hand holding the other. In a word, do nothing that is unbecoming to so holy and divine a function as the preaching of the word of God.

St. Francis de Sales says: "Let gestures be free, noble, generous, strong, holy, grave and measured. They should be free from restraint; noble as opposed to those of an uncultured person or a novice; generous as one who would speak to one's children; strong in the sense that they are convincing; holy, not seeking self- glorification; grave, not given to worldliness; measured and not used to cause ridicule or amusement."  
( 1 )

(1). Letter to the Archbishop of Bourges.

## CHAPTER X

### 1

#### FAULTS TO BE AVOIDED IN PREACHING

IN ADDITION to several faults already mentioned, the following should be carefully avoided:

1. Guard against affected eloquence which can tend only to corrupt the Word of God. Do not seek to parade a knowledge of worldly subjects, but be concerned only with the spiritual. Do not transform the pulpit into a theatrical rostrum.

2. Avoid long-drawn-out preambles to excuse one's incapacity or unworthiness. Do not expound the difficulty of the subject to be treated, but get to the point at once. Do not make excuses and say that one has not had time to prepare. These things are childish and destroy whatever impression the priest might make.

3. In discussing grave and important matters, use only expressions and phrases which have been carefully thought out. Be sure, too, that they would bear the scrutiny of the most rigid theologians. If by chance you let slip a remark which might be misinterpreted, correct or explain it at once, lest it engender doubt or misunderstanding among the faithful.

4. Do not exaggerate. Stick to the plain unvarnished truth.

5. Do not use humor. Christ never sought to amuse his audience.

6. Do not forget to bow the head when the name of Jesus is mentioned.

7. Do not recite or talk in a sing-song manner, but naturally, warmly and forcefully. In this connection, one can school himself to avoid this fault by teaching catechism for then one must speak in a natural tone, by listening to other pulpit orators, by practising

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

alone, by preparing the material carefully, by watching the inflections, and by using questions often, such as, "How can you prove this truth?" "Do you recall what St. Paul says?" In this way you will acquire fluency and naturalness, and will avoid any semblance of sing-song and declamation.

8. Do not discourage the faithful, but rather, after pointing out the horror of sin, lift them up to new heights of hope by showing how they may practise and acquire virtue by serious and continued efforts. Show them, too, that, if they are willing and cooperative, God will give them graces of conversion and perseverance, and that it is far easier to be saved than to be lost. Likewise, they should be inspired with the means to avoid evil and to put their trust in God. "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil . . . but glory, and honour, and peace to every one that worketh good" (ROM. 2, 9-10).

9. Do not imitate those false preachers who are steeped in worldliness, who inject into preaching the spirit of the flesh and motives of avarice and vanity, who preach themselves and not Christ Crucified, using eloquence only for their glory and gratification, who fill the holy office of preaching simply as a means of livelihood and seek only flattery. Never stoop to imitate those who preach not Christian virtues but the vanities of earth, making the road to heaven sound easy and attractive by permitting laxity while minimizing the dangers of hell. Do not imitate those who never use Scripture but depend upon profane authors, who refer to secular sciences rather than to the truth of the Gospel and utter honeyed words which contain no food for thought nor grace of conversion.



10. Finally, do not follow those whose sermons merely arouse expressions of opinion concerning the preacher himself, such as, "What a learned man! What an eloquent speaker!" If listeners who praise in these words were asked what the priest said, they would be at a loss to give the slightest idea of his sermon for it was empty and devoid of substance. Whosoever would work for the salvation of souls, and not be reproved for failing in his duty, should never fall into these faults of misguided preachers, who endanger their own and the faithful's salvation.

#### FAULTS TO BE AVOIDED IN PREACHING

111 -

11. Again I repeat, there is nothing against which a priest should guard himself more assiduously than vanity for through it many a preacher has fallen. If the great St. Paul avers that he feared he himself might become a castaway after he had preached to others, which of us should not tremble? Which of us should not be humbled? Should we not, indeed, employ every means at our disposal to banish vanity from our lives and preserve within our hearts a Christ-like humility? Should we not crush the slightest thought or feeling of self-love or complacency, mindful of our nothingness? Should we not shun the praises of men as a veritable poison, remembering that honor and glory are due God alone, begging Him to destroy pride within us, that our souls may know true humility?

## CHAPTER XI (\*)

### FURTHER ADVICE TO PREACHERS

THE Exordium should be short. Then, enter into the discourse at once, telling the faithful very plainly what the subject of the sermon is. Do not waste time describing the plan, but get to the point immediately.

If there be present a distinguished personage, such as a Cardinal or a Bishop, let the mark of respect paid him be short and without flattery, as becoming one who preaches Christ Jesus.

In proving some truth, put the strongest proofs at the beginning and at the end; keep the less important ones for the body of the sermon. If you use the device of making God speak directly to the people, do not employ words or terms unworthy or unbecoming. Likewise, this applies to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints. In apostrophes to Our Lord, His Blessed Mother or the Saints, speak with the utmost respect.

When hurling maledictions upon sinful practices or describing the horrors of evil or the punishment of sinners, do not forget to inject a note of mercy and forgiveness lest the faithful be discouraged. When preaching about a Saint, make the discourse truthful and simple, showing forth his wonderful virtues, his works and his claims to spiritual greatness.

Let funeral sermons be restrained and pious, not flattering discourses to please the relatives of the dead person. Use these occasions to give particular emphasis to the inevitability of death and the nothingness of earthly things.

Finally, have no other aim in preaching than to enlighten men's minds, touch their hearts and make them better Christians. Remember  
(\*). This chapter has been slightly shortened.

### FURTHER ADVICE TO PREACHERS

113-

that, if God demands an account of every idle word that man shall speak, how strictly will He judge those who while preaching made use of the divine word to please their own vanity, tickle the ears of their hearers or as means of parading their own knowledge and erudition. There are many priests in hell because on earth they thus profaned the word of God while preaching.

No matter who offends you or hurts you, say nothing from the pulpit which might cause the faithful to notice that you harbor spite or bitterness. If you have been the victim of calumnies or lies and have suffered them sufficiently long, and fear that your work may be hindered thereby, then it might be well to justify yourself in the pulpit, calmly and modestly.

## CHAPTER XII

### TOUCHING THE HEARTS OF THE FAITHFUL

IN ORDER to impress your hearers, put into practice what has been written in "Chapter 11" concerning the interior and exterior dispositions required and the exemplary life that you should lead. The word of God is all the more effective when it is reflected in the life of the preacher.

Preach solid doctrine, using texts of Scripture and passages from the writings of the Fathers. Give good and convincing reasons in support of your theme and, since nothing moves more than the truth, your hearers will be won to Christ.

Observe faithfully the suggestions on pronunciation and gestures in Chapter IX.

Be assiduous in prayer and meditation. Therein you shall find food for sermons and light to understand the beauty of the Christian truths. If you are animated with the truth of what you preach, you cannot help animating others. When your heart and your mind are enlightened by the Eternal Father, you will be more able to give forth His doctrines than if you simply culled them or studied them from books. There will be almost the same difference between these doctrines as there is between raw food and well-cooked viands.

Hence St. Gregory the Great<sup>(1)</sup> and St. Thomas Aquinas<sup>(2)</sup> say that preaching should proceed from the fulness of contemplation, and that

(1). De perfectis viris post contemplationem suam redeuntibus, dicitur (Ps.44)' Memoriam suavitatis tuae eructabunt (Homil. 5 in Ezech).

(2). Unum quidem (opus vitae activae) ex plenitudine contemplationis derivatur, sicut doctrina et praedicatio (Sum. Theo. 1a 11ae, q. 188, art. 6).

### TOUCHING THE HEARTS OF THE FAITHFUL

115 -

preachers should be as nearly as possible perfect men, filled with God's goodness, which they pour out from the fulness of their hearts.

The truly apostolic priest will need no other medium to touch the hearts of the faithful than to prepare, accompany and follow his sermon with prayer, asking God for the light to draw from the Divine Word the help he himself needs to move those to whom he speaks. Res quae in se ipsa non arserit, altum non accendit, says St. Gregory.<sup>(3)</sup> There is no heart that is so cold that it will not be inflamed by a good meditation: In meditatione mea exardescet ignis (Ps. 38, 4).

The priest being himself convinced and inflamed with the doctrine he is preaching, should pronounce with love and devotion the words of his discourse. He will not indulge in vehement language nor give vent to anger and indignation, but rather will make his sincerity and fervor manifest in his every word and gesture. Thus, his congregation will know that he speaks from a heart full of compassion and love for sinners, and that he is fired with zeal for God. His words will be like living coals which will inflame even the hardest hearts. Although the lips may speak to the ears, the heart always speaks to the heart.

He will dispose of his time so that he will be able to prepare for the divine office of preaching. Whenever he is to preach in the morning, he should allow himself enough time for the celebration of Holy Mass. St. John Chrysostom says that the tongue which has received the Sacred Body and Blood of Christ, is a terror to the devil and is consequently a most powerful instrument to touch the hearts of hardened sinners.<sup>(4)</sup>

Before going to the church to preach, the speaker should make one last rapid survey of his topic to make sure that he is fully prepared. Consequently, he should avoid other work or conversations which might distract him. There is nothing more unbecoming than to see a priest about to speak the word of God talking frivolously with others before mounting the pulpit. It is well to kneel before the Blessed Sacrament for a few moments before the sermon and to proceed to the pulpit with his eyes cast down and his whole being giving evidence of the seriousness of what is to be done.

(3). Moral. 91, cap. 28.

(4). St. John Eudes does not give the reference for this statement.

116 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Use Sacred Scripture, especially the words of the Prophets and of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which are particularly effective.

Do not be too long or yet too short. Put vigor and force into every part of the discourse, but especially in the conclusion.

After the sermon, go down from the pulpit modestly with a devout and humble deportment.

## Chap. CHAPTER XIII

TEACHING THE DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED  
FOR RECEIVING THE WORD OF GOD

To MAKE the preaching of the Word of God effective and fruitful, the faithful, as well as the priest, must do their part; therefore, you must teach the people how to profit by sermons. When you are going to deliver a sermon in a parish, you might first point out to the people the best methods for profitable cooperation. These may be summed up in five points:

1. Dispositions regarding the Word of God;
2. Dispositions regarding God Himself;
3. Dispositions regarding the house of God;
4. Dispositions regarding the preacher;
5. Dispositions regarding the hearers themselves.

Explain these dispositions very clearly to the congregation.

1. They should have a great respect for the Word of God, and regard the assistance at a sermon, not as a commonplace act but as one of the most important and necessary for the preservation of their faith. "Faith then cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of Christ," says St. Paul (Rom. 10, 17). The Sacred Scripture classifies those who know no God with those who lack preachers. "And many days shall pass in Israel, without the true God, and without a priest a teacher, and without the law" (2 Par. 15, 3). The law of God, which is the basis of our faith, comes to us through preaching.

Make the faithful understand that assistance at a sermon is of such importance that St. Augustine compares it to Holy Communion. He assures us that the person who listens carelessly to the Word of God is just as guilty as he who allows the Sacred Host to fall to the ground. *Non minus reus erit qui verbum Dei negligenter audierit,*

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

*quem ille qui corpus Christi sua negligentia, in terram cadere permiserit. (1).*

It follows, then, that even as the Christian should not approach the Holy Table without preparation, so he should not hear a sermon without the proper dispositions. There should be a desire to listen attentively and with profit, and a fixed determination to make use of the knowledge required. There should also be the realization that one is not listening to the harangue of an orator or demagogue, but rather to the exposition of the Word of God, which is to be preserved in one's heart and practised as a sure means of salvation.

2. The faithful should realize their great debt of gratitude to God for the grace bestowed upon them in the gift of the priest, Christ's representative, to show them the way to heaven. They should never leave the church without saying a prayer of gratitude to God for the sermon to which they have listened. If they fail to thank God for the spiritual nourishment, they are guilty, to say the least, of gross ingratitude.

3. The faithful must remember the sanctity of the church where the sermon is to be preached. They must respect and reverence it as the house of God, where noise and useless conversation are out of place. As the dwelling place of Him in whose presence the very angels tremble, nothing untoward or unseemly must be tolerated or countenanced.

4. For the preacher himself they must entertain much respect and charity. Respect for he is God's messenger and Christ's ambassador, taking the Master's place, clothed with His authority and speaking in

His name. Well, indeed, may we say that he is the instrument through which Christ Himself speaks: "For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Matt. 10, 20). "Christ . . . speaketh in me," says St. Paul (2 Cor. 13, 3), "God as it were exhorting by us" (Ibid. 5, 20).

Charity for the faithful must not censure or judge rashly him who is preaching, nor misinterpret his words or intentions. Charity in that they must not find fault because the preacher repeats and stresses the same truths others before him have taught. After all, there  
(1). Lib. L. Homiliarum, Homil. 26.

## TEACHING HOW TO RECEIVE THE WORD OF GOD

119 -

is no better food than wholesome bread taken frequently; good medicine used continually may effect a cure; music played often brings unalloyed pleasure. Charity, not despising those preachers who, because of their mediocrity of talents, are not so forceful or eloquent as their more gifted brethren. It should be borne in mind that it is not the preacher half so much as the preaching which counts. Should we receive a letter from the king, we would cherish and treasure it, without considering the talents or character of the messenger who delivered it.

5. The faithful should have purity of intention, for which two things are necessary: the first is a complete renunciation of all that is not proper, for instance, to hear a sermon for amusement or pastime, out of curiosity or from some selfish motive. The second is an act of protestation to Jesus Christ that they wish to hear His word in order to learn the truths of eternity.

They should purify their conscience by an act of contrition so that nothing may hinder God's grace from operating in their souls.

The faithful must also practise humility and docility by a) dispelling any trace of vanity and feeling of superiority to the priest; b) remembering that no one is so learned that he does not need further instruction, as St. Ambrose(2) and St. Augustine(3) point out; c) recalling that the words of the priest are meant for each listener. If some vice is mentioned, let no one make the mistake of thinking the remarks are intended only for others. If perchance they have no application for particular individuals, let those favored souls thank God in a spirit of deepest humility.

The faithful should receive God's word with edification and piety. Teach them to read their prayer books while awaiting the sermon, thus using the time they are in church for their soul's advantage. When the priest has entered the pulpit, let them give all attention and respect, seeing in him the person of Christ the Saviour. They should make the sign of the cross with him, with devotion and reverence, and during the sermon proper, they should give their concentration to the priest,

(2). De Officiis, L. 1, cap. 1.

(3). Epist. ad Mercatorem.

120-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

banishing every profane thought or distraction. They should be taught not to turn around or gape at their neighbor, but to keep their minds fixed on the subject being treated and their hearts united to God.

After the sermon, the faithful should not leave the church without thanking God for all the benefits received from the sermon and praying for the grace to cooperate with the truths exposed; meditating upon what the priest has said, singling out certain points or passages for further reflection; beseeching Our Lord's help for the preacher, that his work on this and all future occasions may be fruitful of good. Even as one thanks ordinary teachers who instruct in profane subjects, so, too, one should be grateful to him who nourishes with the words of life. *In Christo Jesu per Evangelium ego vos genui* (1 Cor. 4, 15). What

ingratitude would the faithful show, indeed, if after the sermon they criticize the priest, or, instead of thanking God for the help given them, merely find faults with the efforts of the preacher?

These, then, are the dispositions required that the faithful may hear the Word of God with profit, which every priest must seek to instil into them. To which I would add that the priest should preach, not only by word and example but also by prayer. At Mass, during the Divine Office and at all times, his constant entreaty to God should be that his words will be efficacious for good. *Dei voci suae vocem virtutis* (Ps. 67, 34). He should pray that he may be able to destroy in the minds and hearts of his hearers all that is not in conformity with the divine will, or whatever may impede the fruitful reception of the Word of God.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE TEACHING OF CATECHISM

CATECHISM is most useful and necessary, not only for children but also for adults who are often ignorant of the faith. Priests, therefore, should give as much attention as possible to this part of their sacerdotal duty and should see that their flock is properly instructed. Pastors especially should look upon the teaching of catechism as one of their most important tasks.

There is, however, a common fault which priests must avoid at all costs. which consists in thinking themselves so far above the simple teaching of catechism that they make of it a lecture in theology, which no one understands. This smacks of vanity and pride and destroys whatever spiritual good their work might accomplish.

The priest who would teach catechism well should make it a point to explain the simple matter of faith as set forth in the catechism, and employ his time, not in preaching nor in long instruction, but in questioning and instructing the children.

Naturally, teaching catechism will not demand the same type of gravity and seriousness as preaching; nevertheless the priest must preserve a certain dignity while at the same time trying to make himself one with the children. He must treat them with cordiality and gentleness, yet not give way to levity. Above all else, he must not tolerate any irreverence on their part in the church, but enjoin upon them due respect for the sanctity of the house of God.

If his youthful charges are inclined to be unruly or irreverent in any way, he should rebuke them gently at first, and then with becoming severity. Failing to see any improvement from this type of children, he should advise their parents.

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Before beginning the catechism class, a short prayer should be said. The *Veni Sancte Spiritus* is recommended. Then, the children should be taught to pray aloud with the teacher, asking the blessing of Christ and His holy Mother. Before the first class, a short instruction may be given to show the necessity and excellence of learning about God and His holy law.

As the sign of the cross is most important, and yet so many persons persist in making it irreverently and carelessly, no catechism class could begin better than by insisting on the correct use of this blessed act of faith.

To make the children repeat either singly or in pairs the answers contained in the book being used, is an excellent manner of impressing upon their youthful minds the necessary truths of religion. A new subject may be broached by saying: "Today we shall take up such and such . . . ." It may be very helpful to have the children question one another. Make them speak distinctly, but do not let them talk in a babble of confusion. Do not give them too much to memorize at one time. A short instruction or moral lesson may be drawn from each one of these catechism classes.

When the Incarnation is discussed, do not use words and expressions to cause wonder or arouse curiosity, but simply explain that the little body of Jesus was formed in the Blessed Virgin Mary and His soul was made out of nothing like our own. The body and soul are united in the person of the Son of God.

Teach the children the excellence of serving Mass. See that the boys learn how to pronounce the



Latin and serve at the altar in a becoming manner. Point out the holiness of this function and how privileged they are to be admitted within the sanctuary.

Little stories and anecdotes may be used with profit and serve as a fitting conclusion for any catechism class. They should, however, be prepared in advance.

Do not be content merely to teach catechism, but endeavor to make your children good sturdy Catholics. Teach them to have the love of God in their hearts and a salutary fear of breaking His commandments. Impress upon them a profound hatred of sin and a tender devotion towards Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, their

## THE TEACHING OF CATECHISM

123 -

guardian angel and their patron saint. Urge them to go to confession and Holy Communion very often. Guide them in the ways of obedience to their parents and the civil law. Enjoin upon them charity, modesty and devotion. Infuse into their young hearts real respect for the church and the cemetery.

Preparation for First Communion is the most important event in their lives; therefore, the subject should be explained with special care. The Sacrament of Penance will have to be treated well lest their tender consciences be formed falsely. Everything which concerns Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament should be outlined clearly.

Do not make exceptions in dealing with the children, singling out certain brighter ones, but treat all alike and even go out of your way to be kind to the backward ones. Prizes may be helpful to encourage them to learn their catechism.

After catechism class is finished, a hymn may be sung and a prayer said, perhaps the Our Father, the Hail Mary, or the Creed.

Do not keep the children too long for they tire easily and lose interest in coming again. It is good to spend a little time in recreation with the children after the class.

It need hardly be added that, since morning and evening prayers are so important, the teaching of them should occupy a considerable portion of every priest's time. If the pastor is not able to discharge these duties himself, he may select some devout Catholics to assist him.

A set hour for the classes is imperative, and one that will be convenient for all. Teach the children to come to the church and take their places at the hour fixed. Then, kneel down and say a little prayer. They must understand that the church is a holy place; hence, it must not be profaned by talking and misbehavior.

While the children are in class, nothing else must be considered or talked about except the lessons for the day. Do not let them whisper among themselves; do not permit them to play or act lightly. Teach them to regard one another as brothers and sisters, not shunning this one or that one or having hard feelings towards any other child.

Teach them obedience to parents, love for God and His holy Mother, devotion to the Rosary. They should say the beads daily to obtain the favor of living and dying in the state of grace.

**Part III****THE GOOD CONFESSOR**

Part 111

THE GOOD CONFESSOR(1)

**CHAPTER I****EXCELLENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE OFFICE  
OF CONFESSOR**

JESUS CHRIST has made every priest His associate in the infinite power of His Divinity. He has given the priest a power greater than any other in heaven and on earth except that of His Blessed Mother. He has bestowed upon His earthly representative a power unequalled by that of any human prince or king; a power denied even to the Prophets of old; a power strong enough to destroy Satan, erase sin and infuse divine grace. St. John Chrysostom rightly says: *Omnis potestas caelorum sacerdotibus commissa est; quanam potestas major esse quaeat?*" (2)

The Son of God has made the priest judge with Himself, giving him the power to pass sentence, to forgive or to condemn others. "The Father hath given all judgment to the Son" (John 5, 22). "The Son gave all powers of judgment to the priest," says St. John Chrysostom. Elsewhere the same saint adds that the throne of the priest is in heaven. *Sacerdoti thronus in caelis collocatus est.*(4) St. Clement, disciple of St. Peter, declares that the priest holds in his hands the keys of life and

(1). This work was originally published as a separate volume with opening paragraphs discussing all the powers of the priest. Some of these have been omitted to focus the reader's attention on the powers of the confessor.

(2). *De Sacerdotio*, lib. 3, C. 4.

(3). *Idem.*, loc. cit.

(4). *Homilia 5 in illud Isaiae: In anno quo mortuus est rex Ozias.*

**THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

death, God having given him the power of condemning or delivering the sinner.(5)

Thus, O priests of God, you are one with the Sovereign Priest in a most intimate association. To you He communicates His own divine qualities. Guard carefully the talents He has bestowed upon you lest in neglecting them you be cast into exterior darkness. Use them for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Do you want to learn how to exercise these divine powers usefully and efficaciously? Then make proper use of the Tribunal of Penance. There you exercise the role of mediator, redeemer, physician and judge. There you continue the work of the redemption; there you should act with humility and patience like unto Christ's. Though the task be hard, remember how Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for souls and for the destruction of sin. Recall the prolonged torments endured by our Saviour to redeem mankind, and so discharge your duty as confessors unhurriedly without display of irritability or weariness.

In the Tribunal of Penance you are the living image of the power and majesty of the Son of God. There you are as it were little gods, vested with the powers of God, doing what belongs by right to Him alone, blotting out sin, communicating the grace of the Holy Ghost to souls. Consequently, in the Sacred Tribunal you should serve the interests of God, thinking only of Him, desiring only to establish His kingdom in the

hearts of men.

As a judge representing the Supreme Judge, yours is the power of bestowing or refusing absolution. God communicates to you His power of judge in a more excellent manner than He does to the judges of earthly courts. They judge bodies; you judge souls. They judge temporal affairs; you judge eternal ones. Their power is a passing one; yours reaches beyond to eternity. What you absolve or condemn on earth is absolved and condemned in heaven. Their judgments are recorded on paper; yours are written with the Blood of Christ in the eternal books of divine justice.

These reflections show you the importance of your duties as confessor. If you discharge them well, sin will be destroyed and grace will be infused into men's souls. The devil will be expelled and the Holy (5). In Constitutionibus apostolicis C. 37.

## THE OFFICE OF CONFESSOR

129 -

Ghost will be imparted to souls, so that they will become a terrestrial paradise instead of an abode of Satan. Men will be reborn spiritually. The fruits of the Passion will be applied in their fulness. The Blood of the Lamb will wash and purify and the words applied by the Sacred Writers will be fulfilled in souls: *Quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra es* (Cant. 4, 1). Finally the children of Satan will become children of God; the members of the devil will become the members of Jesus Christ.

I say "if you discharge your duties well," for a confessor who does not act as he should, may be guilty of grave wrongdoing. Instead of destroying sin he merely establishes the soul more firmly in its grip. He ensnares the sinner in a net of evil and gives him a false sense of security. "Peace, peace, and there is no peace" (Jer. 6, 14). Instead of driving out the devil he merely strengthens Satan's hold on the unhappy penitent. Instead of raising the sinner to life he kills him; instead of giving life to Christ in souls, he crucifies the Redeemer anew. Instead of cleansing souls, he soils them; instead of beautifying souls, he renders them more hideous; instead of filling up what is wanting to Christ's Passion (Col. 1, 24), he renders the sufferings of the Saviour vain and useless.

These things are said for the priest's enlightenment in the administration of the Sacrament of Penance and to make him realize the importance of his holy office. The confessor, who is fired with zeal and filled with prudence, is a treasure in the Church of God. Following as he does the teachings of the Gospel and the guidance of the Church, he is a spiritual physician, an equitable judge, a charitable mediator, and a merciful saviour among men.

But the bad or careless confessor, who is ignorant, imprudent~ lazy and negligent, is a plague in Christ's holy Church. He is not an emissary of God, but an agent of the devil. He is not a doctor of heaven but of hell, for as God has his patriarchs so the devil has heresiarchs. As God has His prophets, apostles and martyrs, so, too, the devil has his prophets, apostles and martyrs.

The unworthy confessor is not a divine judge, but another Pilate pronouncing sentence upon Christ and the souls that the Son of God died to redeem. He is not a mediator for God, but for the devil, not a

130 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

dispenser of heavenly blessings but a profaner of divine mysteries and sacraments. In a word, instead of being another Christ, he is a very devil.

No tongue can tell the evil the bad confessor commits. He does great harm to the Church, persecuting it more cruelly than Nero, Diocletian and the tyrants of history. Would to God that all priests who administer the Sacrament of Penance might meditate seriously on these truths! Would to God that they might consider the inestimable good that they would accomplish if they were animated with the same spirit

and if they followed the same maxims! They would completely overthrow the devil's tyranny and snatch souls from perdition. Would they might open their ears to the words of the Holy Spirit: "Take heed what you do: for you exercise not the judgment of man, but of the Lord" (2 Par. 19, 6). Take heed in very truth for what you do is not temporary, but eternal. What you perform does not concern an earthly kingdom, but the Kingdom of God. You handle the treasures of heaven; you are responsible for the salvation or the damnation of souls. Videte quid faciatis. Remember to bring to your task the care and application demanded; have the necessary qualifications. Otherwise, the absolutions you give may become so many damnations for you. Never forget that when you say the words, *Ego te absolvo*, the Eternal judge may reply, if you are unworthy, *Ego te condemno*.

If you were to ask what are these necessary qualifications, I would answer that they are six, namely: zeal for souls, science, charity, prudence, piety and fidelity to the secrecy of confession. To each of these qualifications an entire chapter will be devoted.

## CHAPTER II

## ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

THE First and most important obligation of the priest is to labor for the salvation of souls. For that purpose Christ established the priesthood in the Church. For that end should a young man embrace holy orders. When he enters the priesthood, his soul should be so filled with grace that he is able to sanctify and save the souls of others.

Thus, priests are called "saviours" in Sacred Scripture (Abdias 1, 21). Christ came into this world to effect the salvation of souls, and for thirty-three years He devoted every thought, word, action, suffering, and even His very life for that purpose. Then, He returned to His Heavenly Father, but before departing He appointed successors to take His place. Who are these successors? They are His priests, who must seek always to imitate the ineffable love and ardent zeal of His Sacred Heart.

"He who is content with saving himself and neglects the salvation of others," says St. John Chrysostom, "cannot secure his own salvation." *Qui sua contentus salute, negligit alienam, nec suam consequi potest.*(1) If that is true of the ordinary Christian, how much more can it be said of priests and especially of confessors! Since the work of the confessional is difficult, they need special zeal for the honor of their Master and for the salvation of their brethren.

Thus to inflame your hearts with this holy zeal, it is well to ponder how pleasing it is to God to work with Him for the spiritual welfare of your neighbor. These considerations will apply to all priests as well as to confessors.

(1). In cap. 18 Matt. homilia 60.

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

What, then, does it mean to save souls created to the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the Precious Blood of His Divine Son? It is the great work of God, the task of the God-Man and His Holy Mother. It is the mission of the Church, the desire of the angels and saints and of all chosen souls on earth. In a word, it is the supreme work of all works.

## 1. The Salvation of Souls is the Great Work of God

First of all, the salvation of souls is the great work of God. Domine, opus tuum (Hab. 3, 2). Herein God employs all His thoughts, actions, mysteries, power, wisdom, goodness, mercy, and all His other divine attributes. All that God accomplishes in Himself from all eternity and outside Himself in time is directed towards this very end.

What does God do in Himself from all eternity? He gives birth to His Son, and from the Father and the Son proceeds the Holy Ghost. It follows that even as God gave being to His Son, it was His eternal design also to send Him into the world to save man. Likewise, it is clear that the Son, born from all eternity, had that same intention. And the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son shared that same design for man's salvation. If one could speak of moments of time when referring to timeless eternity, one might say that at the very moment that the Holy Ghost proceeds from all eternity, it is His will to come into the souls of men and to transport them from earth to heaven. Thus it is apparent that all that God accomplishes within Himself is associated with the salvation of souls.

So it is, too, with all that God accomplished outside of Himself. If He created the world, it was that He might people it with beings who would by their good works fit themselves to enjoy the beatific vision; that He might make a place where men would battle against the enemies of their souls, disposing themselves to

merit heaven by practising faith, hope, charity, humility, patience and all the other virtues. If God made a heaven, it was to share it with those who conquered the enemies of salvation. If He established a Church on earth, it was to give men easy and efficacious means of saving their souls through the sacraments. If He made a hell with frightful torments, it was to impress those who are actuated more by fear than by love to work out

## ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

133 -

their salvation in fear and trembling; to chastise those who are so far spent in sin as to be willing to yield their souls to sin and perdition and to drag others to ruin with them.

From the foregoing we learn that the salvation of souls is the end and purpose of all the works of the power, wisdom and goodness of God. It is, therefore, the great work of His divine majesty.

### **2. The Salvation, of Souls is the Great Work of the God-Man**

Saving souls is likewise the great work of the God-Man. Listen to His very words: "As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10, 15). St. Thomas Aquinas explains these words by saying that God the Son knows the inclinations of His Father; He knows what the Father loves most, namely the souls of men. Nothing is nearer to God's heart than their salvation; that is the reason why Christ gives His life for souls. A little later we read in the same chapter of St. John: "That which my Father hath given me is greater than all" (John 10, 29). According to the Angelic Doctor, this means that the God-Man holds in higher regard the souls His Father has given Him than anything else, even His own body and His own life, since He sacrifices them for the salvation of men(2)

Thus does Our Lord speak and behold what He does for souls! See Him coming forth from the bosom of the Father, putting aside His glory to become one of us. See Him annihilate Himself at the time of the Incarnation: *Exinanivit semetipsum* (Phil. 2, 7). See Him reduced to the helplessness of a child, born in a stable and dependent on others for every single thing. See Him suffering every type of hardship, shedding His blood eight days after His birth, fleeing into Egypt, separated from the Chosen People, living seven years among strangers. See Him laboring in the carpenter shop with Joseph and doing penance in the solitude of the desert. Behold Him conversing and dwelling with men, eating and drinking with sinners, going about preaching, suffering the indignities of His terrible Passion, even kneeling before a devil according to Sacred Scripture, "One of you is a devil" (John 6, 71). Behold Him in the Garden of Gethsemani, overwhelmed with

(2). *Expositio aurea Sti. Thomae in Joannem* 10, 15.

134 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

anguish, sweating blood, His Heart oppressed with sorrow. Behold Him in the midst of His enemies, mocked as a common criminal before Annas, Caiaphas and Pilate, buffeted, spit upon and reviled, scourged and stripped of His garments. Behold Him crowned with thorns, placed on the same level as Barrabas, a notorious criminal, condemned to death, crucified and dying on the cross. Behold His Sacred Body laid in the sepulchre.

Seek to evaluate the all-consuming love with which He endured all these things for souls. You will find that His love was so perfect that He was ready to suffer still more if in doing so He might benefit individual souls. He loves them so much that He would be willing to suffer even eternally for them. That infinite love made Him willing not only to suffer in Jerusalem, but also in every place in the world, and even to accept atrocities much more humiliating and terrible than those of Calvary.

What does all this signify? Simply that all these things, these mysteries of the Incarnation, Birth,

Circumcision, Passion and Death, are so many voices crying out to us: "Thus Jesus loved souls." Thus did He love and prefer them to anything else, even His own life. For that reason, He abandoned everything of His own, stripped Himself of all glory and happiness that He might insure their perpetual felicity in heaven. That was why He gave His most precious possessions, His Body and Blood, even His life, and was ready to endure an eternity of suffering, if such were the will of His eternal Father.

O my Saviour, who could conceive and express Thy love for men? O merciful Jesus, since Thou dost love souls so much, surely those persons, who cooperate with Thee in the work of redemption, must be very close to Thee. On Thy ministers surely Thou must lavish an abundance of grace and blessings.

### **3. The Salvation of Souls is the Great Work of the Mother of God**

The salvation of immortal souls is also the great work of the Mother of God. Why did Almighty God choose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the Mother of God? Why did He preserve her from original sin and make her holy from the very first moment of her life? Why did He

ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

135 -

shower upon her so many privileges, ornamenting her with grace and virtue? Why did He confer upon her so much wisdom, goodness, meekness and such great power in heaven, in hell and on earth? It was simply that she might be worthy to cooperate with her Divine Son in man's redemption. All the Fathers of the Church say clearly that she is co-redemptrix with Christ in the work of our salvation. I hear Our Lord and His Blessed Mother saying to St. Brigid, whose revelations are approved by the Church, that Adam and Eve lost the world by eating an apple, but that they saved it by a heart: quasi uno Corde mundum salvavimus (Revel. extravag. cap. 3), that is Our Lord and His Mother had but one heart, one love, one sentiment, one mind and one will with each other. As the Sacred Heart of Jesus was a furnace of love for men, so the heart of His loving Mother was inflamed with charity and zeal for souls., Christ immolated Himself upon the cross for the redemption of mankind, and Mary made a similar sacrifice in undergoing untold sufferings and sorrows.

What more shall I say? I would even go so far as to state that the Blessed Virgin Mary so loves souls that she was and is ready to undergo every torment of earth to save even a single soul. There have been many saints in history who have offered to do that very thing. How can we say less of the Queen of saints? Who can doubt that she would not willingly undergo a thousand hells, rather than behold her Son so afflicted? Yet she accepted this unspeakable sorrow in order to cooperate with her Divine Son in the redemption of the world. The salvation of souls is, therefore, the great work of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

### **4. The Salvation of Souls is the Great Work of the Church, of the Angels and Saints, of the Apostles**

The salvation of souls is the great work of the Church, the reason for its establishment, the purpose of its sacraments and ceremonies. It is the object of the ministry of priests, bishops and supreme pontiffs. It is the aim of all the Councils, laws and functions of the Church.

It is also the work of the angels, for St. Paul says, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" (Heb. 1, 14).

136 -

THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

It is likewise the great work of the Apostles and saints. Listen to St. Paul speaking to the Christians of his day: I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls" (2 Cor. 12, 15). To the Jews who

had persecuted him and conspired against his very life he speaks thus: I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost; that I have great sadness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I wished myself to be anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9, 1-3). "These latter words suggest," says St. John Chrysostom, "that the great apostle was ready to sacrifice even the happiness of heaven on behalf of his brethren." (3) According to Cassianus St. Paul means that he would willingly suffer the everlasting punishment of hell to deliver the Jews from it, if that were possible and in accordance with God's will.(4)

Be not surprised at so great zeal in St. Paul for many great doctors say that Moses was inspired with the same thoughts and feelings when he prayed for the Chosen People: "Either forgive them this trespass, or if Thou do not, strike me out of the book that Thou hast written" (Exod. 32; 31-32)(5).

Speaking to his flock, St. John Chrysostom said: I would willingly be a thousand times anathema for your salvation."(6) St. Catherine of Siena and other holy persons offered to suffer the pains of the damned for souls. And have we not met a holy person(7) so actuated by God's love

(3). In cap. IX Epist. ad Rom.

(4). Collat. 32, cap. 6.

(5). In this paragraph and the preceding one St. John Eudes simply paraphrases a passage from Cornelius a Lapide, in Epist. ad Rom. 9, 3:

"Optat Paulus heroico quodam excessu quasi caesae caritatis, quae abstrahit, nec considerat an res sit possibilis, an secundum Dei ordinationem, necnon: vel si non abstrahit, optat sub tacita conditione, si Deus vellet et si fieri posset; optat, inquam, aeternam separationem, non a caritate, sed a beatitudine et gloria futura cum Christo, ut judaei salventur. Imo optat, ait Chrysostomus, in aeternum perire; et, ut Cassianus ait Collat. 32, Cap. 31, aeternis addici poenis, idque tum pro gloria Dei, ne scilicet Deus a Iudeis blasphemetur, sed in aeternum laudetur, tum pro salute ipsorum Iudaeorum. Optat ergo hic Paulus illud, idem quod in simili casu optavit Moyses (Exod. 32, 31), dicens: 'Aut dimitte eis hanc noxam, aut, si non facis, dele me de libro tuo quem scripsisti.'"

(6). Hom. 3 in Acta Apostolorum.

(7). The person to whom St. John Eudes refers is Marie des Vallées, a holy woman of Coutances in Normandy. See Father Joseph Mary Ory, The Origin of the Order of our Lady of Charity (Buffalo, 1918), p. 95.

## ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

137-

that she was granted the privilege of suffering unlimited torments which others had merited, merely to save these souls from perdition? Have we not heard her protesting her willingness to undergo the torments of hell rather than to have a single soul commit a mortal sin?

With these realities before you, be not surprised at the explanation of St. John Chrysostom of the words of St. Paul, 'I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren' (Rom. 9, 3), for the zeal and love of the apostles transcended the charity and zeal of the saints and holy persons to whom reference has just been made.

This then is the great work of the apostles, of the saints whose only desire was to witness the fulfilment of the words of the Queen of saints in her Magnificat: "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away" (Luke 1, 53). Who are the hungry? The saints who hungered and thirsted for souls. Who are the rich? The demons who have in their possession the treasure of countless Souls purchased by the Precious Blood of the Lamb.

O my Saviour, when will these sacred words of Thy holy Mother be at last fulfilled? O Mary, my Mother, when will thy great prophecy come true? When will the devils be deprived of their spoils? When will the zeal of thy loving children be satiated? May every creature of heaven and earth prostrate himself



before the throne of God to implore this grace!

## 5. The Salvation of Souls is the Great Work of Priests

To all the foregoing considerations permit me to add that the salvation of souls is the great work of priests, whose holy office was founded simply for man's salvation. How weighty are the obligations of priests! What a burden is laid upon their shoulders! Listen to the words of the Prophet Ezechiel, I will seek that which was lost: and that which was driven away, I will bring again. And I will bind up that which was broken and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve: and I will feed them in judgment" (Ezech. 34, 16). Five things must be observed to discharge these sacerdotal obligations.

The first is for the priest to conduct himself so that his life may be a model of priestly devotion. "Be thou an example of the faithful in

138 -

### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity" (1 Tim. 4, 12). "In all things shew thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity" (Titus 2, 7). A priest should be such that he may say at all times, "For we are the good odour of Christ unto God" (2 Cor. 2, 15). Thus, he should be a living example of charity, purity, sobriety, humility and patience. He should be like John the Baptist, "A voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Luke 3, 4), that is, crying to sinners in the wilderness of the world: "Do penance."

Do you not know that the robe of the Great High Priest was adorned with little bells to show, as St. Jerome explains, that the priest should be *totus vocalis*,<sup>(8)</sup> all voice, and that everything about him should be a tongue preaching and instructing those who come in contact with him. *Universa vocalia sint: quidquid agit, quidquid loquitur, sit doctrina populorum.* <sup>(9)</sup>

Nothing is so potent as the example given by the priest be it good or bad. Thus, St. Gregory says that priests deserve eternal damnation as often as they give bad example to those confided to their care. *Pastores tot mortibus digni sunt, quot ad subditos suos perditionis exempla transmittunt.*<sup>(10)</sup>

The priest should be "a burning and a shining light" (John 5, 35), burning before God, shining before men; burning in prayer, shining in action; burning by example, shining by doctrine. "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven," says St. Matthew (5, 16). And St. Bernard says that "the light shed by a priest must be so strong and so bright that the wind of vanity will not extinguish it." <sup>(11)</sup>

The second thing that the priest must do is to instruct the faithful on their Christian obligations. He must teach them to know and love God, to fear and serve Him through obedience to His commandments. He must lead them to know their Saviour, His principal mysteries, Jesus and Mary, the Church and the Sacraments. They must be made to pray in gratitude and petition for pardon and help. They should learn

(8). Epistol. ad Fabiolam.

(9). Apud Corn. a Lapide, in Exod., 28, 35.

(10). De cura pastoralis, p. 2, C. 3.

(11). Serm. de Ioan. Baptista, Cf. A. Lapide, in Joan. 5, 35.

ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

139 -

to recite their daily prayers with utmost care, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Creed and the Confiteor. Through exhortations from the pulpit and in catechism classes, the priest should encourage the

faithful to cooperate to the fullest extent in their own salvation.

Thirdly, he should eradicate spiritual disorders from the lives of the flock. To do this he must know his people and their conduct. He should be unsparing in his pains to track down and root out evils which may exist; he should frequently visit the schools to instruct and guide the young in the way of salvation. He should enjoin great respect for the church and all holy places, insisting on proper deportment there at all times. He should keep everything pertaining to the altar in good order and see that the liturgical functions are carried out with the dignity becoming the King of heaven and earth.

Fourthly, the priest should practise charity. He should be affable and kind to all without distinction. He should be assiduous in visiting the sick, especially those in danger of death. He should console the afflicted and the needy, and be ever kind to the poor. He should advise those who seek his fatherly counsel, correct those who are wayward and seek to put an end to any quarreling among his parishioners.

Fifthly, he must administer the Sacraments with holiness, for the glory of God and becomingly lest through carelessness he neglect any requisite. Above all else, he should apply himself heartily to the administration of the Sacrament of Penance, for through it he will know the state of his people, their spiritual needs and weaknesses. Through it he will find the means of curing the ailments of their souls. He will open to them unexplored avenues of grace, will spread before them in his instructions and encouragements a banquet of heavenly delicacies.

These are the chief obligations of the priest and he must be ever vigilant lest even one soul be neglected or lost for the Sovereign Pastor will hold him responsible, and the price of Christ's Blood will be visited upon him.---"I will require his blood at thy hand" (Ezech. 3, 20). I mention neglect for this makes him a murderer in God's eyes, a murderer of souls committed to his charge.

St. John Chrysostom observes that when priests allow themselves to fall into sin, the people quickly follow. Every soul will be held to a,

140 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

strict accounting of his own misdeeds, but the priest will also be held responsible for those of his flock who fall because of his example. *Sacerdotes non solum pro suis, sed etiam pro omnium peccatis reddituri sunt rationem.* (12)

If each individual soul will find it difficult to render an account of his works on judgment Day," says St. Augustine, "what must be said of priests, who must give an accounting of the souls committed to their care?" *Si pro se unusquisque vix poterit, in die iudicii, rationem reddere, quid de sacerdotibus futurum est, a quibus sunt omnium animae requirendae?* (13)

### 6. The Salvation of Souls is the Work of Works

Since the salvation of souls is the great work of God, of the God made man, of the Church, of the angels, the apostles and the saints, it is readily seen that it is the work of works, surpassing all others in time or eternity.

What indeed would be considered great human endeavors? Constructing great palaces or public buildings, raising armies and marching at their head into battle, being acclaimed as a mighty ruler? These would be great, no doubt, but remember the words of Sacred Scripture, "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity" (Eccles. 1, 2). All these things vanish and pass away. "That which is high to men is an abomination

before God" (Luke 16, 15). To teach even a child to make the sign of the cross or instruct one of God's little ones, is a nobler work in the eyes of God than all human and natural undertakings.

Among the supernatural works there are five of paramount importance: 1. Fasting and mortification; 2. Works of mercy; 3. Prayer and contemplation; 4. Miracles; 5. Martyrdom. Yet, the saving of a soul is greater even than these works.

St. Chrysostom says: "The salvation of one soul is far greater than fasts or vigils or the austerities of the hermits; it is greater than to give most generous alms to the poor!" (14)

Surely to ransom a soul from Purgatory is a marvelous act, but to

(12). Homil. 38 in cap. XI. Matth.

(13). Lib. L. Homiliarum, Horn. 7.

(14). Orat. 5 contra judaeos.

#### ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

141 -

snatch a soul from mortal sin is greater for theologians teach that the slightest sin is worse than all the evils of earth, purgatory and hell.

To spend one's time in prayer and contemplation is a very holy work, but St. Teresa says that while contemplation is pleasing to God, it is far more efficacious to leave prayer aside and go to the rescue of a soul in sin. (15)

Who shows the greatest love for God? St. Gregory answers this all important question. *Ille in amore Dei major est qui ad ejus amorem plurimos trahit.* (16) And it is written that Our Lord revealed to a great saint (17) that it is more pleasing to Him for His faithful servant to instruct and lead a soul to salvation than to spend a year in contemplation.

*Si separaveris pretiosum a vili, quasi os meum eris* (Jer. 15, 19). If thou wilt separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth," which means, according to St. Gregory, that, if you load souls from evil by exhortation and example, you will be like unto Jesus Christ Himself, who is the mouthpiece of His Almighty Father. (18) St. John Chrysostom explains this same text thus: If you use your words to convert and instruct others, you will be like the Master, who is the mouthpiece of His Father and who became Man and was crucified in order to redeem sinners." (19)

The greatest physical miracle is to bring a dead man back to life, but to raise a soul from sin is greater still. *Majus est miraculum peccatorem convertere, quam carne suscitare.* (20) The life of the soul is infinitely more precious than to raise up all the dead bodies of all men on earth. The resurrection of the dead is, therefore, but a shadow of the resurrection of the soul from sin.

If God gave a man power to create a new world, imagine how that man would be regarded by his fellow creatures. Yet, St. Augustine says that the conversion of a sinner is a work greater and more admirable than even such a deed for the soul is dearer to God than all

(15). Exclamat. 2.

(16). St. Greg. apud S. Bonav. Pharetra 1. 1, cap. 14.

(17). We are unable to say who this great saint is.

(18). Moral. 18, 23.

(19). Orat. 5 contra judaeos, apud Corn. a Lapide, in Jerem., 15, 19.

(20). St. Greg. Dialog. lib. 3, cap. 17.

142 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

created things.(21) And St. John Chrysostom remarks that "nothing, not even the whole world, is worth a single soul."(22) Did not Christ say, "That which my Father has given me, is greater than all"? (John 10, 29) St. Augustine prays thus: "Thou hast made all things, O God, in the visible world for man's body, the body for the soul, and the soul for Thyself." St. John Chrysostom avers that man is the noblest of God's creatures, for all else was created for the use of man, heaven and earth, the stars and all that exists (23).

What greater return could one make to God than to offer one's life for Him? Yet St. John Chrysostom says that to forego martyrdom in order to work for the salvation of souls is more acceptable to Almighty God. He states that this is not his own thought, but that of St. Paul. Writing to the Philippians, the great apostle says that though he desires to be with Christ, he feels it more advantageous to God's glory that he remain with them (Phil. 1, 23-24). St. Teresa envied those who worked for the salvation of souls, more than she did the martyrs. St. Catherine of Siena kissed the ground trodden by those engaged in apostolic ministry. Richard of St. Victor wonders whether it could be possible for heaven to grant a greater favor than to set men aside to work for the spiritual salvation of their fellow men.(24)

What more can I say? *Omnium divinatorum divinissimum est cooperari Deo in salutem animarum*, writes St. Dionysius.(25) And St. Gregory adds, *Nullum omnipotenti Deo tale est sacrificium, quale est zelus animarum*(26).

These things being so, who can measure the love of God for those who serve Him in ministering to souls? Who can plumb the depths of the graces that He pours upon them on earth? Who can envision the extent of the reward that He reserves for them in eternity? Who can conceive the horrors and punishments He has Prepared for those guilty of leading souls to ruin? I will meet them as a bear that is robbed of her whelps and I will rend the inner parts of their liver; and I will

(21). Tract. 17 in Joannem.

(22). In i Cor., Homil. 3.

(23). Oral. 3 contra judaeos. (24). In Cant. 1, 1. (25). *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, Cap.3. (26). Homil.12 in Ezech.

## ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

143 -

devour them there as a lion, the beast of the field shall tear them' (Osee 13, 8). Who does not tremble at such words; who does not shudder at the thought of causing the loss of a single soul; who will not give himself wholeheartedly to a work so dear to the heart of God?

O priests of God, what obligations are yours towards Him who called you to share His office of Saviour! How lofty is your calling, for you are the associates of God, of Jesus, of Mary, of the angels, of the apostles and the saints! Work unceasingly, courageously and constantly for Him! Let your only joy be to please Him! Accept whatever difficulties you encounter for His sweet sake!

Take pity on the souls created to His image and likeness, the souls of your brethren. Commiserate the sufferings of Our Lord, the agony He endured, the tears He shed, the blood He poured out, the miseries He bore. Compassionate the Blessed Virgin Mary in the grief she experienced for her Divine Son, and let no day go by without endeavoring to assuage that grief by laboring for souls. Obey the injunction of Sacred Scripture: "Deliver them that are led to death; and those that are drawn to death forbear not to deliver" (Prov. 24, 11).

Pray the Master of the heavenly harvest to send workmen into His vineyard. Imitate the apostles and the disciples, of whom it was said that they were occupied at all times, in public and in private, in preaching Jesus Christ. If your labors do not produce the results you hope for, do not be discouraged. Even if you should keep only one soul from falling into mortal sin, you would have done more good than if you had

delivered the world from a universal pestilence.

If a great physician of antiquity<sup>(27)</sup> was given the title of divine for having rid his country of a physical plague, what term should be applied to the physicians of souls who cure men's spiritual ills? Think of a man afflicted with the worst human disease you can imagine, and then visualize the pains and torments of hell, the punishment of one mortal sin. Is there any comparison? Consequently, when by word or example or prayer, you prevent a soul from sinning, or rescue it from the grip of iniquity, you save it from punishment far exceeding the greatest torment possible on earth.

I can hear the Angel of the Apocalypse cry out: "Woe to the earth,  
(27). Hippocrates, a Greek physician, 460-378 B.C.

144 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

and to the sea, because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (Apoc. 12, 12), to appease his hatred for souls. Should you not love your brethren more profoundly than their enemy hates them? Should you not be more actuated by the desire to save them than he is to destroy them? If he in his rage deems the time permitted to him to seek their ruin as a mere *modicum tempus* "a short time," how ardently should you use every minute of your definitely short life to work for good?

Cease not, then, to work for so lofty a purpose, and the day will dawn when you will reap the rewards of your labors. "And in doing good let us not fail. For in due course we shall reap, not failing" (Gal. 6, 9), for even though you should not always succeed in drawing souls from evil, at least your earnest efforts will be rewarded.

Try, then, to save as many souls as possible and above all apply yourself with most fervent zeal to hearing confessions for in this way you can accomplish untold good. as I shall point out in the following section.

### 7. Further Considerations

All that has been said surely can inflame the heart of a priest, but I would repeat that, from all the duties of the priest, I would single out the hearing of confessions as the most useful and important. Nothing else even approaches it in its power for good and fruitful results.

Surely a good preacher can win souls, but so can a good confessor. Preaching is the soul of the priestly work, while confession is its heart. Preachers begin the work of salvation. confessors bring it to completion; preachers make known the will of heaven, confessors have it practised; preachers are doctors giving general principles, teaching the faithful to love and serve God, confessors are physicians imparting individual direction and treatment. Preachers pronounce what remedies will be effectual. confessors apply them. Preachers are the trumpets of God, confessors are the soldiers destroying sin; preachers direct the artillery of eternity from a distance and not always accurately., while confessors battle at close quarters.

Preachers are God's watchdogs, who drive away the ravening wolf;

ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

145 -

confessors are His guardians who rescue souls about to be devoured. Preachers exhort, confessors reconcile; preachers are ambassadors of God, speaking in His name, confessors are like little gods, clothed with His power and doing God's work in men's souls. Preachers describe the terrors of His judgments, confessors apply those judgments; preachers are angels announcing the ire of the Creator, confessors are

other Noalis saving men in the ark of penance.

Each preacher is an Aaron commissioned to address the Pharaohs of earth and soften their hearts with virtue; each confessor is a new Moses guiding the children of God to the Promised Land through the Red Sea of Christ's Blood.

The preacher is a faithful servant of Abraham, that is, of the heavenly Father, seeking another spouse for the only Son of God; the confessor is a wise Egeus of King Assuerus, adorning other Esthers, that is, immortal souls, with the ornament of divine grace to make them pleasing to the King of heaven and earth.

The preacher is a Saul mustering an army to battle against the Philistines, that is, the devils; the confessor is a David killing Goliath, that is, sin, with the sword of prayer when he gives absolution to the sinner.

The preacher is a prophet crying to those who enter the temple of the Lord: Audite verbum Domini; haec dicit Dominus; declaring to men the promises of the divine bounty and the threats of divine justice; predicting eternal reward for the good and an eternal punishment for the wicked. The confessor is a Levite slaying the victims of the sacrifice, that is, sinful souls; making them die to sin; washing them in the Precious Blood of the Lamb; placing them in the sacred hands of Jesus Christ. the Sovereign Priest, that He may offer them in sacrifice to His Heavenly Father.

The preacher is a forerunner of the Son of God, preparing the ways of the Lord; the confessor is a disciple cleansing, adorning, and making ready the upper rooms of men's hearts for the coming of Christ in Holy Communion.

Finally, the preacher announces the mysteries and sufferings of the Saviour, while the confessor applies them and their fruits to souls.

146-

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

The preacher denounces Satan publicly without fear; the confessor drives the devil from men's hearts, delivering them from tyranny and placing them in the bosom of the Father.

From these considerations learn the excellence and importance of this great function of your priestly life. Know, too, how useful and necessary it is and how pleasing to Him who loves souls so much. Your zeal for its careful discharge should be all-consuming. If the angels know the meaning of jealousy, they would envy the priest who is privileged to share a ministry so pleasing to God, and so efficacious for the souls for whom the Saviour shed His Blood.

If, then, you have a spark of love for God, be assiduous in carefully discharging this part of your sacerdotal office. Cherish it and consider yourself honored to have been chosen by God for this divine work. Be zealous in discharging your work in the confessional; seek to acquire the ultimate of those qualities which will fit you to be an excellent confessor.

## CHAPTER III(\*)

### SCIENCE OF THE CONFESSOR

THE PRIEST who does not possess the science necessary to exercise the ministry of confession is culpable in the eyes of God and is incapable of discharging this great duty.

Imagine a doctor seeking to practise medicine without sufficient training. He would be a murderer, who, instead of healing his patients, would soon destroy them. Yet, the priest, who is in truth the physician of souls, can become their destroyer if he is not fitted for the work of the confessional.

As an ignorant judge would do irreparable harm in attempting to dispense the law, even more so the priest lacking a thorough familiarity with theology would be guilty of criminal negligence. He would cause innumerable sins, making false consciences, obliging people to make restitution when they are not bound, refusing absolution when it should be given, granting it when it should be withheld. Truly, the Scripture says: If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit" (Matt. 15, 14).

Science is, therefore, the second qualification for the confessor, and this science supposes eight requisites:

1. The priest must be thoroughly familiar with the extent of his jurisdiction. 2. He must understand the matter and form of the Sacrament and must know what makes it valid or invalid. 3. He should have a complete knowledge of sins against the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church. 4. He must be able to distinguish between sins, mortal and venial, and must know the circumstances that change

(\*) The chapter dealing with the judiciary power of the priest, which appears in *Oeuvres COMPLÈTES*, Vol. IV, P. 203 ff., is omitted in this edition.

### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

the nature or increase the gravity of each sin. 5. He should know the ordinary censures and irregularities. 6. He should know the impediments of marriage. 7. He should be able to make sinners realize the horror of sin, and by his direction and guidance lead them to contrition and a firm purpose of amendment. 8. He must be able to suggest remedies for each soul; he must be able to point out the duties and obligations of every state in life and to give persons suitable penances.

To acquire this science, it is necessary that the priest study moral theology and that he be conversant with the best standard works(1) on the administration of the Sacrament of Penance.

(1). St. John Eudes recommends several works on confession that are not available today. Father Cousin, editor of the 1732 French edition of *The Good Confessor*, adds to the list of books given by the Saint "the second and third parts of the *Summa Theologica*." There is undoubtedly no better handbook on moral theology than these parts of the *Summa*.

## CHAPTER IV(\*)

### CHARITY OF THE CONFESSOR

CHARITY is a most necessary qualification for any confessor. He should be consumed with love for sinners. He should be filled with kindness and mercy. He may thunder and fulminate in the pulpit, but in the Sacred Tribunal of Penance he must speak only words of gentleness and encouragement. One catches more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a cask of vinegar.

The priest should enter the confessional with a heart consumed only with the desire of assisting penitents, and should receive, in a spirit of graciousness and helpfulness those who present themselves. No exception should be made. Rich and poor, great and humble, adults and children, all alike should experience the same spirit of understanding.

Remember that in the confessional the penitent addresses you as "Father." Treat him, then, with paternal kindness, overlooking any shortcomings he may have, impressing upon him the seriousness of what he does, while at the same time refraining from harshness. Avoid familiarity under any guise, but seek to banish unwarranted fear lest it interfere with a frank and open confession. Be spiritually helpful. Point out that Christ died for the sinner and extends complete pardon for sin to the soul whose sorrow is sincere and whose purpose of amendment is firm.

If you observe that the penitent is in a state of perplexity and needs help in examining his conscience, be ready to assist him. Urge him to make a complete and accurate confession of his sins, see that he avoid

(\*). If the reader compares this chapter to that of the original French, he will find that it has been considerably shortened. Nothing important, however, has been omitted in the translation.

long and meaningless explanations; assist him in making a succinct picture of his wrongdoing, glossing over nothing, omitting, minimizing or withholding nothing, but making a full and clear accusation of every mortal sin of which he believes himself guilty. Console the afflicted, showing them how to turn their trials and sorrows into merit.



## CHAPTER V

### PRUDENCE OF THE CONFESSOR

Besides ZEAL, science and charity, prudence is also required, for without it you will encounter many pitfalls and cause grievous harm to your penitents. Study, therefore, the following rules that should carefully be observed in the confessional.

Examine the penitent according to age, sex and condition. Be careful not to arouse wrong thoughts or to suggest unknown sins. Do not interrupt him during his confession, but wait until he has finished. Treat each penitent individually. For example, if you notice that a person seems to be ashamed to confess his sins, encourage him by reminding him that priests are not angels but men who, being human themselves, understand the faults and frailties of others. Remind him, too, that although it is human to fall into sin, it would be positively diabolical to remain in that state; that whatever is revealed in the confessional becomes a really sacred trust because of the seal of confession. Recall to his mind the fact that God commands us to confess our sins to priests and that we should do so for love of Him and in honor of the shame which the God-man bore on the Cross because of our iniquities. It is far better to experience a little shame in confessing a sin to another man than to have it revealed before all the angels and men on the Day of judgment.

With a bold or flippant person, however, adopt the opposite course. Remind him that he is actually kneeling at the feet of Christ, the Supreme judge, as represented in the person of the priest; that he is not confessing his sins to a mere man, but to God whose place the priest occupies. Induce him to think of himself as a criminal who has merited punishment by his evil doing. With patience seek to have him

### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

understand that his soul's salvation is at stake, impressing upon him the gravity of making a bad confession. Point out to him that at the hour of death he will have to render a strict accounting to God for such a terrible sin.

Use great discretion regarding the Sixth Commandment. Pray to the Holy Ghost for wisdom so as not to ask too much or too little. Inquire cautiously concerning the sins confessed, but be careful not to destroy innocence or to disedify.

Likewise, approach the subject of restitution with great care, being mindful of the problems involved. This applies also to the breaking of sinful associations and the avoidance of the occasions of sin. If it is obvious that the penitent did certain things in good faith or invincible ignorance, use extreme tact in enlightening his mind.

Suggest remedies suitable to each particular soul. Give a penance which will be at once salutary and easy for the penitent. This requires prudence so that the penance imposed may not be an impossible task. Be lenient rather than harsh in this matter. In refusing or deferring absolution, be particularly careful to act in such a way that you will not attract the attention of persons near the confessional.

The confessor should imitate the wisdom of the serpent and safeguard his own soul lest in helping others he himself be lost. In this regard, four things are suggested.

First, learn to humble yourself by the knowledge of your own unworthiness and sinfulness, seeing your own image in the crime of your penitents, always being fearful that you, too, may fall unless sustained by divine grace.

Secondly, put into practice the injunction of Sacred Scripture: "Let your modesty be known to all men" (Phil. 4, 5), practising mortification of the eyes, giving an example of true priestly deportment at all times when administering the Sacrament of Penance. If you are careful to observe exterior modesty, God will protect you so that your interior life will not be destroyed and the beauty of your soul will not be contaminated. Yet, this can be done only by special grace from God, which will always be given to those who seek it with humility.

Thirdly, have a great horror of anything contrary to holy purity, observing the following seven recommendations: 1. In treating of the

#### PRUDENCE OF THE CONFESSOR

153 -

Sixth Commandment, renounce everything that is contrary to the spirit of purity, begging God for an increase of his virtue He loves so much. 2. Ask nothing out of mere curiosity. 3. Concerning sins against purity, question the penitent only when necessary. 4. In the confessional, avoid anything approaching familiarity with those of the opposite sex. 5. Keep the eyes modestly cast down. 6. Close the heart and mind against every human affection. 7. If you should transgress in any of these matters, make a profound act of humility, and, correcting the fault, beg God's grace for the future and implore the assistance of our Blessed Lady to obtain it.

Fourthly, to preserve your own soul while working for the salvation of others, cultivate constantly the spirit of piety. The following chapter will treat of this important qualification.

## CHAPTER VI

### PIETY OF THE CONFESSOR

IT IS NOT without reason that the great Apostle, St. Paul, urges his disciple, Timothy, to practise piety, declaring it to be a great treasure, useful in all things (i Tim. 4, 8). A priest animated by the spirit of piety is a worthy instrument in God's hands to accomplish marvels for the salvation of souls.

In the sacred tribunal the confessor frees souls from the misery of sin and forms the Son of God within them anew. He inspires penitents with sentiments of purest devotion, makes them taste the sweetness of God's love, teaches them to know the meaning of true piety, helps them in the practice of the other Christian virtues and at the same time sanctifies himself.

What is piety? Do you wish to know it and to possess it? Practise mental prayer. 1. assure you that if you do not practise mental prayer you will never grasp the meaning of true piety, and, consequently, you will not be truly fitted to hear confessions. It is not sufficient for a priest to drive sin out of souls by absolution; he must form in them the Christian virtues, whose foundation, says St. Ambrose, is piety. *Pietas virtutum omnium fundamentum.*(1)

How can you infuse piety into a soul unless you yourself possess it? How can you nourish if you have no food to give? The more pious the confessor is, the more effectively he will work for the salvation of souls. Truly then, he should strive unceasingly to acquire and practise this indispensable virtue. For this end, three things are suggested. The first concerns what the confessor should do before entering the confessional (1). In Psalm. 118.

#### PIETY OF THE CONFESSOR

155 -

fessional; the second what he should do while he is there; and the third, what he should do after leaving the confessional.

1. Before entering the confessional, he should spend some time in recollection before the Blessed Sacrament to recall the importance of what he is about to do. In the Sacrament of Penance he must be a saviour of souls, destroying sin and opening heaven by the infusion of grace. He must remember that he is about to apply to men the fruits of the Redemption, to fill up in souls those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ (Col. 1, 24), and to make Jesus live and reign in them. These considerations should arouse within him a great desire to discharge his duty in a fitting manner. He must make an act of humility in view of his unworthiness and incapacity, and must be filled with mistrust of self lest he become like the torch that consumes and destroys itself while bestowing light on others.

He must put his entire confidence in Our Lord, protesting that his only desire is to serve and to please His Master, begging for the light and graces he needs. If necessary, he must go to confession or at least make an act of contrition, so as to have his own soul pure and holy. He must pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and saints for guidance. He must recall that many saints now in heaven heard confessions with holy dispositions and he must ask the Holy Ghost to grant him the same dispositions. Thus he will dispose his soul in such a way that he will not deprive God of the honor and glory that must be rendered to the Father of Eternal Mercy by the worthy administration of the Sacrament of Penance. Let him be resolved to place no obstacle in the path of the rich graces which God wishes to impart to those who come to confession.

2. While in the confessional, the priest must elevate his mind and heart to God and follow the suggestions enumerated herewith to maintain the spirit of his saintly work.

When the first penitent enters the confessional, the confessor must think of the incomparable love of God the Father who gave His Only begotten Son for this very person, and thus give himself to God to work with the same love for the salvation of the soul before him. As the second comes, he must consider the great love of God the Son for the penitent and unite himself to this divine love. As the third

156-

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

approaches, he must recall the infinite love of the Holy Ghost for this soul and cooperate with Him for the same purpose. When the fourth penitent kneels down, the priest must envision the ineffable love of the Son of God who became incarnate for the salvation of this very soul. The confessor then continues to recall the divine love manifested in the other mysteries of Holy Faith, imploring Almighty God to apply the fruits of each to the soul of each penitent.

Let the priest also dwell upon the incomparable charity of the maternal heart of Mary, begging her blessing and assistance upon the work in hand. He might also invoke the saints as well as the martyrs, confessors, patriarchs and apostles.

This method will help the confessor to maintain the spirit of recollection and to cultivate a great love of prayer. Likewise, it will render the task of hearing confessions less burdensome and fatiguing, for love and fervor will fill his heart.

It is well for the priest to keep a crucifix in the confessional to be a constant reminder of the ardent love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for souls. So, too, in difficulties it will urge the confessor to seek light and strength from the Divine Saviour, especially when dealing with sins against the Sixth Commandment.

3. After confession, the priest should kneel humbly before the altar to beseech Christ's mercy on behalf of his penitents, and to ask forgiveness for any errors of judgment he may have unknowingly committed while engaged in his sacerdotal labor in the confessional. He should thank Our Lord Jesus Christ for the graces bestowed on the confessor and the penitents, and ask Him to compensate for any deficiency in himself or in the persons who have come to confession. He should beg the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and the saints to offer to the Son of God every one whom Divine Providence has directed to his ministry, with the earnest prayer that none of these souls may perish.

## CHAPTER V11(1)

## FIDELITY TO THE SECRECY OF CONFESSION

ONE OF the most important qualifications of the good confessor is fidelity to the secrecy of confession. This obligation is established on a foundation of divine law, natural law and ecclesiastical law. Consequently, a breach of this weighty trust can never be considered light or unimportant.

It is, therefore, always a grievous sin to reveal anything heard in confession. A priest may not refer, either directly or indirectly, during the lifetime or even after the death of the penitent, to matters revealed to him in the sacred tribunal. He may not mention anything that has been discussed with the penitent before confession with a view to receiving the Sacrament of Penance. Nor may he speak outside the confessional, even in conversation with the penitent himself, of anything revealed there unless express or tacit permission is given. Neither may the confessor mention the sin of an accomplice to his partner in crime, even as a means of urging him to confess his share of the guilt; nor may the priest speak of hearing the confession of one who has come to him secretly and has stated or implied that he wishes the fact to remain unknown. He may not discuss sins which are widely publicized, but are known sacramentally to the priest. The confessor is also forbidden to discuss with a fellow-priest the sins of a penitent who has been heard by both, nor may he refer in general terms to the sins confessed by people living in a small place or by the members of a religious community.

Penances must not be revealed, especially when they are such as are customarily associated with mortal sins. Peculiarities of penitents should not be discussed when they are known only through confes-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

sion. Likewise, when a priest has heard only a few penitents in a certain locality, he should refrain from praising the virtues of any particular one or from saying that his sins were only venial, because this might result in making known indirectly the faults of the others and in insinuating that they confessed mortal sins.

The confessor is not permitted to employ the knowledge obtained in the confessional to guide his actions, whether in doing or omitting anything, without the penitent's permission, if by so doing he runs the risk of revealing indirectly the sin confessed.

If a difficult case of conscience should arise, the confessor may consult another priest so long as he can do this without revealing in any way the identity of the penitent.

It is dangerous to mention any matter which the confessor has heard discussed outside the confessional as well as within its walls. It would be wiser not to mention the subject.

If a person should say to the priest, "I am telling you such and such a thing as if I were in the confessional," he is obliged by the natural law to respect the truth, but is not held by the secrecy of the confessional, even though the priest should believe so, because the seal of confession applies only to sacramental confession.

There are other persons held by the same secrecy as the confessor, namely the superior who has granted permission to absolve from a reserved sin, if the priest has inadvertently or imprudently revealed the person for whom the absolution is asked. Likewise the priest who is taken into consultation, when the identity of the penitent has been revealed involuntarily or with the consent of the person concerned. Those who through malicious curiosity or accident have overheard the confession of another person are bound

strictly to the secrecy of confession. Interpreters used to translate confessions in foreign languages are also bound by the same obligation.

When giving a mission in a parish, a preacher should be careful not to speak, even in general terms, of sins that prevail in that parish, lest he be guilty of breaking the seal of confession.

Finally, every confessor should be most faithful to avoid the slightest mention of what he has heard in confession because such an indiscretion gives scandal to the laity, makes the Sacrament of Penance odious,

FIDELITY TO THE SECRECY OF THE CONFESSION

159 -

robs people of their liberty to confess their sins, and is the cause of many sacrileges with the consequent loss of souls. God will demand a strict account of confessors who are too free in speaking about things that should be wrapped in perpetual silence, and, so far as possible, banished from their thoughts.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SEVEN POINTS TO BE OBSERVED BY CONFESSORS

IT DOES NOT surprise me that the Holy Ghost, formulating the Apostles' Creed has placed among the great dogmas of faith the mystery expressed in the words, "I believe in the remission of sins." This indeed is the purpose and end of all the other mysteries. "This is all the fruit, that the sin thereof should be taken away" (Isa. 27, 9). This is a wonder surpassing all visible miracles performed by Christ on the bodies of men, excelling in the same degree as the soul excels the body and as truth is above the shadow. The miracles performed by the Master on men's bodies were but shadows of those He effects upon their souls in confession. There the blind are made to see, the lepers are cleansed, and the dead are brought back to life.

O God, what admirable changes are wrought in men's souls through the Sacrament of Penance! In a moment the soul passes from the depths of evil to the heights of grace, from death to life, from hell to paradise. He who was a slave of the devil becomes a child of God; he who belonged to the Prince of Darkness becomes the possession of the Prince of Light. He who was the abode of the demons passes from an abyss of misery into an ocean of beatitude. O loving Saviour, what graces Thou didst bestow upon us in instituting this Sacrament! How thankful we should be to Thee!

So great is this grace that even if venial sin alone were effaced by the reception of the Sacrament of Penance, that in itself would be more precious than deliverance from all human ills.

What renders this great favor of God so much more bountiful is that He does not content Himself with forgiving sin, but also gives to man this same power. Weak as we are, encompassed with frailty,

### SEVEN POINTS TO BE OBSERVED BY CONFESSORS

161 -

we share the prerogative of God made Man. O admirable power of God, shared with His creatures! O power divine! Quis potest dimittere peccata nisi solus Deus? (Mark 2, 7).

But the greater the grace, the more rigorous will be the accounting demanded and the more culpable those who make improper use of the Sacrament of Penance. Not one single detail must ever be omitted that might help to exercise the holy ministry worthily. Seven recommendations are appended here.

#### 1. Preparation

If zeal for souls has brought you to the confessional, you will leave nothing undone for the accomplishment of this work. You must see that the penitent begins his confession properly and say yourself the words: Dominus sit in corde tuo, et in labiis tuis, ut rite confitearis omnia peccata tua, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. Open your heart and show the fulness of your desire to help him. Urge him to make three acts: a) an act of renunciation; b) an act of oblation; c) an act of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the angels and to the saints. These acts will serve to drive away the evil spirit and open the floodgates of grace.

#### 2. Instruction

All theologians agree that a knowledge of the principal mysteries of religion is necessary to eternal salvation. "This is eternal life that they may know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17, 3). Without this knowledge no one can properly receive the sacrament.

A confessor cannot, without incriminating himself before God, administer the Sacrament of Penance

to a person who is ignorant of the fundamental mysteries of our holy faith. The priest must be satisfied therefore that his penitent has a sufficient knowledge of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, Redemption and judgment. He is also obliged by necessity of precept to know and accept the Our Father, the Creed and the Commandments of God and of the Church and whatever is essential to the proper reception of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

162 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

### 3. Interrogation or Examination

The confessor must not be satisfied merely to hear confessions. He must take the trouble to question his penitents, following the experience of so many priests who realize the necessity of such questioning. What excuse could a confessor make if, through his carelessness, certain souls did not fully accuse themselves of their transgressions?

Does not the judge in civil life question the culprit? Why should not the spiritual judge do likewise? Give careful attention to this subject, questioning those whom you believe to be insufficiently prepared.

### 4. Contrition and Attrition

Perfect contrition, or imperfect, which is attrition, is as essential to the Sacrament of Penance as confession. Consequently, the priest who wishes to apply the fruit of this Sacrament to souls is no less obliged to help them to conceive sorrow for their sins than he is to hear their confession well.

For this purpose, it is necessary to point out to the penitent his principal sins, especially those to which he is most attached or which are most dangerous. Make him see the ugliness of sin. Teach him to know that while in mortal sin he is in the grip of Satan, dead to grace and destined to be damned. Make him realize that there are many in hell who have not fallen so low as he; that he has delivered to Satan his soul that cost so much to the Son of God. For the satisfaction and passing pleasure of a moment, he has doomed himself to suffer hell forever. He has exchanged the eternal for the transitory.

You should also impress upon the penitent that in spite of having received so many graces he has wasted them all, giving his body and Soul to evil, using his faculties to serve Christ's enemies. Every time a sinner commits a mortal sin he crucifies anew the Son of God (Heb. 6,6).

In recalling these things to the sinner, you must be careful not to discourage him, lest he turn completely from God. Let kindness lead him to a realization of his sins. Tell the penitent that he mentions the true state of his soul only in order that he may make an act of perfect

## SEVEN POINTS TO BE OBSERVED BY CONFESSORS

163 -

contrition or at least attrition, either of which must come from God; for it IS a divine gift, man being incapable of supernatural sorrow.

You should urge the sinner to make a firm purpose of amendment and to have a resolute intention of avoiding occasions which have hitherto led him into sin.

### 5. Remedies

The confessor is not only a teacher, a judge and a mediator; he is also the physician of souls. Consequently, he must not only banish sin from men's souls, but must also apply remedies to prevent its recurrence. He must bind up the wounds of their souls, assuage their spiritual ills and help sinners to



recover completely. Likewise, he must suggest preventive methods to ensure their future safety from such hideous diseases of the soul. He must urge them to accept and use the remedies he suggests just as an ordinary doctor would insist that his medicine be taken; he must impress upon them that they are spiritually ill, and that they must use the remedies he is giving them. Otherwise, they will surely die for all eternity.

Six efficacious means are herewith suggested for spiritual patients.

1. Avoid evil companions and places which lead to sin.

2. Go to confession and Holy Communion, frequently. Choose a good confessor. Cultivate the Proper dispositions required to draw the fullest fruits from the Sacraments. Have a constant devotion to the Mass. Assist piously at Vespers and listen attentively to the preaching of the Word of God.

3. Before beginning your work in the morning kneel humbly at your bedside and adore God, renewing your good resolutions to avoid sin. At the close of the day, make an examination of conscience; recall your firm determination to overcome sin. Ask the assistance of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints.

4. Cultivate an ardent devotion to the Mother of God. Since this devotion is of such paramount importance, every confessor should endeavor to implant it firmly in the hearts of his penitents, recommending some particular acts in her honor daily, counselling them to take her as protectress and guide, saying the beads, wearing the scapular;

164 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

reciting the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He should also urge them to unite the devotion to St. Joseph to that of Our Lady.

5. Read good books of devotion and piety, such as The Imitation of Christ and the Lives of the Saints. Parents should be reminded of their duty in this respect and see that their children make use of good Catholic literature.

6. In addition to these five means suggested, another most fruitful and salutary practice may be added, the annual retreat. The making of a retreat in a monastery or convent among religious is an excellent aid to piety and a consoling help to persons who are really in earnest about their eternal salvation. The confessor should, therefore, urge his penitents to take advantage of the many closed retreats offered the faithful.

These general remedies being helpful to all are strongly recommended. Almsgiving should also be urged and works of mercy, both spiritual and corporal.

Since these things are all so necessary for conversion, it is obvious that a person who would object to carrying out the confessor's recommendations would lack the proper dispositions for a betterment of life and for the reception of the grace of absolution.

#### 6. Penance and Absolution

The confessor should be mindful of three things in connection with penance and absolution.

First, the penance he gives should be made up of various prayers or acts, for example, five Our Fathers, the beads, a prayer or a psalm, alms deeds, fasting on a certain day or hearing Mass. He should not

-confuse the penitent by giving him a penance made up of a number of these prayers and acts mixed together. Let him rather choose one or other of them.

Secondly, the Council of Trent recommends a penance in conformity with the sins committed and the persons involved, lest confessors, by giving penances which do not suit the gravity of the offence, become participators by connivance in the penitents' sins. St. Charles reminds priests of this same fact when he counsels them to give a penance commensurate with the sin committed, following the custom and prac-

#### SEVEN POINTS TO BE OBSERVED BY CONFESSORS

165 -

tice of Sacred Scripture, where we find the guilty obliged to do penance in proportion to their crimes.

Thirdly, the penitent should be exhorted to perform his penance as soon as possible. The priest should encourage him to do the acts or say the prayers with a deep spirit of piety and with a firm resolution not to fall into sin again, and to make voluntary acts of virtue in order to draw greater graces upon himself.

Finally, everything should be done to arouse in his soul a lively sense of sorrow. The confessor must help him to make a fervent act of contrition, assuring him that if he has confessed his sins as well as possible, and has the requisite contrition, his soul will be purified by the absolution he is about to receive, just as truly as if he were to stand in the presence of Jesus Christ Himself and hear from His lips the words of pardon he craves.

The words of absolution must be pronounced with attention and devotion. The priest must be mindful that at the very moment he speaks these precious words, the forgiveness of heaven is granted, the Blood of the Lamb is applied to the penitent, and the life of grace is restored to his soul.

#### 7. After Absolution

First, the confessor must tell the sinner what a great favor he has just received in having his sins forgiven and in being snatched from the jaws of hell. The priest should remind the sinner that a moment ago he was a child of the devil, and now is a son of God, and that the deliverance which has just come to him surpasses even the deliverance of an afflicted man freed from the most grievous sufferings.

Secondly, the priest should exhort the penitent earnestly not to waste the grace of God, but to conserve it with fidelity. Then the confessor should make him understand that he should prefer to lose even his most cherished possession rather than separate himself from God again by sin.

Thirdly, the priest should urge him to go to the altar and, kneeling before Our Lord in the blessed Sacrament, he should thank God for His infinite mercy and goodness in having freed him from the fetters of sin. Then, the confessor should have the penitent say a prayer to

166 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

the Blessed Virgin Mary to invoke her protection, to thank her for this grace, remembering that all blessings come to us through the hands of Mary.

Every confessor should pray daily for his penitents that they may receive the strength and help they need to live up to the instruction they have received.

The priest should send his penitents away with a wish and a blessing: "Go in peace," or "May God bless you."

## CHAPTER IX

### FURTHER ADVICE TO CONFESSORS

TO THE SUGGESTIONS already made in the preceding chapters, we add the following advice because its practical application is of great importance to the confessor.

All confessors should be extremely careful not to contradict or condemn one another. They should be closely united in a spirit of charity, following the same rule of conduct and the same maxims of the Gospel, so that the Holy Ghost may guide, bless and sanctify their harmonious work. Thus their penitents will be impressed and encouraged to follow their injunctions. Let confessors, then, sedulously observe all that has been recommended in this book, as well as what is to follow.

The priest, representing the Son of God as judge of mankind, should always give the appearance of understanding his great responsibility. He should wear his cassock and surplice when hearing confessions, occupying the confessional or some suitable place in the church where he may be seen by all. His very bearing and manner should give edification.

The confessor must radiate the good odor of Christ everywhere, and by word and example further the work of Our Divine Lord in humility, patience and charity.

The penitent must be taught to kneel in all humility in the confessional, with hands joined and eyes cast down or looking at the Crucified Saviour. The confessor should not speak in a loud tone nor permit the penitent to do so, lest their voices reach those waiting Outside.

If there arises a question of reconciliation or restitution, or of some proximate occasion of sin, the confessor should not wait until the end

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

of the confession to dispose the penitent, but should do so at the moment of questioning, when he finds him guilty of one of these sins.

The confessor must not ask useless questions, but examine the penitent on necessary points. He must insist on important details, such as the number of times each mortal sin has been committed, and the length of time that has elapsed since his last confession.

If discord or enmity exists towards another, the priest should encourage the penitent to complete reconciliation, even offering to assist in this if necessary.

If one is engaged in court actions or litigation, the confessor must urge him to try to settle the dispute amicably, if it is possible.

If the penitent should accuse himself of having spoken against his neighbor's reputation, the priest should oblige him to repair the damage. If the statements are true but not generally known, he should be told to endeavor to undo the harm caused, by admitting that he was wrong in having spoken so, then to say whatever good things he can about the person he has sinned against. If the statement is false, he should strive to contradict it, in the presence of the persons who heard it, and in every place where it is possible any harm may have been done.

The confessor should advise the penitent to ask pardon of him who has suffered. Each private

individual, being the master of his own reputation, may forgive in entirety the evil spoken against him, and consequently, the sinner is not held to any further reparation. I say "private individual" as distinct from a public man, who is not master of his own reputation which is necessary for the public good.

If the detraction be of long standing, and, perhaps, entirely forgotten by all, then it is better left unnoticed, lest in seeking to rectify the wrong done, greater trouble may be stirred up. In this case, it would be better to counsel the sinner to say everything he can in favor of the person involved and enhance his good standing in the community.

In dealing with a person held to restore another's goods, here is the course of action to be followed. The confessor should first find out whether the penitent is bound to make restitution. In cases where the person is about to discharge the obligation, and suggests that he would

#### FURTHER ADVICE TO CONFESSORS

169 -

prefer to make restitution anonymously, the priest should assist him if it be deemed expedient.

Married couples living in dissension or actually separated should not be absolved if they cannot give a legitimate reason for their condition.

The confessor should make the penitent cognizant of the duties of his state. Parents, teachers, children and servants should be carefully instructed in their respective obligations.

If there is question of vows that the penitent cannot fulfil, the confessor may commute them for easier things, for example, instead of a pilgrimage or something similar that the penitent has promised to carry out, it would be well to oblige him to make several confessions and communions.

## CHAPTER X (\*)

### AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO CONVERT SINNERS

IN CONCLUSION I shall set down an instruction imparted by the Most Blessed Mother of God,<sup>(1)</sup> concerning the manner in which one should deal with sinners, in public and private, in order to effect their conversion.

When you preach, go into the pulpit bearing with you the cannon, the fire and the terrible weapons of the Word of God, to combat sin and destroy it in the souls of men. When you must address a sinner to bring him back to God, treat him with gentleness, patience, kindness and charity. Deal with him as if he were a sick man covered with wounds and ulcers. Do not show anger towards him, but act like the wise physician who, treating a very sick patient, would display no impatience and anger but rather understanding and pity.

The first thing to be done to effect the cure of the sick soul, that is, the sinner, is to arouse him to the point where he will discover the seriousness of his condition. Help him as much as possible, showing him kindness and compassion.

When the penitent realizes his true condition, you must bathe his injuries with warm wine, that is, you must shower him with every affection, speak to him with patience and charity, and at the same time make him understand that you seek only the glory of God in bringing him back to his Maker. Impress upon his mind the great love and mercy which Christ cherishes for those sinners who return to Him.

(\*). In the French edition a number of chapters are devoted to a very detailed examination of conscience. Cf. *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. IV, P. 294 ff. These chapters have been omitted in the present English edition.

(1). This effective way of converting sinners was given to St. John Eudes by the Blessed Virgin Mary through Marie des Vallées, a saintly woman of Coutances. See footnote, P. 136.

### AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO CONVERT SINNERS

171 -

Recall the conversion of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Augustine, the good thief and countless others.

Anoint his wounds with oil, that is, with the words of Sacred Scripture and the living examples of Christ, His Mother and the Saints. For example, if there be question of inducing one to forgive an enemy, show him the charity of Christ forgiving His enemies even at the hour of death.

Above all else, banish bitterness from your own life. Never bring the vinegar of bitterness to a sinner, but show patience and kindness at all times, even if the one you are trying to help should become angry with you.

If all these expedients should fail, exhort him to pray to God for strength and grace to triumph over self and to be converted. At least, have him allow you to pray in his name. As an effective prayer the "Hail Mary, Daughter of God the Father" is suggested.<sup>(2)</sup>

(2). The prayer that St. John Eudes mentions here is a beautiful salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is recited daily in the two religious orders founded by him, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and the Order of Our Lady of Charity. Priests and religious will find this prayer very helpful, especially when dealing with hardened sinners.

Ave, Maria, Filia Dei Patris,

Hail Mary, Daughter of God the Father,

Ave, Maria, Mater Dei Filii,  
 Ave, Maria, Sponsa Spiritus sancti,  
 Ave, Maria, templum totius Divinitatis,  
 Ave, Maria, candidum liliū fulgidae semperque tranquillae Trinitatis,  
 Ave, Maria, rosa praeifulgida caelicae amoenitatis,  
 Ave, Maria, Virgo virginum, Virgo fidelis, de qua nasci, et de cujus lacte pasci Rex caelorum voluit,  
 Ave, Maria, Regina Martyrum, cujus animam doloris gladius pertransivit,  
 Ave, Maria, Domina mundi, cui data est omnis potestas in caelo, et in terra,  
 Ave, Maria, Regina cordis mei, Mater vita, dulcedo, et spes mea carissima,  
 Ave. Mada, Mater amabilis,  
 Ave, Maria, Mater admirabilis,  
 Ave, Maria, Mater misericordiae,

Hail Mary, Mother of God the Son,  
 Hail Mary, Spouse of the Holy Ghost,  
 Hail Mary, Temple of the Divinity,  
 Hail Mary, Immaculate Lily of the resplendent and ever-peaceful Trinity,  
 Hail Mary, Radiant Rose of Heavenly Fragrance,  
 Hail Mary, Virgin of Virgins of whom the King of Kings did will to be born,  
 Hail Mary, Queen of Martyrs, whose soul was pierced with a sword of sorrow,  
 Hail Mary, Queen of the Universe, to whom all power has been given in heaven and on earth,  
 Hail Mary, Queen of my Heart, My Mother, My life, My consolation, and my dearest hope,  
 Hail Mary, Mother Most Amiable,  
 Hail Mary, Mother Most Admirable,  
 Hail Mary, Mother of Mercy,

172 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

If in spite of your efforts the sinner still remains hardened in heart, then be sure that God will reward your efforts and will repay you just as truly as if you had succeeded.

Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;  
 Benedicta tu in mulieribus;  
 Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus;  
 Et benedictus sponsus tuus Joseph;  
 Et benedictus pater tuus Joachim;  
 Et benedicta mater tua Anna;  
 Et benedictus filius tuus Joannis;  
 Et benedictus Angelus tuus Gabriel;  
 Et benedictus Pater aeternus, qui te elegit;  
 Et benedictus Filius, qui te amavit;  
 Et benedictus Spiritus sanctus, qui te sponsavit;  
 Et benedicti in aeternum omnes qui benedicunt tibi, et qui diligunt te. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;  
 Blessed art thou amongst women;  
 And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus;  
 And blessed be thy spouse, St. Joseph;  
 And blessed by thy father, St. Joachim;  
 And blessed by thy mother, St. Anne;  
 And blessed be thy adopted son, St. John;  
 And blessed be thy angel, St. Gabriel;  
 And blessed be the Eternal Father who chose thee;  
 And blessed be the Divine Son who loved thee;  
 And blessed be the Holy Ghost who espoused thee;  
 And blessed be forever all those who bless and love thee. Amen.

173 -

## **Part IV**

### **MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS (1)**

175 -

## **Part IV**

### **MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS'**

#### **FIRST MEDITATION**

#### **General Obligations of the Priesthood**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **DIGNITY AND HOLINESS OF THE PRIESTHOOD**

CONSIDER the dignity, the greatness and the holiness of the priestly state and what it means to be a priest.

To be a priest is to be an angel, for Sacred Scripture calls priests angels inasmuch as they perform on earth the duties of the angels in heaven. God wished to be surrounded and served by angels on earth as well as in heaven. These earthly angels are His priests who possess greater power than the angels, the cherubim or the seraphim in His heavenly kingdom. Priests therefore should be, if it were possible, purer than, angels, more luminous than the cherubim, more consumed with divine love than the seraphim. They must be *lucernae ardentes et lucentes* (John 5, 35), so that they may enlighten and inflame souls with the fire of eternity.

(1). These meditations were originally 'Part V' of *A Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*. They make up a very complete review of the obligations of the priesthood. The fact that some of them are lengthy should not deter the reader from using them. In this respect it might be well to recall the saint's advice in a short foreword to *A Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*: "If you find the meditations too long or too wide in scope, you may confine yourself to a single point or two, according to your requirements."

176-

## **THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

To be a priest is to be a visible god on earth. All Christians are called gods in Sacred Scripture: "I said you are gods" (John 10, 34), but priests enjoy this prerogative in a much more eminent degree than the rest of the faithful.

Priests are gods in power and dignity, since they are clothed with the infinite power of God. If it were not through this divine power, how could they bring God down upon the altar at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? How could they form Him in the hearts of the faithful and give the Holy Ghost to their souls? How could they forgive sin and communicate sanctifying grace?

God gives His divine power to priests in such an exalted degree that they may effectuate many marvels that He alone accomplishes.

He created this world and can create others. To his priests He gave the power to produce Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, which is indeed greater than to create an infinite number of physical worlds.

The supreme effect of the Father's power is to beget His Only Son from all eternity and to give Him to us by the Incarnation.

The greatest act that Christ ever performed on earth was to immolate Himself on the cross for us, and to give Himself in continual sacrifice for the glory of His Father.

The most sublime work of the Holy Ghost was to form the Sacred Body of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mother, to form the Mystical Body of Christ, His Church, and to apply to men's souls the fruits of the Passion.

Yet, did not God entrust all these powers to His priests? Is it not their ordinary function to form the physical and Mystical Body of the Son of God, and to distribute to the faithful His Sacred Body and His Precious Blood, His Holy Spirit, His mysteries and His graces? Is it not their daily privilege to sacrifice Christ to the Eternal Father, and apply the fruits of His Passion and Death to souls?

O admirable power of God's priests! Certainly each one may say with Christ, the Sovereign Priest, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28, 18). In heaven, for the priest opens and closes its gates; in earth, for he has power over the personal and Mystical Body of Christ, who is so subjected to His minister that it may be truly said: "And he was subject to them" (Luke 2, 50).

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

177 -

Thus, priests are gods in power, authority and dignity. O power and dignity of the priesthood which surpasses all the powers and dignities of heaven and earth, second only to the ineffable dignity of the Mother of God!

Thank God for having elevated you to so lofty a state. Remember that even as priests are clothed with the power and authority of God, so too they should be filled with His holiness, love, charity and other divine perfections. To you especially are addressed the words of Sacred Scripture: "Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved. the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience" (Col. 3,

#### SECOND POINT

##### THE PRIEST'S LIFE OUGHT TO BE A REFLECTION OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Consider how the priest is truly another Christ living and walking on earth: *Nolite tangere christos meos* (Ps. 104, 15). He takes Christ's place, represents His person, acts in His name and exercises His authority. Speaking to all priests in the person of His apostles, our Blessed Lord said: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you" (John, 20, 21). By these words He meant that He sends His priests to dispel the darkness of hell which overspreads the face of the earth, and in its place to illumine the world with heavenly light. He sends them to work for the destruction of the tyranny of sin and the establishment of the kingdom of His Heavenly Father in this world. He sends them to perpetuate on earth the life He led and the virtues He practised. He sends them to continue His own office of mediator, judge and saviour.

The three last-mentioned functions are the principal qualities with which Christ has endowed His priests.

First of all, priests are mediators between God and men, making known His divine will. Theirs is the duty of drawing men to God and of reconciling them with the Creator; theirs is the obligation of rendering to Him the homage, adoration, praise and satisfaction due to Him.

178-

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

They, too, must deal with those important relations between God and man which have to do with His glory, the salvation of the world, and the application of the fruits of Christ's Passion to men's souls.



Secondly, priests are, with the Son of God, judges of the world, not in temporal things, which are merely transitory, but in things heavenly and eternal. They are judges not only of bodies but also of souls, rendering decisions which are not of passing moment, but which will live in eternity. To them must come the judges of this world. Kings and emperors must bend their knees and bow their heads in submission to priestly power and judgment.

Thirdly, with Christ priests are saviours of the world, favored with that very name in Sacred Scripture, "Saviours shall come up into Mount Sion" (Abdias 21). The Son of God shares with His priests the heavenly prerogative of Saviour, desiring that they should be associated with Himself in the salvation of souls. "We are God's coadjutors" (1 Cor. 3, 9). He desired that they should discharge the office of saviours and be employed in the continuation on earth of the greatest and most divine of all His works, the redemption of the world. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you" (John 20, 21). Towards this one end, every duty and office of the priestly life is primarily directed.

In the work of saving souls Christ expended Himself completely, employing therein every moment of His time, His thoughts, words and actions, His works, sweat, tears, blood and His very life. Thus, too, priests must give to this work their heart, their thoughts and affections, their strength and their all, that truly they may say with St. Paul, "I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls" (2 Cor. 12, 15). It follows, then, that, if souls are lost through the priest's negligence, the wounds of Christ, His sufferings and His blood will cry vengeance against him at the hour of death. I will require his blood at thy hand" (Ezech. 3, 18).

Truly the priest is another Christ living and walking on earth. Consequently, his life should be a perfect image of that of the Saviour, or rather a continuation of Our Lord's life. The priest is obliged, then, to study what the Master said while He was on earth, what He did, the virtues He practised, His horror for sin and His perfect detachment from the things of the world. The priest must imitate Christ's purity,

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

179 -

sobriety, humility, modesty and all His other virtues that his own life may reflect them in practice.

O my Saviour, I give myself entirely to Thee since Thou wast so kind as to make me a participant in Thy divine prerogatives. Fill me with Thy Divine Spirit, clothe me with Thy virtues that I may work for the salvation of souls and may say at the end of my life what Thou didst say at the end of Thine, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17, 4).

#### THIRD POINT

##### DUTIES OF THE PRIEST TOWARDS GOD, To MEN AND TOWARDS HIMSELF

Christ associates you with Him in His eternal priesthood and in His divine prerogatives by which you are clothed with His powers and are bound to continue His life on earth. Consider then what Christ is and what He does. Consider Him first, with regard to His Father; secondly, with regard to men; and thirdly, with regard to Himself.

Our Blessed Lord, the Sovereign Priest, is all in all to His heavenly Father who in turn is all in all to His Divine Son. Christ loves only His Father and the Father loves only His beloved Son. Christ's only desire is to make His Father known and loved, and the sole thought of the Eternal Father is to manifest the glory of His Son and have Him adored and loved by men. The Son is the glory and treasure of the Father, and in turn the Son's supreme happiness is to glorify His Father and do His will. Towards this end, Christ

directed every gesture and act of His priestly life, fulfilling them with divine dispositions and intentions.

The priest is also the Father's inheritance as His very title implies, and God is his portion as he freely promised when he received tonsure, *Dominus pars hereditatis meae* (Ps. 15, 5). He must therefore be all in all to God and God must be his all. He must look upon God as his only inheritance and treasure, eschewing the world's fortunes and

180 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

pleasures. He must have no other possessions on earth than God, to whom he should give his whole heart and affections. Consequently, he must be always on his guard to discharge with the greatest care and holiness his priestly duties, such as the celebration of Mass, the recitation of the Divine Office, the administration of the sacraments and the preaching of the Word of God.

Since these offices are of such a divine and saintly character, they should be carried out *digne Deo* (Col. 1, 10), that is, both exteriorly and interiorly in a way befitting the majesty of God, worthy of the excellence of our ministry, of the holiness of the Sovereign Priest with whom we are co-ministers, and worthy of the price of His Precious Blood, in the shedding of which we were elevated to the dignity of the priesthood.

If you would know what Christ is and what He does with regard to mankind and especially with regard to His Church, you have but to look with the eyes of faith at HIS accomplishments while He was on earth, especially His intense sufferings. These deeds are so many tongues that cry aloud: "Thus God loved the world; thus Jesus loved His Church; thus Christ loved souls." With the same breath these voices will say to you: "Thus, too, you must love the Church; thus you must work for the salvation of souls; thus, you must do all things, suffer all things, sacrifice even life itself if thereby you may be instrumental in contributing to the salvation of one soul." *Omnium divinorum divinissimum est cooperari Deo in salutem animarum.* (2)

When you consider Christ in regard to Himself, you learn that being the Sovereign Priest He wished also to assume the character of a host, that thus regarding Himself as a host destined to death and sacrifice for the glory of His Father, "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death" (Phil. 2, 8). His whole life on earth was but a continual death so far as the things of this world were concerned. "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me" (John 6, 38). His very life was truly an unending sacrifice of all that was in Him for the honor of His Father.

He who is called to participate in the priesthood should be one with Christ in the character of host. He should regard himself as a victim  
(2). St. Dionysius, *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, cap. 3.

## MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

181 -

to be perpetually immolated with the Saviour for the glory of God; he should be detached and separated from the things of the world. Dying to all he should live alone for the Master. He should humble himself constantly, and burn with divine love. His whole life should be a perpetual sacrifice of his inclinations, his interests, his happiness, his comforts, his strength, his health and his life for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

O Jesus, Sovereign Priest and Pastor of souls, I adore Thee with all my heart and soul as my Captain, my Exemplar and my Guide. I ask Thy pardon for having neglected to follow Thy divine rule and for having committed so many transgressions in my sacerdotal life. I give myself to Thee that henceforth with the help of Thy grace I may follow Thee more perfectly in all that regards Thy heavenly Father, Thy holy Church and Thy divine Self. I am resolved to imitate those saintly dispositions with which Thou didst

discharge the duties of the  
priesthood while Thou wast on earth. Destroy within me whatsoever may stand in the way of accomplishing  
my desire. Possess me entirely, and establish forever within me Thy life and reign for the glory of Thy  
holy Name.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "God so loved the world."

Sic Deus dilexit mundum (John 3, 16).

182 -

## **SECOND MEDITATION**

### **Obligation of the Priest to Seek Perfection**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **THE PRIEST'S RELATIONS WITH GOD DEMAND EMINENT PERFECTION**

Three principal reasons show that no one is more obligated to practise perfection and holiness than the priest. The first reason comes from what he represents with regard to God; the second from his state and condition; the third from his relations with the life of the faithful.

No one has received greater graces from God than has the priest; consequently, no one can have such great obligations. No man on earth approaches more closely to God or communes more familiarly with Him than does the priest. To no other does God come more closely. The Eternal Father shares His divine paternity with him; the Son shares His Priesthood with him; the Holy Ghost makes him His associate in erasing sin, infusing grace, illuminating men's minds and warming their hearts with charity in the reconciliation of sinners and the application of the fruits of the Passion.

Thus, the priest is God on earth, taking His place, representing His person, acting in His name and clothed with His authority. Necessarily then he must be filled with His holiness according to the recommendation of Sacred Scripture: "Be holy because I am holy" (Lev. 11, 44). The priest must honor and love God with the highest degree of fidelity and perfection possible, inasmuch as he is the recipient of God's greatest favors. Pray constantly to know and practise these truths.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

183 -

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **THE PRIESTHOOD IS THE HOLIEST OF ALL STATES**

No other profession equals or excels the priestly state. Priests are the first officers of the Great King, the principal ministers in His realm, the treasurers and dispensers of His mysteries. Into their keeping Christ has entrusted the fruits of His life and death, His mysteries and His graces. St. Paul calls priests "dispensers of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4, 1). Truly, they are charged with the keeping of His glory, His very Self, His Body and Blood, His Mystical Body and His most precious treasures. Naturally, therefore, theirs must be a holiness far exceeding that of ordinary Christians.

Priests occupy the most exalted position in the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. They are, as it were, the heart and the head of that Body, for they are one with the Sovereign Priest who is the Head and the Heart of the Church. It follows, then, that they must discharge their duties more nobly and

more perfectly than the other members of the Church.

Who could be pledged to a higher degree of holiness than he who is consecrated to God in body and soul by the august sacrament of Holy Orders, who spends his days in the sanctuary engaged in the sacred ministry, who frequently dispenses the sacraments to the faithful, who daily offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and receives within his soul the adorable Flesh and the Precious Blood of the Son of God?

Ponder well these truths and beg God to engrave them on your mind and heart that you may derive from them the grace He wishes to give you.

184-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

### THIRD POINT

#### THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PRIEST AND THE FAITHFUL DEMAND THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF PERFECTION

The priest is called in Sacred Scripture, "The angel of the Lord" (Mal. 2, 7), "the light of the world" (Matt. 5, 14), "an example of the faithful" (1 Tim. 4, 12), for he must purify, illumine and perfect the other Christians. Hence, he must be a font of blessings, whose salutary waters flow abundantly in the house of the Lord. He must be adorned with a supereminence of Christian virtues that his life may be truly a rule and guide for all the faithful.

Be assured, then, that there is no one on earth more obliged to seek perfection than the priest. It is not sufficient for him to lead the life of an ordinary Christian, but he must live as a priest. In other words, he must live so holily that he may sanctify others. This is not merely a counsel but a commandment. The Christian must tend towards perfection because of his baptism, the religious because of his vows, and the priest because of the very holiness of his state.

Humble yourself, seeing yourself so far removed from this holiness. Ask God's pardon for your negligence and infidelity. Make the resolution henceforth to lead a truly priestly life. Adopt at once the means best suited to this end, namely, the renunciation of sin, the world and self; the imitation of Jesus, the Great High Priest, and the performance of all the clerical and priestly functions in His spirit and with His dispositions. Give yourself to Him for this purpose; beg the assistance of Mary, the Mother of priests, and invoke the help of all the saintly priests and levites.

Ejaculatory Prayer: I will serve Thee, O Lord, I will serve Thee in holiness and justice before Thee, all the days of my life."

Serviam tibi, Domine, serviam tibi in sanctitate et justitia coram Te, omnibus diebus vitae meae.

185 -

## THIRD MEDITATION

### Hatred for Sin

#### FIRST POINT

#### GRAVITY OF SIN IN ITSELF

Adore God in His infinite hatred of sin. Give yourself to Him that the Light Divine which knows the hideousness of sin, and His Spirit which hates the detestable monster, may make you also know and hate it.

Realize that sin is the cause of endless miseries, the source of all spiritual and temporal evils on

earth, in purgatory and in hell. It has caused the damnation of countless souls. Sin is so great an evil that it would be better for a thousand worlds to be destroyed than for one soul to be lost. The Doctors of the Church all agree on this point.

Sin is so great an evil that even the attaining of some benefit or good could never justify it. Would it not indeed be a marvelous thing to save all the souls on earth and snatch them from the jaws of hell? Yet, if to obtain such an end it were necessary to commit even the slightest sin, it would not be permitted. It would be far better to allow all souls to perish rather than save them by sinning.

Even too, if such an impossibility could be conceived, that the humanity of the Son of God were to be destroyed, and could be saved only by committing a sin, again it would not be permitted.

Know then that sin is an evil of infinite magnitude, horrible and detestable beyond description. It draws down upon men the anger of God and earns for them eternal damnation. Only God can hate it as it deserves, only He can know its hideousness, only the blood of the

186-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Son of God can destroy its effects on men's souls. It can be destroyed only by the very destruction of a God-Man. You may judge for yourself, then, the extent of your guilt when you sin, and how you should detest even the slightest sin. Learn what confusion should cover you and what penance your heart should know at the realization of your guilt. Know, too, the depth and sincerity of the penance you should perform, and what trepidation you should experience at the very thought of ever falling again and what care you should exercise in avoiding the occasions of sin. Ask God to keep you from sinning in the future.

### SECOND POINT

#### SPECIAL GRAVITY OF SINS COMMITTED BY PRIESTS

The sins of priests are greater than those of the faithful. Since the grace given priests is much greater than that given to the laity, it follows that their ingratitude renders them more criminal. Hence, St. John Chrysostom observes that in the Old Law the sacrifice ordered by God in retribution for the sin of a priest equalled that commanded to be offered for the sins of the entire chosen people.(1) It follows, therefore, that the sins of the priest in the Old Law were regarded as being equal in gravity to the crimes of the entire nation. Yet, the priests of the Old Testament were but shadows of the priests of the New, for to them God had given but a fragment of the graces He has bestowed upon the priests of the Christian Church. It is clear, then, that the sins of a priest of Christ are hideous in the eyes of God. The Council of Trent declares that sins which in others might be considered slight are grave when committed by priests. *Levia etiam delicta, quac in ipsis maxima essent, effugiant.* (2)

Ask God to open your eyes to the importance of these truths that you may excite true contrition in your soul and obtain the grace to

(1). *De Sacerd.*, lib. 6, c. i ic.

(2). *Conc. Trid. Sess. 22 De Reform.*, c. 1.

## MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

187-

avoid every sin and whatever is displeasing to Him who called you to the holiness of the priesthood.

### THIRD POINT

#### HOLINESS REQUIRED IN THE PRIESTHOOD

St. Paul speaking of Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest, says: "It was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7, 26). It seems that the Apostle could hardly find adequate terms to describe the Master's separation from whatever was sinful, because He was a Priest. It would seem as though the word "holy" were sufficient to describe His Priesthood, for St. Dionysius says that holiness is spotless purity, unblemished by anything which would need expiation. Yet, St. Paul adds, "undefiled, innocent, separated from sinners," to make clear the incompatibility between sin and the priesthood. Christ's Priesthood was that very priesthood we share. Thus we, too, must be holy, innocent, undefiled and spiritually separated from sinners as He was.

judge how removed is your life from that ideal set by the Master. Endeavor to repair any faults of which you have been guilty. Resolve that in the future with God's grace you will avoid all sins, especially those opposed to clerical holiness, such as impurity, avarice, laziness, intemperance, pride and vanity.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy."  
Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam (PS. 50, 1).

188 -

#### **FOURTH MEDITATION**

##### **Renouncing the World**

###### **FIRST POINT**

###### **CHRIST'S SENTIMENTS REGARDING THE WORLD**

Adore Christ, the Sovereign Priest, and consider the sentiments He felt and will ever feel towards the world. They number four.

First, there was His feeling of contempt, knowing as He did that the world is but futility and nothingness: "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity" (Eccles. 1, 2).

The second was a feeling of aversion, hate and indignation, springing from the knowledge that the world is the enemy of His Father and the object of the divine anger, as the Apostle explained, "If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2, 15).

The third was a spirit of patience towards the world, for though He has always had the desire to destroy it as He will do on the last day, yet with infinite patience He has suffered and will suffer it until the end of time.

The fourth was His disposition to make use of the things of the world while He lived here below, for the glory of His Heavenly Father. Guided by the Holy Spirit, He sought earthly goods only in so far as they were necessary. With a perfect detachment, He never desired any pleasure from the transitory things of this world.

Ask God to give you similar sentiments and dispositions.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

189 -

###### **SECOND POINT**

## SENTIMENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AND THE SAINTS REGARDING THE WORLD

Christ engraved His own sentiments upon the hearts of His Blessed Mother and of the saints, especially His sainted priests. The Apostles were the first priests, and on the eve of his death He cried to His Heavenly Father, "They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world" (John 17, 16), and St. Paul adds, "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung" (Phil. 3, 8). Whence it follows that the apostles, as well as all holy priests and saints have lived in a spirit of aversion towards the things of this world, regarding them as the enemy of God and with St. Ambrose as the body of Satan. They well realized that the things men esteem are but vanity and folly, or as the Inspired Writer says, "the bewitching of vanity" (Wis. 4, 12).

Offer your heart to the Mother of God and to all the saints that you may know and live their sentiments towards the things of the world. Beg them to destroy within your own soul by the power God has given them, any attachment you may have for the world and its pleasures.

### THIRD POINT

#### REASONS FOR HATING THE WORLD

Two qualities render the world hateful. The first is its malice, the second its folly.

"The whole world is seated in wickedness," writes St. John (1 John 5, 19), and the Holy Spirit assures us that it is filled with folly, "for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3, 19). Its malice is apparent in its vices which pose in the guise of virtues. Its folly is apparent in many things, but particularly in its changing fashions and

190-

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

styles. This changeableness is a true mark of worldly folly: "A fool is changed as the moon" (Ecclus. 27, 12).

Detest the world's malice and despise its folly, and to make doubly sure that you will not become contaminated, avoid worldlings and the places they frequent. Avoid worldly habits in your speech, your dress and your environment. Remember that Christ said: "You are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5, 13), that is, you are to be the wisdom and the wise men of the earth. It would be ridiculous to watch a city's chief magistrate following a fool and going about clothed like him. It would likewise be ludicrous to witness the sad spectacle of a priest following the false maxims and customs of the world he is supposed to guide in divine wisdom. His action would be a direct denial of that beautiful quality Christ bestowed upon him in the words, "You are the salt of the earth." He would become a "salt which has lost its savour" which is fit only to be thrown out and trampled under foot.

If in the past you have followed the ways of the world, beg God to lead you aright in the future that your daily conduct may justify His words, "They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world" (John, 17, 16).

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Deliver me, O Lord, from the present wicked world."  
Eripe me, Domine, de presenti saeculo nequam.

191 -

### FIFTH MEDITATION

## **Self-denial**

### **FIRST POINT**

#### **SELF-DENIAL OF OUR DIVINE SAVIOUR**

Adore our Blessed Lord when He says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself" (Luke 9, 23). Adore the thought, the love and the design that He had in your regard when He said these words. Ask His pardon for placing any obstacle in the way of its fulfilment. Give yourself to Him that you may effectuate what He meant by these words, and realize that He Himself first did what He asks of you, having given you the perfect example of self-abnegation. While He was on earth, He never acted according to His own desires, but rather He did the will of His Father. He never sought His own satisfaction nor His own interests, but those of His Father. "For Christ did not please himself" (Rom. 15, 3). He lived not for Himself, but for God. "I live by the Father" (John 6, 58). He shed His blood even to the last drop, gave His very life, "emptied Himself" (Phil. 2, 7), and concealed His very sacred humanity and divinity in the Blessed Sacrament to the end of time.

Thank Our Blessed Lord for all the glory He has ever given or will ever give to His Father, as well as for the manifold graces He has merited for us. Give yourself anew to Him that you may share His sentiments. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant (Phil. 2, 5-7).

192-

### **THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD DENY THEMSELVES**

Jesus not only requires you as a Christian to renounce the world, Satan and sin, but He also binds you to renounce yourself. "If any man will come after Me let him deny himself" (Luke 9, 23). St. Paul says that you must strip yourself of "the old man" (COL. 3, 9) because "you are dead" (Ibid. 3, 3). Elsewhere He says, "He that shall lose his life for me, shall find it" (Matt. 10, 39). "If any man ... hate not ... his own life . . . , he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14, 26).

This self-denial should be practised for the following reasons:

First, we do not belong to ourselves. "Know you not that you are . . . not your own" (1 Cor. 6, 19). We belong to God by an infinity of titles. We have no right to dispose of our life, no right even to exist, to live, to speak or act, nor even think for ourselves, but only for Him to Whom we belong. Hence, we must renounce ourselves entirely that we may be wholly God's.

Secondly, we must follow Christ if we would be united to Him. We cannot do that if we do not renounce ourselves, for we are but darkness and sin and death. Yet, darkness cannot imitate light, nor sin grace, nor death life.

Thirdly, nothing in this world is more opposed to our eternal salvation than we ourselves. We bear within ourselves four demons more dangerous than the devils who roam this world. The first demon is our own mind, filled with darkness and poisoned with the venoms of sin, whence spring error and heresy. The second is our own will, which St. Bernard calls "an untamed beast, a ravaging wolf, a cruel lion and the sole foundation of hell." The third is self-love, which is the source of untold disorders. The fourth is ambition, pride and arrogance, with which we are born and which cease only with death. From these latter spring a multitude of vices.



In addition, sin has perverted all that is in us, filled us with darkness and malice, unleashed all our dormant passions. It has corrupted our senses, weakened our will and made slaves of body and soul. Hence,

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

193 -

St. Paul calls the body "sinful flesh" (Rom. 8, 3), and refers to it as sin (Rom. 6, 6), and as death (Rom. 7, 24). Sin has poisoned the blood in our veins and the very marrow of our bones, and caused us to be "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. 2, 3).

Self-renunciation, therefore, is not merely a counsel of perfection, but a commandment. If we would share in the redemption of Christ, in the grace and salvation of the new man, we must renounce the remnants of Adam, that is, the old man and self.

When we ponder these truths, we realize that we have no enemy more cruel than our own ego, that there is none we should fear more than our very selves. It is more necessary to renounce ourselves even than to renounce the demons who seek to destroy us. God's greatest chastisement would be to leave us to our own deserts. Let us pray constantly that He will protect us against ourselves, more even than against all the infernal powers.

#### THIRD POINT

#### PRIESTS ARE UNDER A SPECIAL OBLIGATION TO RENOUNCE THEMSELVES

All Christians are obliged to practise self-abnegation. As St. Luke points out, Christ said to all: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself" (Luke 9, 23). We priests are held to this duty in an especial manner for three important reasons: first, because being the first and noblest members of the Mystical Body of Christ on earth, we must follow Christ more perfectly, which means, of course, complete self-denial; secondly, since we are consecrated to God and His Church by ordination, we no longer belong to ourselves; thirdly, since we must encourage others to denial of self, we should practise it ourselves.

Learn the necessity of self-abnegation and develop a great desire to practise it at all times. Cultivate the spirit, the love and desire which annihilated Christ, that you, too, may be annihilated for Him. Study St. Paul's words: "Mortify your members" (Col. 3, 5), and truly strive to mortify your eyes, your taste, your tongue, your passions, your mind,

194 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

your self-love and your will. Be careful to renounce self when you begin any important action, and to surrender yourself to Jesus Christ, asking Him to purify your intentions so that you may do them with His spirit and virtue.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man: rescue me from the unjust man." Eripe me, Domine, ab homine malo: a viro iniquo eripe me (Ps. 139, 2).

195 -

#### SIXTH MEDITATION

#### The Love of God

#### FIRST POINT

## REASONS WHY WE MUST LOVE GOD

We are in this world to love God. For that end we were created, and that alone is our center, our happiness and our sovereign good. God is worthy of our love because of His infinite goodness, His incomparable beauty and His incomprehensible perfections. Our obligations of loving Him are, therefore, infinite in scope because He is all heart and all love for us. From Him we have received an infinity of gifts and graces, both general and particular, as Christians and as priests. Yet, how often we have shown Him ingratitude instead of love, injuries and outrages instead of devotion, in our actions, our words and the improper use of our body and soul.

Be confounded with sorrow, weep tears of blood at the memory of your conduct. Yet, if you were to weep torrents you could never atone sufficiently for your ingratitude. Ask His pardon, crying, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy" (Ps. 50, 1).

Renounce your love for the world and its pomps. Renounce your own self and all creatures. Protest to God that you wish henceforth to follow His commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind" (Luke 10, 27). Offer to Him in consecration your heart, begging Him to destroy in it whatsoever is opposed to His sacred love. Beseech Him to take full possession of you that you may be consumed with the sacred fire of His love divine.

196-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

### SECOND POINT

#### THE FIRST WAY TO LOVE GOD IS TO AVOID SIN

The first thing you must do if you would love God is to hate whatever is opposed to Him, that is, every kind of sin. You must, therefore, purify your soul by perfect penance. Separate yourself forever from any occasion which may lead you astray. Work valiantly to destroy in your life any bad habits, thus eradicating the roots of sin, particularly inordinate self-love and pride.

Ask God's guidance to know the state of your own soul. Examine your conscience rigorously. After discovering your weaknesses, pray that God's divine mercy may give you true contrition and the grace to make amends. Ask also for the grace to remain aloof from dangerous occasions and temptations. Take the means necessary to attain these ends. Make the resolution to put them into practice daily. But, be on your guard against relying upon your own resources, seeking rather your strength in the grace and mercy of God, whom you must invoke unceasingly.

### THIRD POINT

#### THE SECOND WAY TO LOVE GOD IS TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS

In order to love God truly you must establish in your heart a firm resolution of keeping God's commandments and those of His Church, as well as following the rules and obligations of your calling. You must discharge every duty well, especially those directly concerned with your priestly functions and the practice of the virtue of religion. Seek in all things to please and serve the Master.

If you examine yourself carefully on these points, you will find much to humiliate you. Be not discouraged. Form a real desire to fulfil all your obligations out of love for Him. Invoke the help of heaven and

the intercession of Mary and the angels and saints, particularly those whose lives were filled with divine love.

Ejaculatory Prayer: I love Thee, O my God; I love Thee, O infinite Goodness; and I wish to love Thee more and more."

Amo Te, Deus meus, amo te, bonitas infinita, amo te, et magis atque magis amare volo.

198 -

## **SEVENTH MEDITATION**

### **Obligations and Duties Towards Christ**

#### **FIRST POINT**

##### **REASONS WHY WE MUST HONOR AND SERVE CHRIST**

There are three principal reasons why as Christians we must honor, serve and love Christ.

First, we must honor all that belongs to Him, His divinity and His humanity, His body and soul, His thoughts, words, actions and sufferings because they are infinitely holy, divine, admirable and adorable and merit infinite love and praise.

Secondly, we should honor and love all that honors and loves God. Yet everything in Christ renders to God the Father homage and love worthy of His supreme grandeur. In fact, God receives no honor and glory but through His Son Jesus, as the words of Mother Church so clearly state: "Through Him and with Him and in Him is given Thee, O Father Omnipotent, in union with the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory." It is certain that not a single good act is done except through Jesus Christ. "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15, 5). It is He who thinks, speaks and suffers in the members of His Mystical Body all things which are pleasing to the Creator. It is through Him and with Him and in Him that the angels and saints glorify God: "through Whom the angels praise and the dominations adore Thy Majesty."

Thirdly, we are bound to love and serve Christ because of the privations, humiliations and sufferings He endured as well as the gifts He bestowed upon us. What has He not done for us? What has

#### **MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS**

199 -

He not given up? What has He not suffered because of us? He gave all, suffered all, endured all.

O Jesus, what should I not endure and do for Thy sake? Even if Thou hadst done nought for me, I should do all for Thee because Thou didst render such great glory to the Eternal Father, and because Thou art so lovable and adorable! O Good Jesus, may I be all Thine, my body and my soul, my life, all that I have and all that I am!

#### **SECOND POINT**

##### **SPECIAL REASONS WHY PRIESTS SHOULD HONOR AND SERVE CHRIST**

Besides our obligations towards Christ as Christians, we as priests have a multitude of additional obligations. We are clothed with a dignity possessing the quality of the infinite. Through our priesthood we are associated with Him in His noblest prerogatives, in His role as Mediator between God and man, Sacrificer of the Eternal, Saviour of the world.

Likewise, we are made cooperators with Him in the salvation of souls, receiving from Him the right

to continue His most lofty tasks on earth, such as illuminating men's minds, reconciling them with their Maker, washing away their sins and bringing sanctifying grace to their souls. We have received the power of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and of giving His Body and Blood to the faithful as well as to ourselves.

Within our keeping are placed His treasures, mysteries, merits and grace; He entrusts to us His Body and Blood, His Church and every precious gift which is His. We take His own place in the world, with full powers to continue the work of redemption, discharging His own priestly functions. We receive graces in keeping with the high state to which He has called us, for it is true that He always bestows graces in conformity with the office to which He calls a chosen soul. When He bestowed the priesthood upon us, its wealth of graces came to us, unless we put some hindrance in their way.

200-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Thinking over these things, what mind could conceive or what tongue express the depth and breadth of the priest's obligation to be all in all to Jesus? How could he but employ all his time, his life, his mind, his heart and his will and all that he has or knows or is in His service and for love of Him? If he acts differently, what a dreadful death he must expect! What a judgment! What a hell!

### THIRD POINT

#### MEANS TO SERVE CHRIST

We must seek the means best suited for serving Christ. We may do so by thoughts, words, actions, mortifications, vocal and mental prayer, by acts of adoration and love. The best method is to work unceasingly to imprint upon our hearts a living image of His life and His virtues. We must fulfil our priestly duties with His spirit and His dispositions. We must seek always to act in a way worthy of Him in Whose honor and for Whose glory the sacerdotal office is discharged.

This desire shall be our aim. We must give ourselves to Christ that we may thus act, begging Him who set us in His place, to engrave within our being His image, so that loving Him with all our hearts we may become partakers of His saintly virtues and divine dispositions.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "I live, now not I: but Christ liveth in me.  
Vivo autem, jam non ego: vivit vero in me Christus (Gal. 2, 20).

201-

## EIGHTH MEDITATION

### Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary

#### FIRST POINT

#### EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD HONOR THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Adore God in His infinite love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the great designs He had upon her from all eternity and in all the effects of grace and glory which He has worked and will work through her in heaven and on earth. Rejoice with her in all the favors conferred upon her by Almighty God. Thank the Blessed Trinity and associate yourself with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in their love for her, and in their zeal for her honor that you may thereby honor and love her becomingly.

Know that true devotion to the Mother of God is but a continuation of the love, respect and

submission with which Christ honored her on earth. Adore these sentiments in the Divine Heart of Jesus and give yourself to Him that His sentiments may be yours. Since He associated you with Him in His relationship of Son of Mary, He desires you to partake of His own sentiments and dispositions towards her. Pray that He may engrave them upon your heart, that you may honor and venerate her as your mother.

Consider the multitude of reasons obligating you to honor Mary, because of the perfection and excellence with which He endowed her, because of the service and honor she rendered and renders continually to the majesty of God, and because of the immense and incomprehensible blessings you have received through her intercession. "All good

202-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

things came to me together with her" (Wis. 7, 11). "We are filled with all good things through (her)" (Tobias 12, 3).

O great and holy Mary, how admirable thou art! All worthy of praise and honor art thou! What obligations are mine to revere, serve and love thee and to be only thine! This I desire with all my heart; therefore, I offer thee and give thee my body and my soul, my heart, my mind, my life, my being with all its capabilities, my time and my eternity. To thee I protest that I wish that in all these things I may render thee homage now and hereafter. It is my earnest wish that I may lead others to praise, glorify and serve thee. Use on my behalf, I beg thee, the powers God hath given thee over men; possess me entirely so that thy Divine Son may establish the reign of his grace and love in my soul.

## SECOND POINT

### SPECIAL UNION OF MARY AND PRIESTS

There is a particular alliance between the Blessed Mother and priests. As the Eternal Father made her a partaker in His divine paternity, giving her the power of forming Christ within her womb, so, too, He communicates this same fatherhood to his priests in permitting them to form Christ in the Blessed Eucharist and in the hearts of the faithful. Christ made Mary a cooperator in the work of redemption; He also makes his priests coadjutors in the salvation of souls. The Holy Ghost associated Mary with Himself in the most divine of all His operations and in the mystery of the Incarnation; He associates priests with Him to continue this mystery in each Christian soul where Christ is reincarnated by Baptism and in the Blessed Eucharist. Since all graces coming from God pass through Mary's hands, so, too, they are given to you by the ministry of His priests. Mary is the treasury of the Blessed Trinity; priests also share this prerogative. Finally, as through Mary, Jesus was offered to His Eternal Father at the very first, as well as at the very last, moment of His life, so He is immolated and offered to God daily by His priests at Mass.

## MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

203-

Because of this close alliance with Mary, priests owe her particular obligations of love, honor and service. They should be clothed with her virtues and dispositions. Humiliate yourself for neglecting your obligations to her. Form a great desire to fulfil them worthily. Offer yourself completely to Mary Immaculate and beg her to help you.

## THIRD POINT

### MEANS OF HONORING THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

If you have a true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, seek the means of honoring and serving her. You may honor her by thought, applying yourself to the consideration of her mysteries, her virtues, her

actions and her sufferings, as well as by interior acts of veneration and praise for her perfect cooperation with the grace of God. You may also honor her by words, in inciting others to love her, and by vocal prayer, principally the rosary. Lastly, you may serve by action, offering to her every deed you do, particularly almsgiving, fasts and mortification.

You may quite commendably enter any sodality or religious association established in her honor. Your devotion will also be strengthened by having her picture ever near you, and by observing her feasts with special affection.

Yet, the most efficacious of all means is the imitation of her virtues, especially her humility and submission to the divine will, her purity and hatred for sin, her love for God, her charity towards men, her patience, meekness and zeal for the salvation of souls.

With sorrow realize how far removed you are from this ideal; yet, you are amongst her chosen children. Pray to your heavenly Mother that she may obtain for you true repentance for your past transgressions, and the grace of God to be more faithful in the future.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "O Mother most amiable, show thyself a mother to me."  
Mater amabilis, monstra te esse Matrem.

204 -

## **NINTH MEDITATION**

### **Obligations Towards the Church**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **WHAT THE CHURCH IS WITH REGARD TO THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS AND TO PRIESTS**

Adore the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity in all that They mean to the Church, Their incomprehensible love and lofty designs upon it from all eternity. Adore and bless all that They have effectuated through the Church or will ever accomplish. Study the love and zeal of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost that you may learn to love and serve the Church as the beloved daughter of the Eternal Father, who gave her His Son to be her Spouse, and His Holy Spirit to be her Soul and Heart.

The Church is the sister, the mother and the spouse of Christ, as well as His Body and His fulness, as St. Paul remarks: "Which is his body and the fulness of him who is filled all in all" (Eph. 1, 23). The Church is likewise Christ's accomplishment and His perfection, His inheritance, His kingdom, His house, His treasure and crown, His glory and delight.

Moreover, the Church is the mother who engendered you for God by baptism, bears you within her womb, is the nurse who nourishes you with the divine word, as well as with the Body and Blood of her Spouse. The Church is your queen, your governess and directress, guiding you on the road to eternity. She is your teacher who instructs you in the eternal truths of heaven. She has given you the Sacrament of 204

#### **MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS**

205 -

Holy Orders, whereby you have been made a partaker of the priestly office with its privileges, graces and blessings.

How much then should you love and respect the Church! With what zeal you should serve her! How

you should venerate her sacraments, ceremonies and customs! What sorrow you should know when she is made to suffer! What a duty is yours to thank God for having established her on earth! How you should pray that He may guide her always, sanctify and solidify her and give her priests according to His Heart!

## SECOND POINT

### CHRIST'S LOVE FOR HIS CHURCH

Adore Christ in all that He means to His Church, and remember that He is her Redeemer, Saviour, Founder, Brother, Spouse, Head, Doctor, Judge and Pastor; He is her Physician, Advocate and Mediator. Yet, at the same time He is her Servant for He said: "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. 20, 28). He is the Church's food, her life, her heart, her treasure, her reason for existence, her happiness and her God. He calls her His dove and well beloved, His spouse and His sister and His heart, "My heart hath forsaken me" (Ps. 39, 13). He speaks of her as His dear soul, "I have given my dear soul into the hand of her enemies" (Jer. 12, 7).

Behold in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, His sentiments of zeal, care, vigilance and love for His Church. His love is apparent in three principal ways: first, in all the marvelous things He did on her behalf; secondly, in all that He suffered for her; thirdly, in the infinitely precious gifts He bestowed upon her.

Thank Him for all these favors; unite your heart with all the honor and love which has ever been or ever will be rendered Him by His Church. Embrace the sentiments expressed in the words of the Apostle, "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2, 5). Beg Him to inflame your heart with those dispositions,

206 -

### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

that you may truly say, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up" (Ps. 68, 10).

## THIRD POINT

### OUR DUTIES TOWARDS THE CHURCH

When the Son of God called you to the priesthood, He made you a partaker with Him in those all important qualities and offices He exercised in the Church, namely saviour, chief, doctor, father, pastor, physician, mediator, servant and judge.

Weigh well the obligations attached to these lofty prerogatives. Seek to ascertain how you have discharged them, and you will be astonished to find that there is much for which to reproach yourself and implore His pardon. Make the resolution to be more assiduous and faithful in the future.

In order that you may truly appreciate and love these high qualities which you share, picture the burning love which animated the apostles and all holy priests in their devotion to the Church. Study their zeal, vigilance and affection in spreading the Gospel and sanctifying the Church. Learn how meticulous they were about the cleanliness and the appointments of God's temples; how carefully they carried out the liturgy; how faithfully they obeyed all Church laws and with what holiness they administered the sacraments. See how devoted they were to the preaching of the word of God, and how anxious they were at all times to insure the salvation of the faithful.

Consider the sacrifices and sufferings of the apostles and all holy priests on the Church's behalf; see how they lived, not for themselves but for the Church, using their thoughts, words, actions, their strength, minds, their all, for that one object alone, so that truly they could say, "I most gladly will spend and be

spent myself for your souls" (2 Cor. 12, 15).

Let shame engulf your soul as you realize how far you have wandered from the noble example set you by the saints. Beg them to help

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

207 -

you know their zeal. Resolve to try to imitate the ideal they have set. Beseech Mary, the Mother of Christ, to help you by her prayers.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Holy Mary and all Holy Priests and Levites, intercede for me."

Sancta Maria et omnes Sacerdotes et Levitae, intercedite pro nobis.

208 -

### TENTH MEDITATION

#### The Cassock, the Surplice and the Biretta

##### FIRST POINT

##### MEANING OF THE CASSOCK AND SURPLICE

The black cassock signifies that the priest who wears it should at all times be in mourning for Christ, his Crucified Saviour. It means, too, that he should be dead to sin, to the world and to himself, doing penance for his own sins and for the sins of the world. It signifies finally that the priest's body should be at all times mortified in such manner that in him Christ's life is made evident to the faithful.

The surplice represents the "new man," our Lord Jesus Christ, as emphasized by the words used at ordination: "May the Lord clothe thee with the new man created in justice and holiness according to God." It follows that the priest must be like Christ, clothed with His perfection, humility, charity, modesty, purity and His other virtues.

The ordaining prelate when bestowing the surplice calls it the "habit of holy religion." Likewise, he prays that Almighty God may free the candidate from all the slavery of secular dress whose ignominy is put off. Since the Holy Ghost speaks through the Bishop, these words show us the purpose of the surplice in the mind of God.

How many careless or worldly priests there are who by their lives make a mockery of these words and ceremonies! The Church demands that the clerics who wear the surplice, lead a life in conformity with Christ's. Yet there are priests who live as worldlings, and look upon their clerical dress as a bar and a hindrance to pleasures which they renounced at ordination. The Church, through the person of the

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

209 -

Bishop, asks Almighty God to forgive the ordinands' sins, and to free them from the slavery of secular dress. Yet these same clerics cultivate an inordinate love for it, rather branding their own clerical attire as something of which to be ashamed.

O frightful blindness! O damnable profanation of sacred and holy things! Ask God to help you always to respect the attire of your calling, and to lead a life in conformity with the holiness of your clerical dress.

##### SECOND POINT



## THE MEANING OF THE BIRETTA

The biretta is simply a cross which clerics wear on their head to show that the cross of Christ is their crown and their glory, whereby they re-echo St. Paul's words, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6, 14).

Engrave these truths upon your heart. Thank God for having given you the privilege of wearing the robe of religion. Ask His pardon for any profanation you may have made of it. Begin to practise with renewed zeal all that it requires and demands of you. Take seriously the meaning of the cassock, the surplice and the biretta. Treat them with fitting reverence. Pray God to give you the strength to persevere in your good resolution.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Let thy priests, O Lord God, put on salvation."  
Sacerdotes tui, Domine Deus, induantur salutem (2 Par. 6, 40).

210-

### Part V

#### MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

##### Part V

#### MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS(1)

213-

### FIRST MEDITATION

#### Tonsure

##### FIRST POINT

#### TONSURE BINDS US TO STRIP OURSELVES OF THE SPIRIT, WAYS AND MAXIMS OF THE WORLD

TONSURE is the door into the clerical state. If we would understand the dispositions necessary for its reception and the obligations it imposes, we must consider the ceremonies attached to its bestowal. These ceremonies are, as it were, oracles of the Holy Ghost explaining what it means to be a cleric and what is expected of such a one in his daily life.

When the candidate for tonsure has laid aside his secular dress, which the Pontifical calls *ignominiam saecularis habitus*, he presents himself before the ordaining bishop. He is clothed in a cassock, *habitus sacrae religionis*, and bears a lighted candle in his right hand. These externals are to remind the young man that henceforth he must be stripped of the spirit of the world, its ways and maxims, and be vested

(1). Meditations on Tonsure and Holy Orders, like the preceding series on the priestly obligations, are taken from 'Part V' of the original edition of *A Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life*. They will furnish excellent material for meditation in preparation for the anniversary of one's ordination. Seminarians can find no better meditations for the ordination retreats.

214-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

with the spirit of religion and holiness. His only aim in embracing the clerical life must be to seek the honor and glory of the Saviour, and so to spend his days before God and man that he will be truly "a burning and shining light" (John 5, 35).

Humble yourself before God because of your unworthiness. Realize that you cannot enter this holy state without the grace of God. Beg Him to grant you this grace. Pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to all the holy priests and levites to obtain it for you.

## SECOND POINT

### TONSURE OBLIGATES US TO DETACH OURSELVES FROM THE PLEASURES AND HONORS OF THE WORLD

The Bishop cuts, in the form of a cross, the hair of the candidate receiving tonsure. The hair is waste matter which grows from the flesh, often growing from flesh that is dead rather than alive. It signifies the pleasures, honors and vanities of the world. These things in turn are the products of a world which is itself dead and decaying. St. Paul says, *Omnia arbitror ut stercora* (Phil. 3, 8). Thus the true cleric must be detached entirely from worldly things, despising them *ut stercora*. He must crown himself with the cross of Christ, finding his treasure in poverty, his glory in ignominy, his delight in labor and mortification., his life in death to sin, to himself and to the world.

Realizing how remote we are from these holy dispositions, let us give ourselves wholeheartedly to the Son of God that we may acquire them. Let us work unceasingly that whatever within us is contrary to them may be destroyed. Let us beg the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and the saints to assist us.

MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

215 -

## THIRD POINT

### TONSURE OBLIGATES US TO SERVE CHRIST AND BE CLOTHED WITH His VIRTUES

Publicly and distinctly the aspirant for tonsure says, *Dominus pars haereditatis meae et calicis meae, tu es qui . restitues haereditatem meam mihi* (Ps. 15, 5). By these words he makes a solemn protestation that he chooses God for his portion, his inheritance and his treasure, despising all else. So, too, he makes evident his desire to belong entirely to God and to be in His absolute power and possession.

The ordaining prelate then clothes the young man with the surplice, saying: *Induat te Dominus novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creatus est, in justitia et sanctitate veritatis* (Eph. 4, 24). By these words the candidate is reminded that the surplice represents Christ, that he should be clothed with Him much more than an ordinary Christian. Thus, St. Paul writes, "For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ (Gal. 3, 27), meaning that Christians must be adorned with the Master's innocence, holiness and virtues.

These briefly are the dispositions necessary for entrance into the clerical state; these are the obligations and duties of him who has been tonsured.

If this great honor has already come to you, thank God for the favor He has conferred upon you, asking His pardon if your dispositions were unworthy, or your manner of discharging your obligations unsatisfactory. Pray to Our Lord, to His Blessed Mother and to the saints to supply what is wanting in you. Beseech them to obtain for you the grace to be more faithful in the future.

If you are preparing to receive the tonsure, resolve to live henceforth in conformity with its requirements, invoking heaven's assistance the while. Always put on your suppliance with profound respect and devotion, saying, Induat me Dominus novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creatus est in justitia et sanctitate veritatis.

216 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Ejaculatory Prayer: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: it is thou that will restore my inheritance to me."

*Dominus pars haereditatis meae et calicis mei, tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam mihi* (Ps. 15, 5).

217 -

## SECOND MEDITATION

### The Four Minor Orders in General

#### FIRST POINT

#### DUTIES TO JESUS CHRIST FOR HAVING ESTABLISHED THE FOUR MINOR ORDERS

Adore our Divine Saviour as the Author and Founder of the four Minor Orders, porter, lector, exorcist and acolyte. Honor Him as the font and source of grace contained in these sacraments.(1) With subdeaconship, and the diaconship they represent degrees and participations in the priesthood, while together they constitute one perfect sacrament. Yet, this sacrament produces different graces flowing from its seven parts, just as a fountain with seven outlets diffuses its waters in seven separate channels. Revere the Divine Master in the holy plans He formulated for His Church, and the designs He had upon you in particular when He established Minor Orders.

Thank Him for all the effects of sanctifying grace produced in the Church by these orders. Offer Him all the glory they have ever effected or ever will effect in heaven and on earth, through their use by those upon whom they have been or are to be conferred. If you have already received them, renew your dispositions that you may make fruitful use of these orders. If you are about to receive them, give (1). It is an article of faith that Holy Orders is a sacrament. Whether or not each of the various divisions of Holy Orders constitutes a distinct sacrament is open to question. The Episcopate, the Priesthood and diaconship present no controversy, but the subdeaconship and minor orders are in a different category. St. John Eudes regards them as sacraments and many theologians agree with him. Other learned divines, however, hold the opposite opinion, basing their arguments on sound reasoning.

218 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

yourself wholeheartedly to Him that you may know how He would have you receive them. Beg Him to destroy within you whatever is contrary to their fruition.

#### SECOND POINT

#### DUTIES TO OUR LORD FOR HAVING EXERCISED THE FUNCTIONS OF THESE ORDERS ON EARTH

Consider the infinite love of Jesus for His Heavenly Father and His unbounded charity towards you, His chosen ministers, which impelled Him not only to establish these four Orders, but also to exercise

their functions Himself while He was on earth.

He discharged the office of porter when He drove the money changers from the Temple. And He still exercises the functions of this Office when He closes the doors of men's hearts, living temples of God ' against the evil spirit and sin. So, too, He opens them to the Holy Spirit and to divine grace.

He discharged the office of lector when, as St. Luke says, being in the city of Nazareth, He entered the synagogue and arose to read, "surrexit legere" (Luke 4, 16). In His hands were placed the prophecies of Isaias and from them He read to the assembled people.

He discharged the office of exorcist when He expelled demons from men's bodies and vice from their hearts.

He discharged the office of acolyte for He assures us He is the "light of the world" (John 8, 12).

Thank Him, then, for the great honor He rendered to His Eternal Father in all these offices, and offer to the Father this same honor in reparation for the many transgressions of which you are guilty, either in unworthily preparing for the reception of these Orders, or in the manner in which you have carried out the functions they impose. Thank Jesus, too, for the graces and merits you have acquired through the faithful discharge of the Minor Orders, and in future when you make use of them, offer yourself wholeheartedly to Him that He may

#### MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

219 -

infuse into your heart the dispositions and intentions with which He exercised them.

#### THIRD POINT

#### DUTIES TO OUR LORD FOR HAVING CALLED YOU TO MINOR ORDERS

Consider the incomprehensible goodness with which Christ chose you to receive Minor Orders, through which you have been or will be clothed with several offices in the kingdom of the Great King. These offices are so noble and lofty that they surpass all the dignities and powers of the world, in the same measure that the spiritual is above the temporal, heaven above the earth, grace above nature and eternity above time.

Reflect that through these orders the Son of God has made you or will make you a participant in His noblest and highest qualities. For the Order of Porter entitles the recipient to share in that quality of the Saviour described in the Apocalypse: "These things saith the Holy One and the true one, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; shutteth and no man openeth" (Apoc. 3, 7). The Order of Lector bestows upon you the quality of doctor and teacher; the Order of Exorcist shares with you the divine quality of power over demons; the Order of Acolyte gives you the quality described in the words of Sacred Scripture: "I am the light of the world" (John 8, 12).

Thank Christ for all these favors, and beg that they may arouse within you a great love for Him and a keen desire to serve and honor Him with all fidelity.

If you have already received the four Minor Orders, ask His pardon for any negligence you may have displayed in their exercise. Make the resolution to be more faithful in the future. If you have not yet received them, promise that when they are conferred upon you, you will endeavor to discharge worthily the obligations they will impose

220 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

and to make your life conformable to those high qualities of soul they demand. Ask the assistance and prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all holy priests and levites of the Church.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Holy Priests and Levites, intercede for us."  
Sancti Sacerdotes et Levitae, intercedite pro nobis.

221 -

## THIRD MEDITATION

### The Order of Porter

#### FIRST POINT

#### EXCELLENCE OF THE ORDER OF PORTER

The first of the four Minor Orders is that which establishes porters in God's house. Yet it is so noble and so exalted a position that it raises those invested with it to a dignity and greatness far excelling even the highest earth can bestow. The porter thus occupies a position more exalted than any judge or president or governor or prince or king or emperor. This is true, too, of the Orders of lector, exorcist and acolyte.

Four reasons prove this statement.

First, the highest dignity of the world does not demand a sacrament. Yet, one cannot become a porter, lector, exorcist or acolyte without the bestowal of a sacrament.<sup>(1)</sup>

Secondly, all these Orders imprint on the soul of the recipient a divine mark or character, which no earthly honor can effect.

Thirdly, these Orders bestow sanctifying grace, provided no obstacle impede its infusion. No earthly dignity can produce such an effect.

Fourthly, not even a king nor an emperor has the right to open or close the doors of the church. A ruler may banish a subject from his kingdom, but he may not eject him from the Temple of God, nor may he drive devils from the bodies of the possessed.

Know then that there is nothing small in the Church. Even what appears to be trivial or inconsequential is in fact great, noble and important and must be treated with the utmost respect and reverence.

(1). See footnote pp. 213.

222 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

This is very evident, since it was necessary for Christ to institute a Sacrament in order to give to His chosen ones the power to open and close the doors of the church, ring the bells, read Sacred Scripture, exorcise the possessed, light the candles, present the wine and water for Mass, and finally to Infuse into souls the grace to discharge their duties.

Be mindful, then, of your profound obligations to the Sovereign Monarch of the universe. Be grateful for the grace He has given you or will give you in appointing you porter in His House. Thank Him with all your heart and beg of Him light to understand the full extent of the obligations of your office and a plenitude

of grace to discharge them worthily.

## SECOND POINT

### EXTERIOR FUNCTIONS OF THE ORDER OF PORTER

The Order of Porter has two distinct types of function, exterior and interior.

The exterior functions are those named in the Roman Pontifical of Clement VIII and the Pontifical of the Apostolic Library. They consist in ringing the church bells, opening and closing the doors of the Temple of God to the faithful, of barring them to the unfaithful, of admitting those worthy of entering the sacred edifice, of expelling those who would profane it by impiety or sacrilege. Likewise, the porter is charged with the care of the Sanctuary. He opens the book for the preacher, watches over the appurtenances of the church, is careful always that nothing is defiled or lost through his negligence. He must keep the church clean and maintain good order there at all times.

Ponder well your conduct regarding these matters. If you have been guilty of any negligence or failure of duty, ask God's pardon. Make the resolution that henceforth you will be assiduous in the discharge of your holy functions, above all to see that the church and particularly the sanctuary is scrupulously neat and clean, that God may not be dishonored in His own house by neglect and disorder.

Give yourself entirely to the Son of God that you may experience

## MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

223 -

the fire of His zeal for the Temple of God, as enunciated by the Psalmist: "For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up" (Ps. 68, 10).

## THIRD POINT

### INTERIOR FUNCTIONS OF THE ORDER OF PORTER

The interior or spiritual functions of this office are, according to the Pontifical, "to close against the devil and open to God by word and example the invisible House of the Lord, that is, the hearts of the faithful." The porter is so to live that his conduct and behaviour will be as so many bells calling, inviting and impelling men to know God and serve Him with love. This idea is suggested by the Inspired Writer in Exodus, when speaking of the robe of the High Priest: "And beneath at the feet of the same tunic round about, thou shalt make as it were pomegranates, of violet, and purple, and scarlet twice dyed, with little bells set between" (Exod. 28, 33).

Be humbled at the realization of how far you fall short of this ideal. Examine yourself carefully that you may discover what exists in you that is contrary to it. Pray God that you may have the grace necessary to rectify whatever is wanting in you.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "May the Lord open your heart in his law."  
Adaperiat cor vestrum in lege sua (2 March. 1, 4).

224 -

## FOURTH MEDITATION

### The Orders of Lector, Exorcist and Acolyte

## FIRST POINT

### FUNCTIONS OF LECTOR

There are two types of functions, exterior and interior, attached to the office of those ordained as lectors in the house of God.

The exterior functions are to dispense the word of God to the faithful by reading to them those holy doctrines befitting the Temple of the Lord. The lector should read clearly and distinctly with the intention of edifying and instructing. This part of the office of lector is so important that the Holy Ghost, speaking through the words of the Pontifical says that "those who discharge this function well will be associated with the apostles who from the beginning of Christianity, so worthily dispensed the word of God."

The lector also sings the lessons of the Church offices, and in addition blesses the bread and new fruits of the earth.

The interior functions are, according to the Pontifical, "to believe with his heart, and to effect in practice that which he reads, that he may teach the faithful by word and example." Thus, the ordaining prelate says to the young aspirant to the office of lector: "When you~ read in the church, you are assigned to an elevated position where you may be seen and heard by all. This signifies that you should possess all the virtues in an eminent degree that you may indeed be a guide and a model of the spiritual life to those who see and hear you."

Ask God's pardon for any faults you may have committed in the

### MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

225 -

exercise of the office of lector. Make the resolution of being more faithful in the future and beg the assistance of His grace.

## SECOND POINT

### FUNCTIONS OF EXORCIST

The exterior functions of the office of exorcist are to expel demons from the bodies of those possessed, to notify the faithful when it is time to receive Holy Communion, and to pour water on the hands of the priest at Mass.

The interior functions are to banish from the body and soul of the exorcist whatever is sinful and unbecoming lest he himself become the prey of those very devils he seeks to rout. Hence, the Holy Spirit speaking through the Pontifical calls exorcists "spiritual rulers for casting out devils, with all their multiform wickedness, from the bodies of the possessed," and "approved physicians of Thy Church, confirmed by the gift of healing and by heavenly virtue."

Thank God who has given you, or who is about to give you the privilege of sharing in these excellent prerogatives. Humbly ask His pardon for having abused them. Be resolved in the future to use them to the best possible advantage that they may produce their desired fruits in your own soul for the glory of His Holy Name.

## THIRD POINT

### FUNCTIONS OF ACOLYTE

The exterior duties of acolyte are to carry candles on certain occasions during ecclesiastical functions, to light the candles and present the wine and water for Mass.

The interior duties are outlined by the Holy Ghost speaking through the Bishop. "Strive worthily," he says, "to fulfil the office once you have

226-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

received it. For you shall not be able to please God, if, carrying in your hands a light before Him, you serve the works of darkness, and thereby set an example of faithlessness to others. But as Truth says: 'Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in Heaven' (Matt. 5, 16). And as the Apostle Paul says: 'In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life' (Phil. 2, 15) - 'Therefore let your loins be girt and lamps burning in your hands, that you may be children of the light' (Luke 12, 35). 'Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light' (Rom. 13, 12). 'For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk then as children of the light' (Eph. 5, 8). What that light is upon which the Apostle so much insists, he himself points out adding: 'For the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth' (Eph. 5, 9). Be, therefore, solicitous, in all justice and goodness and truth, to enlighten yourselves and others and the Church of God. For then will you worthily supply wine and water in the Divine Sacrifice, when, by a chaste life and good works, you shall have offered yourselves as a sacrifice to God."

Weigh well these words and give yourself to Christ that you may possess the fruit He would have you enjoy. Offer Him thanksgiving for having been called to the office of acolyte, humiliation and contrition for past infidelities, and determination to be faithful in the future and a fervent prayer for heavenly grace.

Ejaculatory Prayer: O most blessed Light divine, Shine within these hearts of Thine, And our inmost beings fill.

O lux beatissima Reple cordis intima tuorum fidelium.

227-

## FIFTH MEDITATION

### The Order of Subdeaconship

#### FIRST POINT

#### DUTIES TO OUR LORD FOR HAVING INSTITUTED AND PERFORMED THE DUTIES OF SUBDEACONSHIP

Adore Christ as the author and Founder of subdeaconship. Honor Him in the designs upon His Church as well as upon you when He established it. Adore Him as the source of the graces contained in this Sacrament, graces earned at the price of His Precious Blood. Adore Him too as He carried out the functions of this Order. The office of Subdeaconship is to serve, that is, to serve God and the Church in the sacrifice of the altar and to assist the Deacon. For this purpose Christ came on earth. "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister," says Sacred Scripture (Matt. 20, 28). Thus, our Saviour spent His life serving God and men. "Behold my servant," said the Eternal Father referring to Him (Isa. 42, 1). And St. Paul says He took the form of a servant, *formam servi accipiens* (Phil. 2, 7). He brought His life to a close by the menial task of washing His apostles' feet.

Thank Him for the honor rendered His Father by the institution and exercise of this Order, as well as for the graces He merited for mankind through its operation. Offer to Him the glory rendered by those



who have worthily discharged the functions of the subdeacon, offering yourself likewise to Him that you, too, may know the dispositions becoming to a servant of God and His Church.

228-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

### SECOND POINT

#### THE GOODNESS OF OUR LORD IN CALLING YOU TO SUBDEACONSHIP

Consider the goodness of Christ whereby He chose you from among thousands and honored you with the privilege of subdeaconship. Realize, too, that He thereby associated you with Himself in His mission of Servant of God and the Church.

Thus, before ordaining those who are to become subdeacons, the bishop reminds them to consider attentively and seriously the burden they are about to assume and the obligations they are contracting. He reminds them that they are still free to withdraw and engage in worldly pursuits, *ad saecularia vota transire*, but after having received subdeaconship they will belong to the Church as perpetual servants: *In ecclesiae ministerio semper mancipatos*. To serve her with purity and holiness, they will henceforth be obliged to live in perfect chastity and continence.

Consequently, when you have received or when you will receive this order, know that you will have given, consecrated and delivered yourself wholly to the Church and to God to live chastely in a degree of perfection not asked of others. Be mindful also that "to serve God is to reign. *servire Deo regnare est*, and that the service of Christ is more honorable than any man could envision. The chaste ecclesiastic is an angel of God on earth.

Thank God for the precious favors you have experienced through your admission to subdeaconship. Ask His pardon for any unfaithfulness of which you have been guilty. Renew your profession of service and chastity, begging Him for the grace to discharge worthily the functions of your Order.

MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

229 -

### THIRD POINT

#### FUNCTIONS OF SUBDEACON

The external functions of subdeacon are as follows:

1. To prepare the water for the altar and for baptism.
2. To assist the deacon in the ministry of the altar.
3. To carry the sacred vessels to the altar for the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ.
4. To wash the corporals and purificators in a vessel especially reserved for the purpose, and afterwards disposing of the water so used, by emptying it into the baptistery. Likewise, he is to wash the other altar linens, always discharging his duties *studiose, nitide et diligentissime*.

The interior functions are to employ the water of divine doctrine to wash and purify the spiritual corporals and cloths of the true altar of the Church. That altar is Christ Himself and the corporals and cloths are the members of Christ, that is, God's faithful. The subdeacon must so regulate his own life and morals that they may render him able to discharge worthily the duties of an office which demands holiness and probity.

Thus, when the bishop consecrates a subdeacon, the Church speaking through the mouth of the ordaining prelate begs God to bless, sanctify and consecrate the ordinand. Holy Church implores Him to constitute the subdeacon a tireless and watchful sentinel of the heavenly army. She begs God to send down upon the ordinand the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and fortitude, knowledge and piety, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

Then the bishop places the amice on the young man's head, saying: "Receive this amice by which is signified the curbing of the tongue." As he places the maniple on the aspirant's left arm, he says, "Receive the maniple by which is signified the fruit of goodworks." Then he clothes him with the tunic, saying, "May the Lord clothe thee with the tunic of sweetness and the garment of joy."

230 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

These things show clearly that the subdeacon should be filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost; that he should know how to control his tongue, practise goodworks and have as his only joy the serving and honoring of God.

Consider these truths and give yourself completely to the Spirit of God that you may acquire gratitude, love and penance and a firm resolution to give yourself wholeheartedly to Jesus, invoking His grace and the assistance of His Mother, and of the holy priests and levites in heaven.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "O Lord, for I am thy servant: I am thy servant and the servant of thy Church."

O Domine, quia ego servus tuus: ego semus tuus et servus Ecclesiae tuae.

231 -

## SIXTH MEDITATION

### The Order of Deaconship

#### FIRST POINT

#### DUTIES TO CHRIST FOR HAVING INSTITUTED DEACONSHIP

Adore our Saviour as the Author and Founder of the Order of Deaconship, and the source of all the graces contained in this sacrament. Adore Him, too, in the designs He conceived for His Church and for you in particular when He instituted deaconship. Thank Him for the honor given His Father through its medium and for the manifold graces it has brought to mankind. Ask His pardon for not having discharged its obligations properly, giving yourself unreservedly to Him with the firm intention of working only for His honor and glory.

#### SECOND POINT

#### THE CHIEF DUTY OF THE DEACON IS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

One of the most beautiful and saintly qualities with which the Eternal Father endowed His Son is enunciated in these words of Sacred Scripture: "I am appointed King by him over Sion his holy mountain preaching his commandment" (PS. 2, 6). Christ was the sovereign Preacher of the divine word. The principal office He discharged while on earth was to preach and He Himself stated that He had been sent from heaven for that purpose, «I must preach the Kingdom of God: for therefore am I sent » (Luke 4, 43).

232 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

The Master has associated you or will associate you with Himself in this noble and sublime office,

for one of the principal duties of the deacon is to preach the word of God. "The deacon must minister at the altar, baptize and preach," says the bishop to the ordinand.

Thank God, then, for this favor He confers upon you. Realize your unworthiness, and give yourself to the Saviour that you may excite within your heart the proper dispositions to discharge your duties worthily. Seek to know the dispositions with which the Lord exercised these functions. Endeavor to put into practice the injunction already given or about to be given you by the bishop: "Take care that you may illustrate the gospel, by your living works, to those to whom you announce it with your lips, so that it may be said of you, *Blessed are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things.*" These words mean simply that you should so live that your every action may be as it were a tongue or a voice, vox clamantis (Matt. 3, 3), exhorting the faithful to serve and love God.

### THIRD POINT

#### ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE DEACON

The remaining duties of the deacon are:

1. To serve the priest at the altar. Deacons are therefore the levites of the Gospel, carrying out in the New Law those duties devolving upon the levites of the Old Testament, who served the priests in the tabernacle.
2. To confer the Sacrament of Baptism.
3. To administer Holy Communion. Hence, the Pontifical calls them "co-ministers of the Body and Blood of Christ," inasmuch as they cooperate with the priest in the administration of the Body and Blood of Our Lord.

Christ fulfilled all these duties while He was on earth. He was the servant of His Father: Ecce servus meus (Is. 42, 1). He baptized the

#### MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

233 -

apostles: Hic est qui baptizat in Spiritu Sancto (John 1, 33). With His own hands He administered to them His Body and Blood.

Thus, in elevating you to the dignity of the diaconship He has shared His own prerogatives with you. What admirable goodness! What heartfelt praise you should offer Him! What confusion should fill you at the realization of your failure to live up to His generosity and for the indignities and ingratitude you have offered Him! How saintly should be the life of a deacon! No wonder St. Paul says that a deacon must be proved before being received; they must be "chaste, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre: holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience" (1 Tim. 3, 8-9).

Finally, take well to heart the words of the bishop, "Be ye pure and chaste as becoming ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God." Ask our Blessed Lord for these requisites.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Grant, O Lord Jesus, that among Thy dispensers I may be found faithful."  
Da mihi, Domine Jesu, ut inter dispensatores tuos fidelis inveniar.

234 -

#### SEVENTH MEDITATION

##### The Priesthood

## FIRST POINT

### DUTIES TO OUR LORD IN RETURN FOR THE INSTITUTION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Adore Christ as the sovereign Priest, Author of the Order of the Priesthood and Source of all graces contained in this august sacrament. Adore Him in all His holy designs upon His Church and upon you when He founded it. Adore Him in His divine exercise of the functions of the priesthood while He was on earth, thanking Him for the glory He rendered His Father, and for the grace He bestowed upon the whole Church and upon you in particular. Ask His pardon for having impeded the operation of this grace within your own soul, and beg Him to help you to be more faithful in the future.

## SECOND POINT

### EXCELLENCE OF THE SACERDOTAL FUNCTIONS

Ponder what the bishop says to the young man presented as a candidate for the priesthood.

He reminds him that the ancients, whom God commanded Moses to appoint to govern the Chosen People, were but figures and shadows of the priests of the New Law; and that the priests of today are the

#### MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

235 -

successors of the seventy-two disciples selected by the Master. They are *doctores fidei*, *comites Apostolorum*, *cooperatores ordinis episcopalis*.

The bishop then instructs the ordinand that the sacerdotal office comprises the following functions:

1. To change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, to offer Him sacrifice and give Him the people.
2. To preach the word of God.
3. To baptize.
4. *Praeesse*, that is, to rule and guide souls towards eternity.
5. To forgive sins or withhold absolution.
6. To bless. Hence when the bishop anoints the hands of the ordinand with holy oil, he says: "Deign to consecrate and sanctify, we beseech Thee, O Lord, these hands by this holy anointing and our blessing; that whatsoever they may bless may be blessed; and that whatsoever they may consecrate may be consecrated and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

Remember that all these qualities and functions belong only to the divine and infinite power of God. Consequently, when He admitted you to the priesthood, He elevated you to a divine and infinite dignity. Consequently, you incur obligations which are infinite in character and obligate you to thank God constantly, to love Him and to surrender yourself completely to Him that you may worthily discharge your duties. Let this be your resolution.

## THIRD POINT

### MEANS OF CONSERVING THE GRACE OF ORDINATION

Weigh well the words spoken by the Holy Ghost through St. Paul: "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the imposition of the hands of the priesthood" (1 Tim. 4, 14).

I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee. by imposition of my hands" (2 Tim. 1, 6).

If Timothy, to whom these words were addressed, himself a saint and martyr, needed this salutary admonition, how much more is it necessary for you!

To preserve and revivify the grace of ordination, or to dispose yourself to receive it, three things are necessary:

1. Destroy within you by penance whatsoever is opposed to it.
2. Cultivate a high esteem of the priesthood and its duties. Entertain an intense desire to discharge its obligations in holiness. Put into practice the beautiful words spoken by the bishop to the ordinand:

"As you, therefore, beloved children, have been chosen by the voice of our brethren to be consecrated as our coadjutors, preserve the purity of your lives in unspotted holiness. Reflect seriously on what you do. Let your conduct be in conformity with the action you perform, so that celebrating the mystery of the Lord's death, you take heed to mortify your members from all vices and lusts. Let your doctrine be spiritual medicine for the people of God; let the odor of your life be the delight of the Church of Christ; so that you may build up the house, that is the family of God . . ."

3. Be ever mindful of your need of God's grace for the fulfilment of your priestly duties. Beg of Him that He may assist you. Pray to the Blessed Virgin and all the holy priests and levites in heaven.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "O sweet Jesus, grant that the odor of our life may be the delight of thy Church."

*O bone Jesu, fac ut bonus odor vitae nostrae sit delectamentum Ecclesiae tuae.*

237 -

## **EIGHTH MEDITATION**

### **The Feast of the Priesthood(1)**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **JESUS CHRIST IS THE SOVEREIGN PRIEST**

Let us consider and adore our Lord Jesus Christ as the supreme High Priest, exercising with infinite sanctity the sacerdotal functions by which He procured unlimited glory for His Heavenly Father, destroyed sin, merited for us all the appropriate graces necessary to our salvation and placed before our eyes the living example and the perfect rule that we must follow if we would exercise worthily these same great functions.

Let us give profound thanks to Him for all these miracles, beseeching the angels, and the saints, especially all the holy priests and levites, and the Blessed Virgin Mary to help us to bless and thank our Sovereign Priest for His incomparable gifts.

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **INSTITUTION OF THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD BY OUR LORD**

Let us consider our good Saviour as the Founder, the Head and Superior of the Holy Order of the priesthood, as the Principle and the

(1). The Feast of the Priesthood was formerly celebrated by the Eudist Fathers, the Sulpicians and other religious congregations on November 13.

238-

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Fountain of the boundless wealth of graces and blessings contained in Holy Orders and as the Sanctifier of all holy priests and levites.

Let us thank Our Lord and summon all the angels and saints in heaven to thank Him with us, for the infinite favor conferred upon the Church in establishing the priesthood, and in raising up her Priests on whom He has bestowed such admirable powers, for the benefit of the faithful, enabling each chosen priest to offer the wonderful sacrifice of the altar, to administer on their behalf His Sacred Body and His Precious Blood, to wipe out the sins of the faithful and to reconcile them with God, in short, to close hell against them and to open heaven for them.

We shall also bless Our Lord, the High Priest, for the countless graces He has conferred on earth on all His holy priests and levites, and for all the glory and happiness which He communicates to them in heaven. We shall likewise thank the glorious company of priests for all the services they have rendered to the divine Majesty of God, and to His true Church. We shall offer to God all the honor that they accorded Him while on earth and will give Him forever in heaven. We shall ask them to unite us with their unceasing praise of God and to make us sharers in the virtues they practised here on earth as members of the priesthood.

## THIRD POINT

### INCOMPARABLE FAVOR WHICH OUR LORD HAS GRANTED US IN CALLING US TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Let us consider the incomparable favor which Our Lord has bestowed in having called each of us to a state so noble, so holy, so worthy of admiration as the priesthood. We must give Him deepest thanks for this inestimable privilege, and beg all the saints of heaven to bless and glorify Him for it on our behalf.

Then we shall make a careful examination of our innumerable sins, offences and negligences, in our sacerdotal functions, that we may humble ourselves most deeply at the feet of our Redeemer, asking His

## MEDITATIONS ON TONSURE AND HOLY ORDERS

239 -

pardon with great contrition, and offering Him, in satisfaction all the honor rendered to His majesty by all the holy priests and levites, in the performance of these same functions. We must implore our Divine Master to repair our defects Himself, while we promise henceforth to begin with His help to live as veritable priests, and to discharge with fitting fervor and sanctity the functions of His divine Priesthood, beseeching Him to grant us all the graces we need for this end. We must also ask the Blessed Virgin Mary and all holy priests to aid us to obtain these graces from the infinite mercy of the omnipotent High Priest.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Thou art a priest for ever."

*Tu es sacerdos in aeternum* (Ps. 109, 4).

240 -

**Part VI**

**MEDITATIONS  
FOR  
THE ANNUAL RETREAT**

243 -

**Part VI**

**MEDITATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETREAT((1)**

**FIRST MEDITATION**

**The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass**

**FIRST POINT**

**THE DIGNITY AND HOLINESS OF THE MASS**

REFLECT on the greatness, the holiness and infinite dignity of this august mystery.

It is the most marvelous action ever performed in heaven or on earth; it is a divine sacrifice with Christ as its victim, offered to God by God for intentions and ends which in themselves are infinite. It is the supreme sacrifice of Calvary by which Our Lord confers three ineffable favors upon you: He comes to you, He sacrifices Himself for you, and He gives Himself to you.

Cultivate a great love and appreciation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, at which myriads of angels gather in holy awe. Thank the Son of God for having established it in His Church, and for having given you the privilege of offering it and of receiving His Sacred Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

(1). These short and practical meditations are taken from the original edition of A Memorial of the Ecclesiastical Life. See Oeuvres Complètes, Vol. III, p. 124 ff. They may be used for morning meditation or for daily examination during the annual retreat.

244-

**THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

**SECOND POINT**

**FAULTS COMMITTED IN THE CELEBRATION OF MASS**

Examine yourself carefully on the faults you have committed in offering the Holy Sacrifice. Examine both your interior and exterior deportment. Have you prepared worthily for Holy Mass? Have you made a proper thanksgiving afterwards?

What fruit have you reaped from the scores of Masses that you have offered and from the many Communion you have received? What advancement in virtue or what amendment of life have you gained?

Have you been assiduous in preventing profanations and irreverence in the churches where Mass is offered? Has your behaviour been in keeping with what is expected in reverence and devotion to the Mass?

Ask God's pardon for any faults of which you may have been guilty. Pray Our Lord to help you repair the evil your negligence or culpability may have caused. Make the resolution of being more careful in the future. Beg God's help to persevere.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Bear in mind what you do. Let your conduct be in conformity with the action you perform."

Agnoscite quod agitis ; imitami quod tractatis.

245 -

## **SECOND MEDITATION**

### **The Sacrament of Penance**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **CHRIST'S GOODNESS IN HAVING INSTITUTED THIS SACRAMENT**

Let us consider the goodness and mercy of Christ in having established in His Church this great sacrament by which He confers three special favors upon us.

First, Our Blessed Lord pardons our sins through sacramental Penance, wipes away all our transgressions, no matter how enormous or numerous. Consequently, our indebtedness to Him is equal to His infinite kindness. Sin being infinite in malice, the Divine Son bestows an infinite good upon us when He pardons us. Even in the remission of one venial sin, He confers upon us a spiritual favor greater in value than He would give us if He were to cure the greatest physical sufferings we could conceive. It is obvious that even the smallest sin surpasses the greatest material ill.

Let us think, then, of our obligations to God because of the manifold sins He has forgiven us. Let us thank Him constantly.

Secondly, through the Sacrament of Penance, He applies His Precious Blood to our souls to cleanse and purify them from sin. The Sacrament of Penance is, as it were, a spiritual blood-bath wherein Christ washes us whenever we will. O unspeakable love! He could have wiped away our sins in a thousand other ways, but He chose this sacrament to show us His infinite love.

Thirdly, not only does Penance destroy our sins, but it fills our souls

246 -

#### **THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

with sanctifying grace, increasing the grace that is already within us, or reestablishing it if we have lost it through mortal sin. Instantly, our souls are adorned with His virtues, with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, with the beatitudes, and we become children of God, temples of the Divine Spirit, heirs of the Eternal Father, co-heirs with the Son. Let us thank Him unfailingly for His mercy.

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY FOR THE WORTHY RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE**

In receiving the Sacrament of Penance, it is necessary to have the proper dispositions for its worthy reception. Otherwise, what was meant to be a remedy becomes a poison, what was intended to be a grace becomes a sin. Thus, salvation is endangered and a sacrament is received sacrilegiously. Moreover, the oftener we go to confession, so much the more should we be on our guard against carelessness, routine and the lack of true repentance.



The dispositions with which we should approach this great sacrament are as follows: 1. We should realize that of ourselves we cannot have true contrition; hence, we should constantly invoke God's assistance and the help of the Blessed Mother and of the saints; 2. We should examine our conscience very carefully; 3. We should have true sorrow for our sins and a firm purpose of amendment; 4. We should make our confession clearly and sincerely, concealing or minimizing nothing of a serious nature; 5. We should be very docile to the Admonitions of the confessor; 6. We should faithfully execute the penance as soon as it can conveniently be done; 7. We should range ourselves on God's side against ourselves, putting on His zeal that we may destroy within us the enemy of our souls, sin itself. In a word, we should make each confession as though it were our last, and as though we were about to face the Omnipotent judge from whom nothing will be hidden.

Let us examine ourselves on the manner of making our confessions

MEDITATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETREAT

247 -

in the past, invoking God's pardon for any negligence of which we may have been guilty. Let us make the resolution to repair our past faults by a genuine confession in which we shall have a fulness of His grace. Let us beg His help for the future.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy."  
Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam (Ps. 50, 3).

248 -

### **THIRD MEDITATION.**

#### **Mental and Vocal Prayer**

##### **FIRST POINT**

##### **EXCELLENCE OF PRAYER**

Prayer, either mental or vocal, is a conversation with God. Therein you render Him homage, make known your wants and beg light and grace from Him.

It is, indeed, a high privilege that you, a miserable sinner, a mere nothing, should be able to commune with the Creator. Surely, He bestows upon you a tremendous favor in permitting you even to approach His august presence or to lift up your eyes to Him. "And dost thou think it meet to open thy eyes upon such an one, and to bring him into judgment with thee?" (Job, 14, 3).

Christ was not more insistent upon any point than that of prayer. Why? First of all, because He loves you so much that His chief happiness consists in conversing with you, unworthy though you are. Hence, Sacred Scripture says, "My delights were to be with the children of men" (Prov. 8, 31). Secondly, He realizes that you of yourself are nothing, and can do nothing. Thirdly, He wishes to enrich you with His gifts. You must ask Him continually for what you need, thus making manifest your utter dependence upon Him and your realization that He alone can help you since He is the source of all good.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETREAT

249 -

##### **SECOND POINT**

##### **DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY FOR PRAYER**

Reflect on the interior and exterior dispositions with which the creature should approach his Creator. Man is indeed a humble subject in the presence of his Sovereign, a sinner before the Saint of saints, a criminal before the Supreme judge.

Recall how Christ prayed to His Father during His years on earth. Think, too, how Mary and the saints prayed.

Examine yourself carefully for any faults you may have committed in vocal or in mental prayer.

Have you prepared yourself sufficiently? "Before prayer prepare thy soul," says Sacred Scripture (Ecclus. 18, 23). Have you neglected any obligatory prayers? Have you chosen unsuitable times or inappropriate places? Have you permitted yourself to become the prey of distractions? Have you been reverent and recollected? Have your prayers been fruitful for advancement in the ways of God? Have you taken advantage of the graces and gifts attached to the prayers you have said? Have you distracted others at prayer? Remember you must respect others who are communing with the Master and do nothing to hinder their devotions.

Ask God's pardon for any faults of which you may have been guilty. Beg His grace to be more faithful in the future. Seek the means best suited to help your prayers become meritorious. Avoid the occasions of distraction.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "We ought always to pray and not to faint."  
Oportet semper orare, et non deficere (Luke 18, 1).

250 -

#### **FOURTH MEDITATION**

##### **Submission to the Will of God**

###### **FIRST POINT**

###### **IMPORTANCE OF SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL**

The divine will is the principle, the end and center of all things. It is infinitely powerful, wise and good. It ordains and disposes of whatever happens in this world and in eternity. In all its decrees it is infinitely adorable for it takes its origin in the most perfect justice, goodness and charity towards us. It does all things for the best in the most admirable manner conceivable.

The divine will is manifested in various happenings, by the Commandments, by the precepts of the Church, by our duty, our obligations and our state in life.

The Son of God did not choose His own will but the will of His Heavenly Father. He was entirely subjected to His Father's mandates, no matter how difficult they were.

The Blessed Virgin and the saints followed a similar path of conformity to the divine will.

Our salvation, our perfection, our happiness, our peace, our Wellbeing, and even our liberty, depend on our constant cooperation with the will of God, following the example of Jesus, Mary and the saints

MEDITATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETREAT

251 -

###### **SECOND POINT**

## HOW HAVE YOU PRACTISED SUBMISSION To GOD'S WILL?

Examine yourself on your failures to submit to God's will shown in various events of your life, as well as in your observance of the commandments and in the precepts of the Church. Above all else, ask yourself how you have cooperated with that divine will insofar as it affects your state in life. Ask the Master's pardon and be resolved in the future to correct whatever is wanting in you.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Behold I come that I should do thy will, O my God."  
Ecce venio ut faciam voluntatem tuam, Deus.

252 -

## FIFTH MEDITATION

### Obedience

#### FIRST POINT

#### NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF OBEDIENCE

The virtue of obedience is so necessary to eternal salvation that Our Lord came on earth to teach it to us by word and example. He practised it unceasingly during His life, doing nothing except by obedience. Not only did He obey His Heavenly Father, but likewise He was subject to Mary and Joseph. So, too, He bowed to Herod and Pilate and His executioners who represented the powers of darkness "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22, 53) He was obedient even unto death and unto the death of the cross.

The saints have always loved this holy virtue, preaching it incessantly and practising it scrupulously.

The Scripture, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church all agree that where there is not obedience there cannot be true virtue.

Thank Our Lord for the inspiring example He has given us.

IMITATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETREAT 253 -

#### SECOND POINT

#### HOW HAVE YOU PRACTISED OBEDIENCE?

Examine yourself on the many faults of which you are guilty in regard to the submission of mind and will to those who for you take God's place. Ask His pardon for your transgressions.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Obey your prelates."  
Obedite praepositis vestris (Heb. 13,17).

254 -

## SIXTH MEDITATION

### Charity

#### FIRST POINT

#### EXCELLENCE OF CHARITY

Charity is the queen and mother of all the other virtues, their grid, their soul, their very life. Consequently, where charity does not exist, there is no true virtue possible.

Charity brought Christ forth from the bosom of His Father that He might descend into the womb of the Virgin Mother. It prompted Him to come on earth and lead a life of suffering and misery for thirty-four years, finally dying on the cross. It impelled Him to give Himself to us continually in the Blessed Sacrament.

Charity is the dominant theme of the New Testament, the sole commandment Christ gave before His death. Weigh well His words: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15, 12). Consider, too, the words of the Apostle Paul: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Cor. 13, 47).

The flower and perfection of charity is the meekness which our Saviour recommended in His words, "Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart" (Matt. 11, 29).

The greatest work of charity is to labor for the salvation of souls.

#### MEDITATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETREAT

255 -

This, indeed, surpasses all else that a Christian might ever accomplish on earth, or as St. Dionysius says, It is the most divine of all divine things."

#### SECOND POINT

#### HOW HAVE YOU PRACTISED CHARITY?

Examine yourself on the faults you have committed against charity in thoughts, words, actions or omissions against this virtue, in relation to those with whom you live.

Also consider what transgressions you have been guilty of in the matter of your zeal for the salvation of souls.

Ask God's pardon and make a firm purpose of amendment.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "This is my commandment, that you love one another."  
Hoc est praeceptum meum, ut diligatis invicem (John 15, 12).

256 -

#### SEVENTH MEDITATION

#### Humility

#### FIRST POINT

#### NECESSITY OF HUMILITY

Humility consists in maintaining a very low degree of self-esteem, in despising, hating and avoiding honor and glory as well as the praises of men. It seeks abjection, ignominy and scorn.

Without humility it is impossible to please God or save one's soul, according to the words of our Saviour: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18, 3).

Humility is the measure of perfection and holiness of souls on earth and of their glory in eternity, for the Son of God said when He was here on earth: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18, 4).

Since there is no virtue more necessary than humility, it follows that no vice is more to be avoided than vanity, especially by those who profess to be devout.

Think of the multitudes of angels damned by one defiant thought of pride; think of the number of souls who enjoyed a high degree of holiness, but were hurled into hell because of arrogance and pride.

Reflect upon the sublime examples of humility given by the Son of God, as well as by His Mother and the saints.

Consider in particular these matters regarding which you should practise humility.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETREAT 257 -

## SECOND POINT

### HOW HAVE YOU PRACTISED HUMILITY?

Make a serious and thorough examination of the faults you have committed against humility by thought, word and deed.

Ascertain your true sentiments towards yourself. Do you take pleasure in the esteem and praises of men? Do you seek to avoid whatever may be disparaging to you? Are you boastful? Do you receive with humility deserved corrections or warnings? Do you cling stubbornly to your own opinion in your discussions with others? Do you submit willingly to your superiors? Do you act and speak so as to draw to yourself the praises of those about you? Do you not really esteem yourself before all else? Do you covet dignity and advancement? Do you take a secret pride in your knowledge, experience, industry, ability or whatever talent you may have which you deem important?

Ask Christ to forgive the many sins you may have committed against humility. Beg Him to help you to repair the evil you have caused and take the good resolution to dispel by every means in your power whatever is opposed to this beautiful virtue, that you may acquire and practise humility in the future. That your success may be assured, have this intention at your Masses, Communion and in your prayers. Study your soul, that you may truly know yourself and learn well these three truths: 1. you are nothing, you have nothing, of yourself you can do nothing; 2. you are of yourself sinful, having within yourself the source of every evil; 3. you have richly merited God's anger and eternal punishment if you have committed a serious sin.

Never willingly accept the praises of creatures, but offer them to God to whom they belong rightly: "To the king of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory" (1 Tim. 1, 17).

Humble yourself at the beginning and the end of every action, ever mindful of your unworthiness and following the injunction of Sacred Scripture, "The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things; and thou shalt find grace before God" (Ecclus. 3, 20).

Reject at once any thoughts or sensations of vanity which may come to you. Turn them into occasions of abasing yourself in the light of your own nothingness.

Close your eyes from faults of others, and see only your own. When you witness or learn of your neighbor's weaknesses, be humbled yourself, realizing that there is no crime which you yourself might not commit if it were \*not for God's grace.

When others blame you, accept it that you may learn self-condemnation. Seek not to be regarded as a master, or a learned man or an outstanding personality.

Love and embrace the abjectness which comes from your faults. Willingly accept all humiliations, confusion, contradictions and afflictions which God sends you, not merely as trials to sanctify you, but as just deserts for your sins and as means by which to humble your pride.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Humble thyself in all things: and thou shalt find grace before God."  
Humilia te in omnibus et coram Deo invenies gratiam (Ecclus. 3, 20).

## **EIGHTH MEDITATION**

### **Modesty, Simplicity and Truth**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **EXCELLENCE OF MODESTY, SIMPLICITY AND TRUTH**

Consider the words of St. Paul, I ... beseech you, by the mildness and modesty of Christ" (2 Cor. 10, 1), "put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience" (Col. 3, 12). "Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh" (Phil. 4, 5).

Study the admirable modesty of Christ and His Blessed Mother who are the models and exemplars we as Christians must follow.

Ponder the words of the Son of God, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves" (Matt. 10, 16), and be reminded that simplicity is a virtue dear to the heart of God. It is the direct opposite of duplicity, worldly wisdom and prudence, as well as of useless thoughts, desires, words and actions.

Remember that Christians must cherish a great love of truth: 1. because Christ is the Eternal Truth and is called in Sacred Scripture "faithful and true" (Apoc. 19, 11); 2. because Christians are called in the Scripture "the faithful"; 3. because Christ Himself called liars and deceivers children of Satan, who in turn is the father of lies and the author of deceit.

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **HOW HAVE YOU PRACTISED MODESTY, SIMPLICITY AND TRUTH?**

Make an examination of conscience regarding the faults you have committed against these virtues,

paying particular attention to the modesty you should display when in church, in your own room, walking in public or talking with your neighbor. Are you guilty of duplicity or artifice?

Do you go to extremes in dress, in eating or in the furnishings of your home or room? Are you guided by the maxims of the world? Are you curious about secular events, given to following foolish fashions or inclined to listen to or read useless things?

Are you disposed to be singular or odd, thus causing a rift in that spirit of union which should exist between you and those with whom you live? Are you faithful to your word and your promise? Is your manner of speaking simple, sincere and candid? Do you exaggerate?

Ejaculatory Prayer: "Let your modesty be known to all men."  
Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus (Phil. 4, 5).

261 -

## **NINTH MEDITATION**

### **The Manner of Performing Our Actions**

#### **FIRST POINT**

##### **IMPORTANCE OF DOING ALL THINGS WELL**

It is of the utmost importance that we perform all our actions, even the smallest, in the best possible manner. Several reasons demand this.

First of all, we are children of God, created to His image and likeness. Consequently, we must imitate Him, according to the words of > the Apostle, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children" (Eph. 5, 1). God performs His every work divinely, and so we too must endeavor to discharge every obligation and perform every action with a perfection becoming sons of God and in obedience to the Saviour's commandment, "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5, 48).

Secondly, Christ, who is our exemplar and to whom we must conform our lives, rendered infinite glory to His Father, even in the smallest things, for He did all for love of Him.

Thirdly, God bestows even the smallest things upon us, such as every morsel of bread we eat or every drop of water we drink, with the same love that pours upon us His greatest blessings. Thus, He is as much concerned with those things which may appear trivial as He is with the significant, as we are reminded when Scripture tells us that even the hairs of our head are numbered. Consequently, we must show the same interest in our smallest actions as in the important ones.

Fourthly, when we act negligently and without proper dispositions,

262 -

## **THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS**

we rob God of the glory due Him in time and eternity, purchased for us by the shedding of Christ's blood. In addition, we lose the treasures of grace that otherwise would be laid up for us in heaven, had our motives been holy. Finally, it IS much easier to do our duty with fervor and devotion than it is to act coldly and carelessly.

#### **SECOND POINT**

## HOW HAVE YOU PERFORMED YOUR ACTIONS UP TO NOW?

The proper manner of acting is outlined by St. Paul when he says, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10, 31). These words mean simply that you should act with His dispositions as He Himself would do in our place, as far as you possibly can with the help of His grace.

Weigh carefully the faults you have committed in this respect: 1. in those actions directly concerned with God, as in those things connected with the virtue of religion and with our priestly duties; 2. in those affecting your neighbor; 3. in those that have a bearing upon your state in life, your profession or the office which is yours.

Ask God's pardon for any offenses of which you are guilty. Offer Him in reparation the honor His Son rendered Him by His holy life, and resolve henceforth to do well all that is required of you.

For this purpose:

1. Avoid laziness, coldness, lukewarmness and negligence.

2. Always have a right and pure intention, protesting to God that you wish to do nothing to please the world, nor to gain the esteem of men, nor to pander to your own satisfaction, nor your own temporal or spiritual interests, nor for merit or reward. On the contrary, make open avowal that you do everything for His glory and the fulfilment of His will as well as in thanksgiving for all Christ did while He was on earth.

3. Perform every action according to its appointed time and place. "Let all things be done decently and according to order" (1 Cor. 14, 40).

## MEDITATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETREAT

263 -

4. Let your smallest action include within it all possible perfection, remembering that whatever is done for God is great.

5. Perform all your actions with the dispositions becoming to them: for example, those of humility with a spirit of self-abasement; those of obedience, promptly and willingly; those of penance with mortification and hatred of self and of sin; those of charity towards your neighbor with an open heart filled with divine love; those of piety and religion with devotion.

6. Make an act of renouncement of self before each action, at least before the principal ones, thus giving yourself to Christ to enter into His spirit.

7. Upon the completion of the action, preserve these dispositions, uniting yourself to those which filled the Saviour as He performed similar ones, for He is and "worketh all in all" (1 Cor. 12, 6).

8. Do and suffer all for God. "Do his will with a great heart, and a willing mind" (2 Mach. 1, 3), that is, with the love and wish to please Him, thus putting into every action your sole desire of making His divine will your pleasure, your joy, your happiness and your paradise.

9. When you have performed the action, shut your heart against any self-satisfaction or vanity, remembering that even as you are nothing but sinfulness, so nothing could emanate from you of yourself but evil, God being the only source of good. Thus, too, you should remember that since you never really succeed in doing your best, your actions are usually full of faults which should be looked upon as useless.



\*in themselves and unworthy of merit.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "He hath done all things well."  
Bene omnia fecit (Mark 7, 37).

264 -

## **TENTH MEDITATION**

### **The Use We Should Make of the Faculties of Our Soul and Body**

#### **FIRST POINT**

#### **ALL THAT IS IN US BELONGS TO GOD**

All that is in us belongs to God by three general titles which comprise an infinity of others: the title of creation, the title of conservation, and the title of redemption.

By creation and conservation all that is in our soul and body belongs to His Divine Majesty as many times as there are moments in our life on earth, because, after putting us in this world, God preserves us continually in being.

By redemption we belong to Him by as many titles as His Divine Son had thoughts, words and actions, bore sufferings and shed drops of His Blood. He employed these means, of which each is infinite in value, to snatch us from the captivity of sin and Satan. Thus, we have an infinity of obligations constraining us to use every faculty of our body and soul in His service and for the honor and glory of Him to whom we belong in entirety. "For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body" (1 Cor. 6, 20).

By Baptism we are made members of Christ. "Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Cor. 6, 15) Hence, we are obliged to live His life, be animated by His spirit, make the same use of the powers of our soul and our senses that He did of His. Rather, we should say it is He who should use our faculties for the diffusion of His spirit.

#### **MEDITATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETREAT**

265 -

By Baptism, too, as well as by Confirmation, our body and soul were made temples of the Holy Ghost, consecrated to God more solemnly than are chalices, ciboria or altars. Now, as in a holy temple there is nothing which may be used for profane purposes, so there must be nothing in us but what is used for the service and honor of Him to whom they have been consecrated, not only by Baptism and Confirmation, but also through the Holy Eucharist.

Thank God for all these favors.

#### **SECOND POINT**

#### **How HAVE YOU USED THE FACULTIES OF YOUR SOUL AND THE MEMBERS OF YOUR BODY?**

What use have you made of the various faculties of your soul and body?

Humble yourself and be mindful that instead of having employed all your faculties in the service of

Him who gave them to you, and to whom they belong, you have employed them to serve His enemies.

Ask His pardon with great sorrow in your heart. Offer Him in satisfaction all the honor His Son rendered Him, through the saintly use of His own all holy faculties.

Search your understanding, your memory and your will to see if there is anything there which displeases Him. Scrutinize the passions of your lower appetite, love, hatred, joy, sadness, fear, hope; examine all actions done with your eyes, your hearing, your taste, your tongue, your feet and your hands. Make a determined resolution to mortify and destroy whatever you discover to be at variance with His divine will, obeying the injunction of the Holy Ghost, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3, 5).

Make a new oblation and consecration of your body and soul to God, supplicating Him to employ His all powerful goodness in taking full and absolute possession of you, that He may thus destroy within you whatsoever is contrary to Him, and establish within you His kingdom and His adorable will.

266 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Be resolved to imitate and follow Christ in the holy use to which He subjected His every faculty. Give yourself completely to Him, that He may fill you with His spirit and possess and govern you in all things.

Ejaculatory Prayer: "You are not your own. For you are bought with a great price."  
Non estis vestri: empti enim estis pretio magno (1 Cor. 6, 19-20).

268 -

#### Part VII

### MASS AND OFFICE FOR THE FEAST OF THE PRIESTHOOD

#### INTRODUCTION

269 -

ST. JOHN EUDES labored for many years to revive the priestly spirit in the French clergy of the Seventeenth Century. He realized in the course of time that a solemn feast in honor of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and of all holy priests and levites would greatly help to develop the apostolic life in the members of his Institute and instil it into the seminarians of whom he had charge; and at an early date he decided to establish it. In 1649, he submitted to the approval of Doctors Basire and Le Moussu an Office of the Priesthood written by himself, and this he published in 1652 in the first edition of the Proper of his Congregation. On December 29th of the same year, His Lordship Claude Auvry, Bishop of Coutances, authorized all the faithful of his diocese, and especially the priests and clerics of his seminary, to make use of the Saint's Offices. At this time, the Feast of the Priesthood was allocated to November 15, and accordingly it is morally certain that it was celebrated in the seminary of Coutances on November 15, 1653.

Subsequently, the Saint continued to perfect his Office, as is shown by the editions of the Proper published by him in 1668 and in 1672. In these the hymns are more rhythmic, an octave is added to the Office, and in order to make it possible to celebrate the Feast and its octave before the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, the solemnity is advanced two days and so is kept on November 13. St. John Eudes wanted the renewal of the promises of the clergy in his Society to take place on the Feast of the Presentation, and thus the Feast of the Priesthood served as a preparation for that great act which, in those circumstances, could not fail to be carried out with the greatest possible fervor.

The Saint's Office in honor of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ and of all holy priests and levites is one of great beauty. It is at the same time a magnificent glorification of the heroes of the priesthood whose

270 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

virtues and success it enthusiastically relates, a striking exposition of the dignity and the duties of a priest, and a fervent Prayer that God should grant that His ministers should participate in the spirit and the virtues of their predecessors. In it the Saint was happy in his choice and arrangement of texts from Scripture and the Fathers; and those parts of the Mass and Office that are entirely his own, such as the hymns and the prose, are remarkable for their vigor and their loftiness of thought. He succeeded in introducing the whole of his beautiful teaching on the relations between the priests and the Blessed Virgin Mary, his personal duties and his mission with regard to the laity. When chanted in a major seminary, it could not fail to make a profound impression on the clerics, and the same may be said of the Office as a whole.

This Feast of the Priesthood Was also adopted by the Priests of St., Sulpice and by Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament. At St. Sulpice, it was first fixed for October 30, but later, with the consent of the Ordinary, it was celebrated on July 17, or on another day towards the end of the scholastic year. We cannot say at what precise date the Feast was introduced at St. Sulpice, but apparently it was not established there by Father Olier, but by his disciples some years after his death, which occurred in 1657. According to Father Faillon, the Feast began to be kept there about 1660, and he attributes to Father de Bretonvilliers the compositions of the Office and Mass used in its celebration. We believe, on the contrary, that the Fathers of St. Sulpice, being in touch with St. John Eudes, adopted his Office and Mass, retouching, perhaps, certain parts of it, especially the hymns.

Similarly, the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament also adopted the Feast of the Priesthood, which admirably suited their devotion towards the Holy Eucharist. For there is a close connection between the priesthood and the Eucharist, and in some respects the Feast of the Priesthood seemed to be a happy complement of the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. That is why, when the Benedictines adopted it, they fixed its celebration for the Thursday after the Octave of Corpus Christi. On May 30, 1668, Cardinal de Vendome, the Legate a latere of Pope Clement IX, authorized them to celebrate this Feast, using the Office written by St. John Eudes and accommodated to the Benedictine rite. This Feast did not remain restricted to the three Institutes that

## THE FEAST OF THE PRIESTHOOD 271 -

we have mentioned; it was adopted in several dioceses, amongst others in that of Rouen, in which it is said to have been kept until the middle of the Nineteenth Century.

The Eudists were very attached to the Feast of the Priesthood, and St. John Eudes' immediate successor, Father Blouet de Camilly, "had it inserted in the letters of institution of several houses of the Congregation;" while the General Assembly of 1742 recommended that it be faithfully celebrated in all houses of the Institute. Nor did it cease to be celebrated till towards the middle of the Nineteenth Century, when its abandonment was doubtless due to the return to the Roman Liturgy. The Priests of St. Sulpice preserved it until the liturgy was reformed by Pope Pius X, when they had to give it up; but neither the Eudists nor the Sulpicians have relinquished hope of reviving some day a Feast that so happily harmonizes with their spirit and their works.

**MASS OF THE FEAST OF THE  
PRIESTHOOD OF  
JESUS CHRIST**

Introitus      introit

Dominus dixit ad me: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te: Tu es Sacerdos in aeternum, secundum Melchisedech. Ps. Benedicite, Sacerdotes Domini, Domino: benedicite, sancti et humiles corde, Domino.

V. Gloria Patri . . . Dominus dixit.

Oratio

Deus, tuorum gloria Sacerdotum, qui Unigenitum tuum nobis summum Sacerdotem, et animarum nostrarum Pastorem vigilantissimum dedisti, quique ei, ad sacrificandum tibi hostiam mundam, et ad promovendam humanis generis salutem, sanctos Sacerdotes et Levitas consortes tribuisti: quaesumus, beata Maria semper Virgine et iisdem sanctis Sacerdotibus intercedentibus, ut Spiritum gratiae cui servierunt, in Ecclesia tua excitare digneris, quatenus nos eodem repleti, studeamus amare quod amaverunt, et opere exercere quod verbo et exemplo docuerunt. Per eundem Dominum.

The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee: Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech. Ps. O ye priests of the Lord, bless the Lord: bless the Lord, O ye holy and humble of heart. -

V. Glory be to the Father  
The Lord hath said.

Collect

O God, the glory of Thy Priests, who didst give us Thy Only-Begotten Son to be our High Priest and the most watchful Pastor of Souls, and didst make all holy priests and levites His associates in offering to Thee a spotless victim and in promoting the salvation of the human race: grant, we beseech Thee, through the intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and of all the Holy Priests and Levites, that the spirit of grace be stirred up in Thy Church, so that filled with this same grace, we may love what they have loved, and accomplish in deed what they have taught by word and example.

Through the same Lord.

MASS

273 -

Lectio, Epistolae Beati Pauli Apostoli ad Hebraeos. (Cap. 7)

Fratres, alii sine iurejurando Sacerdotes facti sunt; hic autem cum iurejurando, per eum qui dicit ad illum: Juravit Dominus et non poenitebit eum: tu es Sacerdos in aeternum. In tantum melioris testamenti sponsor factus est Jesus. Et alii quidem plures facti sunt Sacerdotes, idcirco quod morte prohiberentur permanere: hic autem, eo quod maneat in aeternum, sempiternum habet Sacerdotium. Unde, et salvare in

Lesson from the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews. Chap 7. Brethren, others were made priests without an oath: but this with an oath, by him that said unto him: The Lord hath sworn and he will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever. By so much is Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And the others indeed were made many priests, because by reason of death they were not suffered to continue: but this, for that he continueth for ever, hath an everlasting priesthood: whereby

perpetuum potest accedentes per semetipsum ad Deum: semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis. Talis enim decebat ut nobis esset Pontifex, sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus, et excelsior caelis factus: qui non habet necessitatem quotidie, prius pro suis delictis hostias offerre, deinde pro populi. Hoc enim fecit semel, seipsum offerendo, Jesus Christus, Dominus noster.

Graduale. Sacerdotes ejus induam Salutari, et Sancti ejus exultatione exultabunt. V. Isti sunt qui in omnibus prae-buerunt semetipsos exemplum bonorum operum, in humilitate, in modestia, in charitate. Alleluia, alleluia. V. Hi sunt servi boni et fideles, qui ministerium suum honoraverunt: ideo constituit eos Dominus super omnia bona sua.

274 -

Post Septuag, omissis Graduale, Alleluia, et Sequentia, dicitur:

Tractus-In omnibus exhibeamus nos ipsos sicut Dei ministros, in multa patientia, in humilitate, in suavitate, in charitate non ficta: ne mini dantes ullam offensionem, ut non vituperetur ministerium nostrum. V. Inter vestibulum et altare plorabunt Sacerdotes, ministri Domini, et dicent: Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo, et ne des hereditatem tuam in opprobrium, ut dominentur eis nationes. V. Hi sunt boni milites Christi Jesu, qui bonum certamen certaverunt; ideo beatificavit eos in gloria, et dedit illis coronas perpetuas.

Tempore Paschali, loco Gradualis, dicitur:

Alleluia, alleluia. V. Talis decebat ut nobis esset Pontifex, sanctus, innocens, segregatus a peccatoribus, et excelsior coelis factus. Alleluia. V. Se-

he is able also to save for ever them that come to God by him; always living to make intercession for us. For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: who needeth not daily (as the other priests) to offer sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, in offering himself, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Gradual. I will clothe his priests with salvation, and his saints shall rejoice with exceeding great joy. V. These are they that show themselves an example of good works, in humility, in modesty, in charity. Alleluia, alleluia. V. These are good and faithful servants, who have honored their ministry: therefore the Lord made them masters over all his possessions.

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

After Septuagesima, the Gradual, Alleluia, and the Sequence are omitted and the following is said: Tract-In all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in humility, in sweetness, in charity unfeigned: giving no offense to any man, that our ministry be not blamed. V. Between the porch and the altar, the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep and shall say: Spare, O Lord, spare thy people; and give not thy inheritance to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. V. These are good soldiers of Christ Jesus, who have fought the good fight; and therefore he made them blessed in glory, and gave them everlasting crowns. In Paschaltide, instead of the Gradual, the following is said: Alleluia, alleluia. V. It was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made

cundum eum qui vocavit vos Sanctum, et ipsi in omni conversatione sancti sitis. Scriptum est enim: Sancti eritis, quoniam ego sanctus sum. Alleluia.

#### Sequentia

Gaudeamus jubilantes,  
Sacerdotum celebrantes  
Sacrate solemniam.  
Haec est dies laetabunda,  
In qua Patrum veneranda  
Laudamus magnalia.

MASS 275 -

Sit vox lactea, sit canora,  
Sit laus pura, sit decora  
Puritate pectoris.

Laudet caelum, terra, pontus,  
Laudet simul tota virtus  
Spiritus et corporis.  
Te laudamus unitatem,  
Aeternamque Trinitatem,  
Ortum, finem omnium.  
Te laudamus Salvatorem,  
Sacerdotum fundatorem,  
Caput, Patrem, gaudium.  
Et sororem. et Reginam  
Omnis laudet Spiritus.  
Vos consortes Dei Patris,  
Patres estis Dei fratris,  
Quos unxit Paraclitus.  
Prae Angelis sublimavit,  
Apostolis sociavit

Vos Sacerdos maximus.

Vos a cunctis honorari,  
Super omnes exaltari  
Rex jubet Altissimus.

Vos legati Numinis,  
Fratres almae Virginis,  
Et patres fidelium.  
Sacri linguae Flaminis,  
Summi tubae Principis,  
Et doctores gentium.  
Hi caelorum docent leges,

higher than the heavens. Alleluia.  
V. According to him that hath called  
you, who is holy, be you also in all  
manner of conversation holy: be  
cause it is written: You shall be  
holy, for I am holy. Alleluia.

#### Sequence

Come we jubilant, rejoicing,  
Festive rites and solemn voicing  
Of the Priesthood's sacred feast!  
This the day of joy unbounded,  
When we praise with awe well,  
founded Lofty deeds performed by priest.

Let the voice of joy resounding  
Lift its praise in pure tones sound  
ing,

Rising from the heart made pure.

Praise be sung by earth, sky, ocean;  
Likewise let the heart's devotion  
And the soul's give praise most sure.  
One in Godhead we acclaim Thee,  
Trinity eterne proclaim Thee,  
Source of all things and the End.  
God Our Saviour now we praise,  
Hearts to Priesthood's founder raise,  
By all souls let praise be lifted  
To thee, Mary, priesthood's gifted  
Mother, Queen and Sister fair.  
God the Father's own, no other,  
Fathers, ye, of God your Brother,  
Chrism'd by the Spirit rare.  
You the great High Priest bath  
lifted

Higher than the angels gifted,  
joined you to the apostles' train.

You the Most High King com-  
mandeth

Honour'd be by all, demandeth  
You o'er all mankind to reign.

Envoys of the Godhead here,  
Brethren of the Virgin Fair,  
Fathers of the faithful true.  
Tongues of sacred fire flaming,  
Trumpets of the Prince acclaiming,  
Teachers of mankind anew.  
Thus they teach the laws of heav'n,

Christi Jesu pascunt greges  
Verbis, factis, precibus.

276 -

Pravos mores dissipant,  
Carnem, mundum superant,  
Expellunt daemona.  
Foedas horrent voluptates,  
Stultas spernunt vanitates,  
Mundi calcant somnia.  
Vanum ejus rident fastum,  
Asperantur tanquam lutum  
Cuncta temporalia.  
Domus Dei vigiles,  
Et columae stabiles,  
Moestorum laetitia.  
Justis augent gratiam,  
Reis donant veniam,  
Dant cunctis solatia.  
Sub perenni tam piorum,  
Tarn potentum patronorum  
Lactemur custodia.  
Ut a Sanctis adjuvemur,  
Corde magno subsequamur  
Sanctorum vestigia.  
Circa domos, intra templa,  
Corda, voces et exempla  
Christum Jesum praedicent.

Bone Jesu, bonitatem  
Ostende supplicibus:  
Da sanctorum sanctitatem  
Sanctis sequi moribus.  
Intus flagrant charitatis  
Divinis ardoribus:  
Foris lucent sanctitatis  
Praeclaris operibus.

MASS

Hos sacrauit castitas,  
Decoravit pietas,  
Sacrauit humilitas,  
Coronavit charitas,  
Spes, fides et gratia.

O beata Trinitas,

O vera felicitas  
Et Sanctorum sanctitas,

Feeding to Christ's flock the leav'n  
By each word and prayer and deed.

THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Baneful habits they expel,  
Mastering the flesh as well,  
World and devil they exceed.  
Sinful lusts they hold in horror,  
Foolish vanities in terror,  
Stamping out the world's vain dreams.  
They laugh at earthly vanity,  
They spurn with holy sanity,  
Each thing that transitory seems.  
Watchmen of the House of God,  
Pillars sound, unmoved, unawed,  
Joy to those by sorrow swayed,  
Graces for the just they win,  
Pardon give for guilt of sin,  
Comfort unto all dismayed.  
Let us then rejoice, protected  
By the constant help effected  
By such holy guardians strong.  
May we generously follow,  
Helped by saints, whose way we hal  
low, In their holy steps along.  
Round our homes, within our  
temples,  
Let our hearts, lives, and examples  
Herald forth our Lord Christ Jesus.  
Gentle Jesus, show Thy favor  
To all creatures suppliant here;  
Grant they may with pious savour  
Go the way of saints, nor fear.  
Charity within a-flaming  
From the burning fires divine;  
Sanctity without, acclaiming  
By their lives and deeds they're thine.

277 -

Them hath chastity renown'd  
And sweet piety hath found,  
And humility made sound;  
Charity their brows hath crown'd,  
Hope and Faith and grace adorn'd.

O most Blessed Trinity

Rare bliss of Divinity  
And all saints' affinity!

Immensae clementiae  
Immensae sint gratiae,  
Aeterna sit gloria,  
Amen dicant omnia:  
Amen. Alleluia.

Boundless be the mercies dear,  
Boundless be all graces here.  
Everlasting glory be.  
Let all creatures join to say  
Amen. Alleluia.

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secun-  
dum Matthaeum. (Cap. 5)

Continuation of the holy Gospel ac-  
cording to St. Matthew. Chapter 5.

In illo tempore, dixit Jesus di-  
xit to his discipulis suis:  
Quod si sal evanuerit, in quo salietur?  
Ad nihil valet ultra, nisi ut  
mittatur foras et conculcetur  
ab hominibus. Vos estis lux mundi.  
Non potest civitas abscondi supra montem  
posita. Neque accendunt  
lucernam, et ponunt eam sub modio,  
sed super candelabrum,  
ut luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt.  
Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus,  
ut videantur vestra bona, et glorificent  
Patrem vestrum qui in caelis est. Nolite  
putare quoniam veni solvere legem aut  
Prophetas: Non veni solvere, sed  
adimplere. Amen quippe dico vobis,  
donec transeat caelum et terra, iota  
unum aut unus apex non praeteribit  
a lege, donec omnia fiant.  
Qui ergo solverit unum de mandatis  
istis minimis, et docuerit, sic homines,  
minimus vocabitur in regno caelorum:  
Qui autem fecerit et docuerit,  
hic magnus vocabitur in regno

At that time, Jesus said to his disciple:  
You are the salt of the earth.  
But if the salt lose its savour, where  
with shall it be salted? It is good for  
nothing any more but to be cast out,  
and to be trodden on by men.  
You are the light of the world. A city  
seated on a mountain cannot be hid.  
Neither do men light a candle  
put it under a bushel, but upon a  
candlestick, that it may shine to all  
opera that are in the house. So let  
light shine before men, that they  
may see your good works and glorify  
your Father who is in heaven. Do  
not think that I am come to destroy  
the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to  
fulfil. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and  
earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall  
not pass of the law, till fulfilled.  
He therefore that shall break  
one of these least commandments,  
and shall so teach men,  
shall be called the least in the kingdom of

278 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

caelorum. Dico enim vobis, quia nisi  
abundaverit iustitia vestra plus  
quam Scribarum et Phariseorum,  
non intrabitis in regnum caelorum.

heaven. But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called  
great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, that unless  
your justice abound more than that of the scribes and  
Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Credo  
Offertorium

Creed  
Offertory

Sacerdotes sancti ut palma flore-  
bunt, et sicut cedri Libani exalta-  
buntur. Judicabunt nationes et dom-  
inabuntur populis, et regnabit Dom-  
inus illorum in perpetuum. Alleluia.  
Secreta

Deus, qui Filium tuum Unigeni-  
tum pro nobis Sacerdotem et hos-  
tiam, esse voluisti: praesta quae-  
sumus, beata Maria semper Virgine  
intercedente, cum omnibus sanctis

The holy priests shall flourish like  
the palm tree: they shall grow up  
like the cedars of Libanus. They  
shall judge nations, and rule over  
people: and their Lord shall reign forever.  
Secret  
O God, who didst will that Thy  
Only-begotten Son shouldst be priest  
and victim for us, grant, we beseech  
Thee, that as through the intercession  
of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin



<p>Sacerdotibus et Levitis, ut sicut nos, immensa clementiae tuae largitate, divini ejus Sacerdotii participes effecisti, ita et nosmetipsos cum eo, in hac sacrosancta oblatione, in qua omnis sanctitatis fontem constituisti, hostiam vivam et sanctam tibi in aeternum consecrare et immolare digneris. Per eundem Dominum.</p>	<p>and all Thy holy priests and levites, we have been made sharers in Thy Divine Priesthood, through the greatness of His bounty, Thou wouldst deign also to consecrate and immolate us to Thee as a living and holy victim in union with Him in Thy holy oblation, which Thou didst make the fount of all holiness. Through the same Lord.</p>
---	---

Communio

Gratias agimus tibi, Domine Jesu, qui eras, qui es, et qui venturus es: quia fecisti nos Deo nostro regnum et sacerdotes. Alleluia.

Communion

We give Thee thanks, O Lord Jesus, who art and who wast and who art to come: because thou hast made us a kingship for our God, and priests. Alleluia.

Postcommunio

Domine Jesu Christe, Pastor bone, qui dixisti: Rogate Dominum messis, ut mittat operarios in messem suam; te supplices exoramus, intercedente beatissima Virgine Maria Matre tua, cum omnibus sanctis Sacerdotibus et Levitis, ut operarios fideles in vineam tuam mittas; omnes Sacerdotes et Levitas dignos sacris altaribus ministros efficias; et Ecclesiae tuae plures alios Sacerdotes et Pastores juxta Cor tuum concedas; tecum et cum ipsis aeterno Patri aeternae laudis hostiam offerre mereamur.  
Qui vivis et regnas cum eodem Patre, in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus. Per omnia saecula saeculorum.

Postcommunion

Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd, who didst say: Pray the Lord of the harvest that He may send laborers into His harvest, we humbly beseech Thee, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin and all Thy holy priest and Levites, that Thou mayst send faithful laborers into Thy vineyard; that Thou mayst make all priests and levites worthy ministers of Thy sacred altars; and that Thou mayst grant us many other priests and pastors according to Thy heart; in order that with Thee and and them we may offer a victim of praise to Thy Eternal Father, who livest and reignest with the same God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.  
Amen.

**OFFICE OF THE FEAST OF HOLY PRIESTHOOD  
OF  
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

**FIRST VESPERS**

Ant. Dominus dixit ad me: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te: tu es Sacerdos in aeternum, secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

Dixit Dominus et psalmi de die Dominica, ultimo loco Laudate Dominum omnes gentes.

Ant. Pax vobis, dicit Dominus Jesus Sacerdotibus suis: Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos, accipite Spiritum sanctum.

Ant. Vos estis sal terrae, vos estis lux mundi: sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in caelis est.

Ant. Secundum eum qui vocavit vos sanctum, et ipsi in omni conversatione vestra sancti sitis: scriptum est enim: Sancti eritis, quoniam ego sanctus sum.

Ant. Hoc est praeceptum meum, ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos; et discatis a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.

Ant. The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.

Psalms for Sunday. Last psalm, Laudate Dominum omnes gentes.

Ant. Peace be to you, says the Lord Jesus to His priests: As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

Ant. You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world. So let your light shine before men that they may glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Ant. According to him that hath called you, who is holy, be you also in all manner of conversation holy: for it is written: You shall be holy, because I am holy.

Ant. This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you; and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.

280 -

OFFICE 281

Capitulum, Heb. 7, 24

Little Chapter, Heb. 7, 24

Christus Jesus, eo quod maneat in aeternum, sempiternum habet Sacerdotium: unde et salvare in perpetuum potest accendentes per semetipsum ad Deum, semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis.

Christ Jesus, for that he continueth for ever, hath an everlasting priesthood: whereby he is able also to save for ever them that come to God by him; always living to make intercession for us.

Hymnus

Hymn

Jesu, Sacerdos maxime,  
Apostolatus Ordinis  
Rex et Pater sanctissime,  
Nostris adesto canticis.  
Aaron genus clarissimum,

Jesus, our great High Priest we sing.  
Herald of Holy Ordination,  
Father all-holy, holy king,  
Accept our chant of exultation.  
We praise the line of Aaron famed,

Divinitati proximum, Melchisedech regalia Vox intonat magnalia. Laudamus orbis Lampades, Duces Dei certaminum,	Nigh unto God, by Godhead named. Our voices sing the holy things Melchisedech in offering brings. We laud these beacons of earth's ball,
Caelestis aulae Praesides, Christi Columnas militum.	God's champions in His cause divine, The provosts of the heavenly hall, The columns of Christ's fighting line.
Vos Agnus agnos convocans, Pugnam lupis denuntiat: Res mira! per vos militaris Agnus lupos exterminat. Ex ore vestro, Numinis Romphaea sacra fulgurat: Quae saevientis daemonis	Ile Lamb assembling you His flock, Forthwith the wolf abandons flight. A Miracle! the wolf to mock God's Lamb doth conquer bestial might! The sacred glaive of spirit fire From out your unctuous lips doth flash
Truces catervas dissipat.	And put to flight the threatening dire ,
Contra cohortes Tartari, Agni sequamur praelia: Ut donet agnos subsequi . Agni decoros gloria.	Of hostile cohorts' baneful clash. Gehenna's hosts their stand oppose, We see the Lamb disperse their ranks, That He would grant us lambs like those As worthy of His praise and thanks.

282 -

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

0 candidati Principes, Splendor decusque Virginum: 0 purpurati Martyres, Flos et corona Martyrum.	0 white-robed leaders, shining fair, With glistening Virgins' beauty white! As martyrs oft ye well do wear The flower's crown, the martyrs'right.
Carnis dolosae fascinum Ex corde nostro pellite: Fraudes et arma daemonum Oratione frangite.	Dispel afar the wiles of sin Which lure the flesh, assail the heart. Break Thou the Devil's powers within, By might of word his cunning thwart.
Praesta, beata Trinitas, Origo, finis omnium, Patrum tenere semitas Nunc et per omne saeculum.	Grant ' Blessed Trinity Divine, Beginning of all things and End, That we may keep the Fathers' line, Now and forever onward tend.
Amen.	Amen.
V. Elegit cos Dominus Sacerdotes Sibi.	V. The Lord bath chosen them to be his priests.
R. Ad sacrificandum ei hostiam laudis.	R. To offer him a sacrifice of praise.
Ad Magnif. Ant. Beata es, Maria, Regina et Mater Sacerdotum; quia Dominum. Jesum. portasti summum Sacerdotem: Tibi honor, tibi laus, tibi gloria in aeternum. Alleluia.	At the Magnifiant. Ant. Blessed art thou, O Mary, Queen and Mother of priests, because thou didst bear Jesus the High Priest. To thee honor, praise and glory forever. Alleluia.

Oremus: Deus, tuorum gloria Sacerdotum, qui Unigenitum tuum nobis summum. Sacerdotem, et animarum nostrarum Pastorem vigilantissimum dedisti, quique ei ad sacrificandum tibi hostiam mundam, et ad promovendam humani generis salutem, sanctos Sacerdotes et Levitas consortes tribuisti: quaesumus, beata Maria semper Virgine iisdemque sanctis Sacerdotibus et Levitis intercedentibus, ut Spiritum gratiae cui servierunt in Ecclesia tua excitare digneris; quatenus nos eodem repleti,

Let us pray. O God, the glory of Thy Priests, who didst give us Thy Only-Begotten Son to be our High Priest and the most watchful Pastor of Souls, and didst make all holy priests and levites His associates in offering to Thee a spotless victim and in promoting the salvation of the human race: grant, we beseech Thee, through the intercession of Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, and all the holy Priests and Levites, that the spirit of grace be stirred up in Thy Church, so that filled with this same

## OFFICE

283-

studeamus amare quod arnaverunt, et opere exercere quod verbo, et ex-

grace, we love what they loved, and accomplish in deed what they taught

emplo docuerunt. Per eundem Dominum

by word and example. Through the same Lord.

## MATINS

Invit. Jesum, Mariae Filium, Regem Sacerdotum, \*Venite adoremus.

Invit. Come, let us adore Jesus, Son of Mary, King of Priests.

### Hymnus

Salvete, mundi Sydera,  
Gentis sacrae pars inclyta,  
Cleri decus sanctissimi,  
Praeclara sors Altissimi.  
Pars vestra Jesus optima,  
Pars ejus et vos intima:  
Paracliti sacrarium,  
Summi Parentis gaudium.  
Imago Matris Virginis,  
Lucerna Christi corporis,  
Caput, sinus, cor, ubera:

### Hymn

Hail, shining stars of lowly earth,  
The sacred sons of spotless birth,  
The glory of all holy clerks,  
Whose lot it is to share God's works.  
Jesus your highest part, and best,  
And ye to Jesus dearest blest:  
Of Holy Ghost the sacred shrine,  
The joy of Highest Sire divine.  
The Image of the Virgin Spouse,  
The light of Christ's own body's house,

Quis tanta laudet munera?

The heart, the head, the generous breast:

Virtutis auro fulgidi,  
Hostes acerbi criminum;  
Aeternitatis arbitri,  
Pax et salus fidelium.  
Per vos ubique gentium  
Regnum. Dei protenditur:  
Per vos tyrannis daemonum  
Languet, ruit, subvertitur.

How sing such lofty functions best?  
Who shine as with all virtues' gold,  
Fierce enemies to crime and sin  
The judges of th'eternal fold  
Are ye; believers' peace within.  
By you God's kingdom reaches wide,  
Comprising Peoples far and near;  
By you the devils' sway denied  
Doth falter, fail, collapse from fear.

Vobis datur mysteria  
Parvis loqui, non turgidis:  
Divina per vos gratia

To utter mysteries is yours  
Unto the simple, not the proud:  
Through you God's grace most

Sanctis datur, non perfidis.

freely pours  
Not for the faithless but the vowed.

284 -

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Vos horruistis noxia,  
Et falsa mundi somnia:  
Christus dedit clarissimum  
Vitae perennis praemium.

Ye have forsworn all evil things,  
The world, and dreams it falsely  
brings:  
Christ hath the gift most shining  
giv'n,

To show the life of endless heav'n.

Terrae polique Lumina,  
Obscura cuncta tollite:  
Urbis sacrae Munimina,  
Cives sacros defendite.  
Praesta, beata Trinitas,  
Origo, finis omnium,  
Patrum tenere semitas,  
Nunc et per omne saeculum.

Ye shining lights of sky and earth  
Destroy all darksome evil blight:  
Ye sentinels of heaven's girth  
Defend her citizens in light.  
Grant, Blessed Trinity divine,  
Beginning of all things and End,  
That we may keep the Fathers' line,  
Now and forever onward tend.

Amen.

Amen.

#### FIRST NOCTURN

Ant. Talis decebat ut nobis esset  
Pontifex, sanctus, innocens, segrega-  
tus a peccatoribus, et excelsior caelis  
factus.

Psalmi trium Noct. de Confessore  
Pontifici.

Ant. Ego elegi vos de mundo, ut  
eatis, et fructum afferatis, et fructus  
vester maneat.

Ant. Vobis data est omnis potes-  
tas caelorum: Quaecumque enim  
ligaveritis in terra, erunt ligata et in  
caelo; et quaecumque solveritis su-  
per terram, erunt soluta et in caelo.

V. Sacerdotes tui induantur jus-  
titiam.

R. Et Sancti tui exultent.

Ant. It was fitting that we should  
have such a high priest, holy, inno-  
cent, undefiled, separated from sin-  
ners, and made higher than the heavens.

Psalms for the three nocturns are  
those for a Confessor Pontig.

Ant. I have chosen you out of the  
world, that you should go and  
should bring forth fruit, and your  
fruit should remain.

Ant. All power is given to you:  
whatsoever you shall bind upon  
earth, it shall be bound also in heav-  
en: and whatsoever you shall loose  
upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.

V. Let thy priests be clothed with  
justice.

R. And let thy saints rejoice.

OFFICE

285 -

Lectio Prima  
De Epistola B. Pauli Apostoli ad

First Lesson  
Epistle to the Hebrews. Chap. 5, 1-7.

Hebraeos. Cap. 5, 1-7.

Ornnis pontifex ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur, in iis quae sunt ad Deum, ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis: qui condolere possit iis qui ignorant et errant: quoniam et ipse circumdatus est infirmitate: et propterea debet, quemadmodum pro populo, ita etiam et pro semetipso offerre pro peccatis. Nec quisquam sumit sibi honorem, sed qui vocatur a Deo, tanquam Aaron. Sic et Christus non semetipsum clarificavit, ut Pontifex fieret; sed qui locutus est ad eum: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te. Quemadmodum et in alio loco dicit: Tu es Sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech. Qui in diebus carnis suae, preces supplicationesque ad eum, qui possit illum salvum facere a morte, cum clamore valido et lacrymis offerens, exauditus est pro sua reverentia.

R. Benedictus Deus et Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi: Qui Filium suum Unigenitum per Spiritum sanctum unxit in Regem et Sacerdotem in aeternum, ut immolet ei hostiam sanctam immaculatam.  
V. victim.  
of Kings and Prince of Deus, Rex regum et Princeps sacer-  
Filium. suum Unigenitum per Spiritum sanctum unxit.  
286 -

#### Lectio Secunda

De libro Ecclesiastici. Cap. 44, 1-15.

Laudemus viros gloriosos, et parentes nostros in generatione sua. Multam gloriam fecit Dominus magnificentia sua a saeculo. Dominantes in potestatibus suis, homines magnivirtute et prudentia sua praediti, nuntiantes in Prophetis dignitatem Prophetarum, et imperantes in praesenti populo, et virtute prudentiae populis sanctissima verba. In peritia sua requirentes modos musicos, et

Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err: because he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And therefore he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to oil for sins. Neither doth any man take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was. So Christ also did not glorify himself, that he might be made a high priest: but he that said unto, him: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place: Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech. Who in the days of his flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to him that was able to save him from death, was heard for his reverence.

R. Blessed be God and the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ' who anointed His Only-Begotten ~On as King and Priest for ever, that He might offer Ilim a holy and spotless

V. Holy, holy, holy Lord Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus God, King of Kings and Prince of Priests. Who anointed His only-bedotum. Qui gotten Son.

#### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

#### Second Lesson

Ecclesiasticus. Chapter 44, 1-15.

Let us now praise men of renown, and our fathers in their generation. The Lord hath wrought great glory through His magnificence from the beginning. Such as have borne rule in their dominions, men of great power and endued with their wisdom, shewing forth in the prophets the dignity of prophets, and ruling over the present people, and by the strength of wisdom instructing the

narrantes carmina scripturarum. Homines divites in virtute, pulchritudinis studium habentes, pacificantes in domibus suis. Omnes isti in generationibus gentis suae gloriam adepti sunt, et in diebus suis habentur in laudibus. Qui de illis nati sunt, reliquerunt nomen narrandi laudes eorum. Sapientiam ipsorum narrent populi, et laudem, eorum nuntiet Ecclesia.

R. Jesus ingrediens mundum dicit: Hostiam et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi. In capite libri scriptum est de me ut faciam voluntatem tuam: \*Deus meus volui, et legem tuam in medio cordis mei. V. Dominus divit ad me: Tu es Sacerdos in aeternum, secundum ordinem Melchisedech. \*Deus meus

\*

Lectio Tertia  
Cap. So, 1-15.

Hi sunt Sacerdotes sancti, qui in vita sua suffulserunt domum, et in

OFFICE

diebus suis corroboraverunt templum. In diebus ipsorum emanaverunt putei aquarum, et quasi mare

Qui the sea above measure. They took curaverunt gentem suam, et libera- care of their nation and delivered verunt eam a perditione. Qui prae- it from destruction. They prevailed valuerunt amplificare civitatem, qui to enlarge the city and obtained glory adepti sunt gloriam in conversatione in their conversation with the peogentium, et ingressum domus et atrii ple and enlarged the entrance of the ampicaverunt. Quasi stella matutina house and the court. They shone in in medio nebulae, et quasi luna ple- his days as the morning star in the na in diebus suis lucent. Et quasi sol midst of a cloud, and as the moon refulgens, sic illi effulserunt in temat the full. And as the sun when it plo Dei. Quasi arcus refulgens inter shineth, so did they shine in the nebulas gloriae, et quasi flos rosarum temple of God. And as the rainbow in diebus vernis, et quasi lilia quae giving'light in the bright clouds, and sunt in transitu aquae et quasi thus as the flower of roses in the days of redolens in diebus aestatis. Quasi ig- the spring, and as the lilies that are nis refulgens, et thus ardens in igne. on the brink of the water, and as the Quasi vas auri solidum, ornatum sweet smelling frankincense in the omni lapide pretioso. Quasi oliva time of summer. As a bright fire,

pullulans, et cypressus in altum se extollens, in accipiendo ipsos stolam gloriae, et vestiti eos in consummationem virtutis. In ascensu altaris

people in most holy words. Such as by their skill sought out musical tunes, and published canticles of the scriptures. Rich men in virtue, studying beautifulness: living at peace in their houses. All these have gained glory in their generations and were praised in their days. They that were born of them have left a name behind them, that their praises might be related. Let the people show forth their wisdom: and the church declare their praise.

R. Jesus coming into the world said: sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not: but a body thou hast fitted to me. In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do Thy will; I have willed it, O my God, and Thy law is in the midst of my heart. V. The Lord hath said to me: Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech. O my God . . .

Third Lesson  
Chapter So, 1-15.

These are holy priests, who in their life propped up the house and

in their days fortified the temple. In their days the wells of water flowed out: and they were filled as adimpled sunt supra modum.

care of their nation and it from destruction. They prevailed valuerunt amplificare civitatem. They prevailed valuerunt amplificare civitatem, qui to enlarge the city and obtained glory adepti sunt gloriam in conversatione in their conversation with the peogentium, et ingressum domus et atrii ple and enlarged the entrance of the ampicaverunt. Quasi stella matutina house and the court. They shone in in medio nebulae, et quasi luna ple- his days as the morning star in the na in diebus suis lucent. Et quasi sol midst of a cloud, and as the moon refulgens, sic illi effulserunt in temat the full. And as the sun when it plo Dei. Quasi arcus refulgens inter shineth, so did they shine in the nebulas gloriae, et quasi flos rosarum temple of God. And as the rainbow in diebus vernis, et quasi lilia quae giving'light in the bright clouds, and sunt in transitu aquae et quasi thus as the flower of roses in the days of redolens in diebus aestatis. Quasi ig- the spring, and as the lilies that are nis refulgens, et thus ardens in igne. on the brink of the water, and as the Quasi vas auri solidum, ornatum sweet smelling frankincense in the omni lapide pretioso. Quasi oliva time of summer. As a bright fire, and frankincense burning in the fire. As a massy vessel of gold adorned with every precious stone. As an olive tree budding forth, and a cy

287 -

sancti gloriam dederunt sanctitatis amictum. Et circa illos corona fratrum: quasi plantatio cedri in monte Libano, sic circa illos steterunt: quasi rami palmae: et omnes filli eorum in gloria sua.

R. Beata es Maria, Dei Genitrix Virgo, Regina et Mater Sacerdotum: \*Quia Dominum Jesum portasti, Pastorem magnum animarum, et Principem sacerdotum. Tibi laus, tibi honor, tibi gloria in saecula saeculorum.

288 -

lorum. V. Beata te dicent omnes Pastores, et Sacerdotes. \*Quia ... Gloria Patri . . . \*Quia . . .

## SECOND NOCTURN

Ant. Ego sum lux mundi, et vos lux mundi estis. Qui vos audit, me audit: et qui vos spernit, me spernit.

Ant. Nolite tangere Christos meos: qui hos tangit, tangit pupillam oculi mei.

Ant. Hi sunt lucernae ardentes et lucentes super candelabrum sanctum.

V. Sacerdotes meos induam Salutari.

R. Et Sancti mei exultatione exultabunt.

Lectio IV: Sermo sancti Ephrem, Syri Diaconi De Sacerdotio.

O miraculum stupendum! o potestas ineffabilis! O tremendum Sacerdotii mysterium, spirituale ac sanctum, venerandum et irreprehensibile, quod Christus in hunc mundum veniens etiam indignis impertitus est! Genu posito, lacrymis atque suspiriis oro ut hunc Sacerdotii thesaurum inspiciamus: thesaurum, in-

press tree rearing itself on high, when they put on the robe of glory and were clothed with the perfection of power. When they went up to the holy altar, they honoured the vesture of holiness. And about them was the ring of his brethren: and as the cedar planted in mount Libanus, and as the branches of palm trees, they stood around about them: and all their sons in their glory.

R. Blessed art thou, O Virgin Mother of God, Queen and Mother of priests: \*Because thou didst bear the Lord Jesus, the great Pastor of souls, and the Prince of priests. To thee praise, to thee honor, to thee

## THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

glory forever. V. All Pastors and Priests will call thee blessed. \*Because . . . Glory be to the Father \*Because . . .

Ant. I am the light of the world, and you are the light of the world. He that heareth you, heareth me. and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me.

Ant. Touch ye not my anointed:

he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye.

Ant. They are lights burning and shining upon a holy candelabrum.

V. I will clothe my priests with salvation.

R. And my saints shall rejoice with exceeding great joy.

Lesson IV: Sermon of St. Ephrem, Syrian Deacon On the Priesthood.

O wondrous miracle! O power unutterable! O tremendous mystery of the Priesthood, holy and spiritual mystery, worthy of reverence and blameless, which Christ bath by His advent into the world imparted even to those unworthy! On bended knees, with tears and sighs, I pray that we may look into this treasure



quam, his qui eum digne et sancte custodiunt. Scutum siquidem est refulgens et incomparabile, turris firma, murus indivisibilis, fundamentum solidum ac stabile, a terra ad axem usque coeli pertingens. Quid dico, fratres? Excelsos illos

OFFICE

289-

axes contingit, ime, in ipsos coclos coelorum sine impedimento atque labore ascendit, et in medio Angelorum simul cum Spiritibus incorporodis facile versatur. Quid dico, in medio supernarum Virtutum? Quin et cum ipso Angelorum Domino atque Creatore, datoreque luminum familiariter agit et quantum vult confestim quae postulat, facile et cum suo jure quodammodo impetrat.

R. Isti sunt Principes Sacerdotum, qui viventes in carne plantaverunt Ecclesiam sanguine suo: \* Calicem Domini biberunt, et amici Dei facti sunt. V. In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum. Calicem . . .

Lectio V

Non desisto, Fratres, laudare et glorificare illius dignitatis profunditatem, quam nobis, nobis inquam, Adae fillis, sancta elargita est Trinitas. Per hanc mandus salvatus est, et creatura illuminata. Per hanc et mortis potentia destructa est, et inferni vires deperditae ipsaque Adae maledictio exterminata est atque soluta, et ccelestis thalamus apertus est et adornatus. Quid dicam? quid eloquar? aut quid laudibus efferam? Excedit quippe intellectum et orationem, omnemque cogitationem, donum altitudinis dignitatis sacerdotalis. Et, sicut arbitror, hoc est quod Paulus, quasi in stuporem. mentis actus, innuit exclamans: O altitudo divitiarum sa-

of Priesthood; a treasure, I say, to those who guard it with fitting holiness. For it is indeed a matchless bright shield, a strong tower, a wall unbreakable, a firm and stable foundation, reaching from earth to highest heaven. What am I saying, brethren?

ren? It even attaineth those supernal regions, ascending without let or labor from the depths to the very heavens, and there with incorporeal spirits, surrounded by angels, holdeth free and familiar intercourse. But why do I say surrounded by the Heavenly Powers except it be that it treateth-familiarly with the very Lord and Creator of angels Himself, the Giver of Light, asking forthwith whatsoever it will, making petition as it were with certain seemly ease and right?

R. These are Princes of Priests, who living in the flesh have planted the Church with their blood: they have drunk the chalice of the Lord, and were made the friends of God.

V. Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: and their words unto the ends of the world. The chalice . . .

Lesson V

Nor do I desist, brethren, from giving praise and glory to that profundity of dignity which the Holy Trinity hath liberally bestowed upon us, the sons of Adam. Thereby the world hath been saved and the creature enlightened. Thereby both

the power of death hath been destroyed and the forces of hell spoiled; both the curse of Adam destroyed and broken, and the heavenly bridal chamber adorned and thrown open. What shall I say and declare? what in the way of praise? Forsooth, this gift of the lofty dignity of the Priesthood hath outrun mind and speech and all thought. And this I think is what St. Paul indicates when,

pientiae et scientiae Dei, quarn incomprehensibilia sunt iudicia ejus, et investigabiles divinae viae ejus! Altivolans e terra in ccelum, nostra postulata Deo celerrime defert, et Dominum pro servis suis deprecatur.

R. Hi sunt vere Sacerdotes et Martyres, qui pro Christi nomine sanguinem suum fuderunt: \* Et traderunt corpora sua ad supplicia, hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem. V. Isti sunt qui venerunt ex magna tribulatione, et laverunt stolas suas in sanguine Agni. Et tradiderunt.

#### Lectio VI

O potestas ineffabilis, quae in nobis dignata est habitare, per impositionem manuum sacrorum Sacerdotum! O quam magnam in se continet profunditatem formidabile et admirabile Sacerdotium! Felix ille, qui in hac ipsa dignitate administrat pure et irreprehensibiliter! Discamus igitur, Fratres, quoniam magna est et multa, immensa ac infinita ipsius Sacerdotii dignitas. Gloria Unigenito, gloria et soli bono, illud suis praebenti discipulis per sanctum novum Testamentum: ut et ipsi nobis, per impositionem manuum suarum super dignos, exemplum demonstrent. Cuncti ergo honoremus Sacerdotes; cuncti hac venerandi Sacerdotii sublimitate decoratos praedicemus beatos: certo scientes quod si quis amicum Regis

amet, hunc ipsum multo amplius a Rege amari. Quocirca amemus Sacerdotes Dei, siquidem amici ipsius sunt boni, et pro nobis ac mundo deprecantur.

stricken with an amazement of mind, he exclaims: O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable his ways! Flying from earth to high heaven, it bears most swiftly to God above our requests, praying the Lord for His servants.

R. These are truly priests \* and martyrs, who shed their blood for the name of Christ: and they delivered up their bodies to torments, a living victim, holy, pleasing to God. V. These are they who are come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. And they have delivered up

#### Lesson V1

O power unutterable, which hath deigned to dwell in us through the laying on of hands of holy priests!

What great depths lie within this awful and wonderful Priesthood! Happy the man who purely and blamelessly ministers in this dignity! So let us know, brethren, that great and manifold, vast and boundless is the dignity of the Priestly Office it self. Glory be to the Sole-Begotten, glory also to the Only Good, who offers this through the new and holy covenant to His disciples, that these in turn, by the laying of their hands upon worthy men, may furnish an example unto us. Therefore, let us all give honor to Priests and all pronounce those to be happy who have been adorned by this sublime and

admirable office of Priesthood, knowing for sure that he will be loved much more by the King, who is a lover of the King's friend. Wherefore, let us love the Priests of God, seeing that they His friends are good and intercede for us and the world.

R. Vidi in circuitu sedis Seniores, sedentes super thronos, amictos stolis albis, et in capite eorum coronae aureae. Et audiui vocem de throno dicentem: \* Isti ambulabunt mecum in albis, quia digni sunt, et florebunt sicut lilium in aeternum. V. Hi sunt Sacerdotes sancti, qui Virgines permanserunt, et sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit. Isti. Gloria Patri. Isti.

R. I saw round about the throne the ancients, sitting on thrones, clothed in white garments, and on their heads were crowns of gold. And I heard a voice from the throne, saying: These will walk with me in white garments, because they are worthy and have flowered like lilies forever. V. These are holy priests, who have remained Virgins, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

### THIRD NOCTURN

Ant. Ecce ego mitto vos sicut Agnos inter lupos: Estote ergo prudentes sicut serpentes, et simplices sicut columbae.

Ant. Gratias tibi, Domine Jesu, qui facis Sacerdotes tuos Angelos, et ministros altaris tui flammam ignis.

Ant. Isti sunt sancti Dei homines, de quibus os Domini locutum est dicens: Ego dixi, Dii estis vos, et filii Excelsi omnes.

V. Sanctificamini, omnes Ministri altaris.

R. Et sancti estote, quoniam ego sanctus sum.

Ant. Behold I send you as lambs among wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.

Ant. I thank thee, Lord Jesus, who makest thy priests angels, and the ministers of thy altar. a burning fire.

Ant. These are holy men of God, of whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken saying: I said, You are gods, and all sons of the most High.

V. Sanctify yourselves, all ministers of the altar.

R. And be holy, as I am holy.

292 -

### THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Lectio VII: Lectio sancti Evangelii secundum Matthaeum Cap. 5.

In illo tempore: Dixit Jesus discipulis suis: Vos estis sal terrae: quod si sal evanuerit, in quo salietur? Et reliqua.

Homilia sancti Ioannis Chrysostomi Super Cap. 5. Matth.

Vos estis sal terrae: Non enim pro vestra, inquit, salute tantummodo, sed pro universo prossus orbe haec vobis doctrina committitur. Non ad duas quippe urbes, aut decem, aut viginti, neque ad unam vos mitto gentem, sicut mittebam Prophetas: sed ad omnem terram prorsus ac mare, totumque mundum, et hunc variis criminibus oppressum. Dicendo enim: Vos estis sal terrae, ostendit

Lesson V11 The Reading of the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. Chap. 5.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost its savour where with shall it be salted?

Homily of St. John Chrysostom on St. Matthew, Chapter 5.

Ye are the salt of the earth: this teaching is committed to you, not for your salvation alone, but indeed for that of the whole world. I send you not, forsooth, unto two cities, or ten, or twenty, nor unto one people do I send you, as I did the Prophets; but to the bounds of the whole earth and the seas, to the whole world, and a world oppressed by diverse crimes.

For in saying: Ye are the salt of the

omnium hominum. infatuatam esse naturam, et peccatorum vi corruptam: et idcirco, illas ab eis maxime virtutes requirit, quae cunctis necessariae atque utiles sunt futurae. Nam qui mansuetus est ac modestus, et misericors et justus, non intra se tantummodo haec recte facta concludit, verum in aliorum quoque utilitatem praeclaros hos faciet effluere fontes.

R. Isti sunt Sancti, qui oves Domini paverunt verbo et exemplo, quia ipsum. in tote corde suo dilexerunt. \* Ipsi intercedant pro nobis ad Deum, ut mittat operarios in nossem.

#### OFFICE

suam. V. Hi sunt fratrum amatores qui multum orant pro populo, et universa sancta civitate. Ipsi.

#### Lectio Viii

Sed qui mundo corde est atque pacificus, et persecutionem pro veritate patitur, nihilominus in commune commodum vitam instituit. Ne igitur putetis, inquit, ad levias vos ducendos esse certamina, neque exiguarum rerum vobis ineundam esse rationem. Vos estis sal terrae. Quid igitur? Ipsae putrefactae medicatae sunt? Nequaquam. Neque enim fieri potest ut ea quae jam corrupta sunt, salis perfricatione reparentur. Non enim hoc fecerunt, sed ante renovata, sibi tradita, atque ab illa jam putredine liberata aspergebant sale, et in ea novitate conservabant quam a Domino susceperant. Liberare quippe a putredine peccatorum, Christi virtutis est. Ut autem ad illa iterum non revertantur, Apostolorum curae est ac laboris.

R. Cum Agnus aperuisset librum, viginti quatuor seniores ceciderunt

earth, He shows that the nature of all mankind hath been subjected to foolishness and corrupted by the power of sin: and hence He requires of them those virtues in especial which will be necessary and profitable to all. For he who is gentle and modest, merciful and just, rightly concludes that these were wrought not within himself only, but he will proceed to put forth these fair fountains for the good of others as well.

R. These are the Saints who make the sheep of the Lord fear by word and example, because they love him with their whole heart. \* May they intercede for us before the Lord, that

293 -

he may send laborers into his vineyard. V. These are lovers of their brethren, who pray greatly for their people and for all the holy city.

#### Lesson VIII

But he who is clean of heart and a peace-maker and suffers persecution for truth's sake, sets forth a life for the common benefit as well. Think not, therefore, he saith, that you shall be led forth to trivial contests or that you will be esteemed for mediocre deeds. Ye are the salt of the earth. What then? Hath that which was putrefied been healed? By no means! Nor is it possible that things already corrupt should be made whole by the application of salt. This they did not accomplish, but things previously renewed and committed to them and already divested of their rottenness these they purified by salt and preserved in that estate which they had received from the Lord. For it belongs to Christ's power to deliver from the rottenness of sin, but it is the concern and task of the Apostles that these should not again revert to that state.

R. When the Lamb had opened the book, the four and twenty an

coram eo in facies suas dicentes:

\* Dignus es, Domine, accipere honorem, et gloriam, et benedictionem, quia fecisti nos Deo nostro Reges et Sacerdotes. V. Et adoraverunt viventem in saecula saeculorum, et cantabant canticum novum dicentes. Dignus es. Gloria. Dignus es.

294 -

Lectio IX

Lesson IX

Vides quemadmodum paulatim Prophetis hos meliores esse patefecerit. Non enim illos filios veteris Testamenti, neque mediocres ponit magistros, sed severos quosdam atque terribiles. Hoc est enim omnino mirabile, quia non adulantes, neque palpantes, sed e diverso salis instar urentes, fere omnibus se tam desiderabiles reddiderunt. Nolite ergo, inquit, mirari si, alios omittens, vos potissimum doceo, atque ad pericula tanta succingo. Considerate quippe quantis urbibus, quantisque populis vos sim missurus magistros. Propterea, non vos tantummodo volo esse sapientes, sed ut tales faciatis et ceteros. Hujusmodi autem Magistros, in quibus certe tantorum periclitatur salus, maxima debet polleere prudentia, tantasque illis virtutum adesse divitias, ut aliis quoque utilitatem aedificationis impertiant.

Te Deum.

AD LAUDES

Ant. Sacerdos in aeternum Christus Dominus, per Spiritum sanctum, pro nobis semetipsum obtulit hostiam Deo, in odorem suavitatis. Psalmi de Dominica.

Ant. Ego elegi vos, ut sitis vasa munda, in honorem sanctificata, utilia Domino, et ad omne opus bonum parata.

Ant. Sacerdotes tui, Domine, induantur, sicut electi Dei, sancti et

cients fell down before the Lord, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honor and glory and benediction, because thou hast made us to our God kings and priests. V.

And they adored him that liveth for ever and ever, and sang a new hymn saying . . .

THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Now thou seest how He hath revealed these to be better, in a Measure, than even the Prophets. For He regards those sons of the Old Covenant not as mild teachers but rather as stern and terrible. For this is altogether wonderful that not as flattering or coaxing, but rather as burning like salt they ingratiated themselves to such an extent with all men. Be not amazed therefore, He says,

if passing over others I teach you in particular and gird you up for such dangers. Indeed, consider to what cities and peoples I am about to send you as teachers. Wherefore, I wish you to be not only wise, but to act even as they and others. But teachers such as these in whom the salvation of so many is certainly involved in peril, must shine with the greatest prudence, and they must possess such a wealth of virtues that they may impart also to others a useful edification.

Te Deum.

LAUDS

Ant. Christ the Lord, the Eternal Priest, hath delivered Himself for us, a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness.

Psalms for Sunday.

Ant. I have chosen you, that you may be clean vessels, sanctified in my honor, useful to the Lord, and ready to every good work.

Ant. Let thy priests be clothed, O Lord, as the elect of God, holy and

OFFICE

295

dilecti, viscera misericordiae, benignitatem, humilitatem, modestiam, charitatem.

Ant. Sacerdotes Dei, benedicite Dominum: Sancti et humiles corde, laudate Deum.

Ant. Sacerdotes Domini, laudate Deum, quia gloria et honore coronavi vos: et constituit vos Dominos domus suae, et Principes omnes possessionis suae.

Capitulum, Heb. 7.

Christus Jesus, eo quod maneat in aeternum, sempiternum habet Sacerdotium: unde et salvare in perpetuum potest accedentes per semetipsum ad Deum, semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis.

beloved, with the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, charity.

Ant. O priests of God, bless the Lord: holy and humble of heart, praise God.

Ant. Priests of the Lord, praise God, because he crowned you with glory and honor: and made you masters of his house, and rulers of all his possessions.

Little Chapter, Heb. 7.

Christ Jesus, for that he continueth for ever, hath an everlasting priesthood: whereby he is able also to save for ever them that come to God by him; always living to make intercession for us,

Hymnus .

Hymn

Hymnos Olympus intonet,  
Psalmosque terra personet;

Heavens on high with hymns let ring.

Totis medullis cordium,

To Christ let us exultant sing,

Christo canamus canticum.

While earth its Psalms of praise doth bring

To every heart a vibrant string.

Caeli colamus Principes

With worship let us hofior show

Regumque terrae Judices,  
Iesu Sacristas inclytos,  
Dei domus Arcarios.

To Heaven's leaders praise bestow,  
The judges of earth's kings, the  
Priests  
Unstained of Christ, who spread His  
feasts.

Mundi bases fortissimas,  
Ecclesiae custodias:  
Regis superni nuntios,  
Pacis perennis Angelos.

The world's supporting pillars firm,  
The Holy Church's guardians term,  
The messengers of Heaven's King,  
Bright angels lasting peace to bring.

296 -

THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

Vos sacra caeli buccina  
A Prole missa Virginis  
Legatione caelica,  
Arcana Jesu panditis.  
Vos Spiritus Oracula,  
Tormenta Christi bellica:  
Per vos patent mysteria,

Ye sacred trumpets of the sky  
By Virgin's Son sent far and nigh,  
Shed forth the mysteries secret  
Of Jesus, His the envoys fleet.  
Ye oracles of Spirit bright  
Christ's fearsome threats do bring to  
light;

Per vos fugantur crimina.

Through you the mysteries appear,  
Through you all crimes are banished'  
here.

Qua mente cernunt Angeli  
Jesum, Mariae Filium,  
Regem tremendum saeculi  
Vobis in ara subditum!  
Agni stupent sanctissimam  
Carnem, sacratis oribus,  
Deo litari victimam  
Escam dari mortalibus.

In ways the Angels' flashing sight  
Sees Mary's Son, Lord Jesus bright,  
The King tremendous of the skies  
To you on altar subject lies.  
The flock beholds with awe, amazed,  
The Flesh confection as they gazed,  
By sacred words God's victim  
wrought,

Salutis orbis vindices,  
Hostes salutis pellite:  
Sacri polorum cardines,  
Vitae fores recludite.

And here as food to mortals brought.  
Who come to save the universe  
Dispel ye far the foes adverse;  
Be ye the axis of the poles  
Whereon life's doors swing wide to  
souls.

Praesta, beata Trinitas,  
Origo, finis omnium,  
Patrum tenere semitas  
Nunc et per omne saeculum.

Grant, Blessed Trinity divine,  
Beginning of all things and End,  
That we may keep the Fathers' line,  
Now and for ever onward tend.

Amen.

Amen.

V. Sacerdotes Dei incensum et  
panes offerunt. R. Ideo sancti erunt  
Deo stio.

V. The priests of God offer in  
cense and bread. R. And therefore  
they shall be holy to their God.

A Bened. Ant. Vobis datum est  
nosse mysteria Regni Dei, ad dan-  
dam scientiam salutis plebi ejus, in  
remissionem peccatorum, eorum.

At the Benedictus. To you it is  
given to know the mysteries of the  
kingdom of heaven, to give knowl-  
edge of salvation to his people, unto  
the remission Of their sins.

OFFICE

297 -

Oremus

Let us pray

Deus tuorum gloria Sacerdotum,  
qui Unigenitum tuum nobis sum-  
mum Sacerdotem et animarum nos-  
trarum Pastorem vigilantissimum  
dedisti, quique ei ad sacrificandum  
tibi hostiam mundam, et ad pro-  
movendam humani generis salutem,  
sanctos Sacerdotes et Levitas con-  
sortes tribuisti: quaesumus, beata  
Maria semper Virgine, iisdemque  
sanctis Sacerdotibus et Levitis inter-  
cedentibus, ut spiritum gratiae cui  
servierunt in Ecclesia tua excitare  
digneris; quatenus nos eodem re-  
pleti, studeamus amare quod amave-  
runt, et opere exercere quod verbo et  
exemplo docuerunt. Per eundem

O God, the glory of Thy priests,  
who didst give us Thy Only-Begot-  
ten Son to be our High Priest and  
the most watchful pastor of souls,  
and didst make all holy priests and  
levites His associates in offering to  
Thee a spotless victim and in pro-  
moting the salvation of the human  
race: grant, we beseech Thee,  
through the intercession of Blessed  
Mary, ever Virgin, and of all the  
holy Priests and Levites, that the  
spirit of grace be stirred up in Thy  
Church, so that filled with this same  
grace, we may love what they loved,  
and accomplish in deed, what they  
taught in word and example.

Dominum.

Through the same Lord . . .

AD PRIMAM

PRIME

Ant. Sacerdos in aeternum.

Ant. The Eternal Priest.

R. Christe Fili ... V. Qui natus  
es de Maria Virgine.

R. O Christ, Son of the living  
God, have mercy on us . . . V.  
Who was born of the Virgin Mary.

Lectio brevis: i Petr. 2. Vos autem  
genus electum, regale Sacerdotium,  
gens sancta, populus. acquisitionis;  
ut virtutes annuntietis ejus, qui de  
tenebris vos vocavit in admirabile lu-  
men tuum.

Short Lesson: i Peter 2. But you  
a chosen generation, a kingly priest  
hood, a holy nation, a purchased  
people: that you may declare his  
virtues, who hath called you out of  
darkness into his marvellous light.

AD TERTIAM

TIERCE

Ant. Ego elegi vos.

Ant. I have choseii you.

Capit. Christus Jesus.

Little Chapter. Christ Jesus.

R. Sacerdotes tui Induantur jus-  
titiam. Sacerdotes . . . -

R. Let thy priests be clothed with  
justice . . . Let thy priests . . .

V. Et Sancti tui exsultent . . .  
Induantur justitiam. Gloria Patri  
. . . Sacerdotes.

V. And let thy saints rejoice . . .  
Be clothed with justice . . . Glory  
he to the Father . . . Let thy priests.

298 -

THE PRIEST, HIS DIGNITY AND OBLIGATIONS

V. Sacerdotes meos induam Salu-  
tari. salvation.

V. I will clothe my priests with

R. Et Sancti mei exultatione ex-  
sultabunt.

R. And my saints shall rejoice  
with exceeding great joy.

AD SEXTAM

SEXT

Ant. Sacerdotes tui.

Ant. Let thy priests.

Capit. Abd. i.

Little Chapter. Abdias, i.

In monte Sion erit salvatio, et erit  
Sanctus. Et erit domus Jacob ignis,  
et domus Joseph flamma. Et ascen-  
dent Salvatores in monte Sion judi-  
care domum Esau. Et erit Domino  
regnum.

And in Mount Sion shall be sal-  
vation, and it shall be holy: and the  
house of jacob shall be a fire and  
the house of Joseph a flame. And  
saviours shall come up into Mount  
Sion to judge the house of Esau:  
and the kingdom shall be for the Lord.

R. Sacerdotes meos Induam  
Salutari. Sacerdotes . . .

R. I will clothe my priests with  
salvation . . .

V. Et Sancti mei exultatione  
exultabunt. Induam. Gloria Patri.  
Sacerdotes.

V. And my saints shall rejoice  
with exceeding joy . . . I shall  
clothe . . . Glory be to the Father  
. . . I will clothe.

V. Sanctificamini, omnes Ministri

V. Be ye sanctified, all ministers



altaris.

R. Et sancti estote, quoniam ego sanctus sum.

AD NONAM

Ant. Sacerdotes Domini.

Capit. i Petr. 2.

Vos autem genus electum, regale Sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis; ut virtutes annuntietis ejus, qui de tenebris vos vocavit in admirabile lumen suum.

R. Sanctificamini \* Omnes Ministri altaris. Sanctificamini . . .

V. Et sancti estote, quoniam ego

of the altar.

R. And be holy, because I am holy.

NONE

Ant. Priests of the Lord.

Little Chapter. i Peter 2.

But you are a chosen generation a kingly priesthood, a holy nation: a purchased people: that you may declare his virtues, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

R. Be ye sanctified, all ministers of the altar . . . Be ye sanctified . . .

V. And he holy, because I am

OFFICE

299 -

sanctus sum . . . Omnes . . . Gloria Patri . . . Sanctificamini . . .

V. Sacerdotes Dei incensum et panes offerunt.

R. Ideo sancti erunt Deo suo.

AD SECUNDAS VESPERES

Ant. Vocavit nos Dominus vocatione sua sancta, ut nos divini sui Sacerdotii consortes faceret. Gratias Deo super inenerabili dono ejus.

Psalmi de Dominica, ultimo loco Memento Domine David.

Ant. Dei adjutores sumus, Dei et hominum mediatores, dispensatores mysteriorum Christi. Gratias Deo super inenarrabili dono ejus.

Ant. Isti sunt Sancti, qui fecerunt et docuerunt mandata Domini: ideo magni vocabuntur in Regno caelorum.

Ant. Hi sunt qui ad justitiam erudierunt multos, ideo fulgebunt quasi splendor firmamenti, et quasi stellae in perpetuas aeternitates.

Ant. Omnes sancti Sacerdotes, rogate Dominum messis, ut mittat operarios in messem suam.

Capit. Hebr. 7. Vide Laudes.

Hymnus

Terrae Deos extollimus,  
Patres Deorum psallimus;  
Dei patres et filios,  
Summo Parenti proximos;

holy. All . . . Glory be to the Father . . . Be ye sanctified . . .

V. The priests of God offer incense and bread.

R. And therefore they shall be holy to their God.

SECOND VESPERES

Ant. The Lord hath called us by his holy calling, that we may be made partakers of his holy priesthood. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

Psalms for Sunday. Last psalm, Memento Domine David.

Ant. We are God's coadjutors and the mediators of men, the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

Ant. These are saints, who keep and teach the commandments of God: therefore they shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven.

Ant. These are they that instructed many in justice: therefore they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as stars for all eternity.

Ant. All holy priests, pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest.

Little Chapter. Hebr. 7. See Lauds.

Hymn

We praise those gods, the gods of earth, '  
We sing them bringing gods to birth;  
The sons and sires of God be praised,  
To highest Parent nearest raised.

Christos Dei sanctissimos, Dignos Dei vicarios: Nactos Dei consortium, Sortemque coeli clavium.	God's holiest other Christs they be, Vicars esteemed of Deity: Born thus to share the life divine And hold the keys to heaven's shrine.
Pupilla vos charissima, Os, lingua, cor et viscera, Manusque Regis gloriae: Sponsi, patres Ecclesiae.	The eye most precious of the King, Of Glory, yel His heart ye bring, His mind, His hands, His lips and tongue, As Church's Sponsors be ye sung!
O vos beatos Principes Inter beatos Coelites, Jesu coruscus munere Et Trinitatis foedere! Per vos avernus clauditur, Per vos Polus recluditur: Divina per vos gratia Novare curat omnia. Videte quot miserrimas Mentes draco nunc devorat, Poenas quibus teterrimas AEternus ignis praeparat!	0 blessed Princes set on high Amongst the blessed in the sky, Shining with Jesus' splendid light And Trinity's blest aura bright! By you the jaws of hell are stopped, By you the doors of Heaven oped: By you doth work the grace divine To renovate and to refine. Behold how many souls forlorn The dragon now devours apace; For whom most fearsome woes are sworn, And who eternal fires must face.
Vos ergo Patris optimi Rogate nunc clementiam: Det hostis atrocissimi Calcere nos ferociam.	Implore ye now the favor kind Of God the Father gently just, To grant as strength to leave be hind The fearsome foe, downtrod in dust., Beseech the King of harvests white That He his fields would visit here;, That He Redeemer stir up bright His spirit in the clergy dear. Grant, Blessed Trinity divine, Beginning of all things and End, That we may keep the Fathers' line, Now and forever onward tend.
Rogate Regem messium Messas suas ut visitet: Suum Redemptor Spiritum In corde Cleri suscitet. Praesta, beata Trinitas, Origo, finis omnium, Patrum, tenere semitas Nunc et per omne saeculum. Amen.	Amen.

OFFICE 301

V. Magna est gloria eorum in Salutari tuo.	V. Great is their glory in thy Sal vation.
R. Gloriam, et magnum decorem. impones super cos.	R. Thou hast laid upon them glory and great beauty.
Ad. -Magn. Beatam te dicent, O Maria, Dei Genitrix Virgo, omnes sancti sacerdotes et Levitae: quia ex te ortus est Christus Deus noster, Princeps Sacerdotum et magnus Pas- tor animarum. Alleluia.	At the Magnificat. All thy holy Priests and Levites shall call thee blessed, O Mary, because Christ Our God, the Prince of Priests and Great Shepherd of Souls was born of thee. Alleluia.

Oremus. Deus, tuorum gloria sacerdotum, qui Unigenitum tuum nobis summum Sacerdotem et animarum nostrarum Pastorem vigilantissimum dedisti, quique ei ad sacrificandum tibi hostiam mundam, et ad promovendam humani generis salutem, sanctos Sacerdotes et Levitas consortes tribuisti: quaesumus, beata Maria semper Virgine, iisdemque sanctis Sacerdotibus et Levitis intercedentibus, ut spiritum gratiae cui servierunt in Ecclesia tua excitare digneris; quatenus nos eodem repleti, studeamus amare quod amaverunt, et opere exercere quod verbo et exemplo docuerunt. Per eundem Dominum.

Let us pray. O God, the glory of thy priests, who didst give us Thine Only-begotten Son to be our High Priest and the most watchful pastor of souls, and didst make all holy priests and levites His associates in offering to Thee a spotless victim and in promoting the salvation of the human race: grant, we beseech Thee, through the intercession of Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, and all the holy Priests and Levites, that the spirit of grace be stirred up in thy Church, so that filled with this same grace, we love what they loved, and accomplish indeed what they taught by word and example. Through the same Lord.